Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

Report on Consultation – Route Options

Skye Reinforcement Project

November 2020

REF: LT 91

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

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GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Alignment	A centre line of an overhead line, along with location of key angle support structures.
Consultation	The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based on a genuine exchange of views, normally, with the objective of influencing project decision-making.
Design Solution	The design of the transmission infrastructure (location, structure type) between Fort Augustus and Ardmore
Detailed Design Stage	Further refines the routeing process and seeks to define an indicative alignment, design solution, the location of support structures, limits of deviation, access strategy and mitigation measures.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A formal process set down in The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 used to systematically identify, predict and assess the likely significant environmental impacts of a proposed project or development and identify appropriate mitigation measures to avoid, prevent, reduce or offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment.
GWDTE	Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystem
Habitat	Term most accurately meaning the place in which a species lives, but also used to describe plant communities or agglomerations of plant communities.
Kilovolt (kV)	One thousand volts.
Limit of Deviation (LOD)	The area either side of the proposed alignment within which micrositing of support structures may take place in accordance with the conditions of the Section 37 consent.
Micrositing	The process of positioning individual support structures to avoid localised environmental or technical constraints.
Mitigation	Term used to indicate avoidance, remediation or reduction of likely significant adverse effects on the environment (see definition of EIA).
National Scenic Area (NSA)	A national level designation applied to those landscapes considered to be of exceptional scenic value.
Overhead line (OHL)	An electric line installed above ground, usually supported by lattice steel towers or poles.
RAG Rating	Each topic within the environmental, technical and cost categories should be considered in terms of the potential for the development to be constrained and a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating applied as appropriate.
Route	A linear area of approximately 1 km width (although this may be narrower/wider in specific locations in response to identified pinch points / constraints), which provides a continuous connection between defined connection points.
Route (preferred)	A route for the overhead line taken forward to stakeholder consultation following a comparative appraisal of route options.
Route (proposed)	A route taken forward following stakeholder consultation to the design stage of the overhead line routeing process.
Routeing	The work undertaken which leads to the selection of a proposed alignment, capable of being taken forward into the consenting process under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.
Scheduled Monument	A monument which has been scheduled by the Scottish Ministers as being of national importance under the terms of the 'Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979'.

Term	Definition
Section	Due to its length, it has been necessary to split the project into 'sections' to more easily describe, identify and assess route options. There are seven sections from Section 0 to Section 6.
Semi-natural Woodland	Woodland that does not obviously originate from planting. The distribution of species will generally reflect the variations in the site and the soil. Planted trees must account for less than 30% of the canopy composition.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Areas of national importance. The aim of the SSSI network is to maintain an adequate representation of all natural and semi-natural habitats and native species across Britain.
Skye Reinforcement Project	The current project being consulted upon.
Span	The section of overhead line between two supporting structures.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	An area designated under the EC Habitats Directive to ensure that rare, endangered or vulnerable habitats or species of community interest are either maintained at or restored to a favourable conservation status.
Special Landscape Area (SLA)	Landscapes designated by The Highland Council which are considered to be of regional/local importance for their scenic qualities.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	An area designated under the EC Wild Birds Directive to protect important bird habitats.
Stakeholders	Organisations and individuals who can affect or are affected by the Skye Reinforcement Project.
Study Area	The area within which the route and alignment study (design stage) takes place.
System Planning Pathway	A system planning pathway looks at medium to long term network needs to determine electrical transmission infrastructure requirements (Development Pathway).
The National Grid	The electricity transmission network in Great Britain.
Volts	The international unit of electric potential and electromotive force.
Wayleave	A voluntary agreement entered into between SHE Transmission and a landowner upon whose land an overhead line is to be constructed for the installation and retention of the transmission equipment.
Wild Land Area (WLA)	A series of 42 mapped areas which have been identified by Scottish Natural Heritage as comprising the most extensive areas of high wildness within Scotland, following a process of interpretive mapping and site survey. WLA is not a statutory designation but these areas are considered to be nationally important.

PREFACE

This Report on Consultation has been prepared by Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc (SHE Transmission), with input by ASH Design and Assessment Ltd., to provide a summary of the responses received from key stakeholders (including statutory and non-statutory consultees, local communities, landowners and individual residents) during public consultation between Mid November 2019 and end of June 2020 in response to the publication of the preferred route and design solutions identified for the proposed Skye Reinforcement Project.

A Consultation Document[1] was published in March 2020 which sought comments on the proposals, the approach to route selection, the analysis of route options and the identification of a preferred route. Prior to this, a face to face meeting was held with statutory consultees in November 2019 to provide an update to the project and seek preliminary feedback.

This Report on Consultation describes how the feedback from consultation has informed the identification of the proposed route. Once confirmed, the proposed route is then taken forward for the subsequent detailed design stages of the project.

Under normal circumstances, consultation on the project would involve public engagement events held in the local area and events were planned to take place in March 2020 at seven locations along the route between Dunvegan on the Isle of Skye, and Fort Augustus. However, as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic these events had to be cancelled.

To continue engagement on the project SHE Transmission developed an online consultation tool, to enable the local community to experience the full exhibition from home on a computer, tablet or mobile device. The online exhibition was designed to look and feel like a real consultation in a community hall, with exhibition boards, maps, interactive videos and the opportunity to share views on the proposals.

Visitors were able to engage directly with the project team, via a live chat function, where they could ask any questions they might have about the project and share their feedback on the current proposals. Access to exhibition material and information about the project was also made available.

The virtual consultation events took place via the project website https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/skye-reinforcement/ at the following times:

- 9th June 2020; 14:00 – 16:00;
- 10th June 2020; 10.00 – 12.00; and
- 11th June 2020; 18:00 – 20:00.

Exhibition materials remain available via the project website.

This Report on Consultation also provides a summary of how SHE Transmission have responded to comments received from key stakeholders on the preferred route and design solution and details the actions that will be taken as the project progresses through the detailed design stages.

[1] SHE Transmission (March 2020). Skye Reinforcement Consultation Document: Route Options

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc (SHE Transmission) is proposing to construct a new 132 kV overhead transmission line (OHL) between Fort Augustus Substation and Ardmore Substation on the Isle of Skye; referred to as the Skye Reinforcement Project.

A Consultation Document[2] was published in March 2020 which sought comments from stakeholders on the proposals, the approach to route selection, the analysis of route options and the identification of a preferred route. Prior to this, a meeting was held with statutory consultees in November 2019 to seek initial comments.

An online exhibition was held in June 2020, providing visitors with an opportunity to view exhibition boards, maps, interactive videos and a chance to share views and ask questions on the proposals by directly engaging with the project team.

A number of consultation responses received during this phase of the consultation process are of relevance to further assessment work that is planned for the next design stages of the project. This included requests for further information on the alignment of the OHL, the support structures proposed and the consideration of mitigation to minimise potential significant adverse effects. Further information and clarification will be provided once the more detailed design and environmental impact assessment work has been undertaken.

Despite some concerns, comments received illustrated a general acceptance of the preferred route put forward in Sections 0, 1, 4, 5 and 6. However, there were concerns expressed from stakeholders in relation to Sections 2 and 3, with a considerable number of comments received from the local community and community representatives in relation to Section 3 and the preferred route through Glen Arroch and Kylerhea.

Actions being undertaken to address comments raised during the routeing stage of the project include engaging an overhead line engineering consultancy and contractor early in the process to ensure that construction methods are fully understood in tandem with considering route and alignment options, design solutions and consideration of alternative solutions. Further environmental survey and assessment work will also be undertaken in parallel with the engineering studies to enable a collaborative approach to identifying an acceptable alignment and design solution through the sensitive landscapes and environment.

Additional targeted consultation will be undertaken with key statutory and non-statutory consultees, local councillors and local communities as the design progresses over the next 6 months to provide updates on the project during this detailed design stage. In addition, a consultation document will be published in the summer of 2021 to seek further feedback on the design solution prior to finalising the proposed design and commencing the EIA and consenting stage.

The preferred route identified within the Skye Reinforcement Consultation Document, March 2020 is shown on Figures 1.0 to 1.6. As discussed in this report, there is considerable design work still to be undertaken, specifically in relation to Sections 2 and 3, to evaluate the route, alignment and design solutions and to seek an acceptable solution which minimises potential likely significant adverse environmental effects where possible.

In Sections 2 and 3, no decision on the preferred route has been made at this stage, and the progression from preferred route to proposed route in these Sections will be subject to further review through the next design stage.

In all other sections (Section 0, 1, 4, 5 and 6), the preferred route put forward in the Consultation Document is to be taken forward as the proposed route. Whilst the proposed route has been identified for these sections, the next design stages will form the basis for detailed design decisions on alignment, design solution, type of support structure, limits of deviation, access and proposed mitigation in these Sections.

[2] SHE Transmission (March 2020). Skye Reinforcement Consultation Document: Route Options

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Purpose of Document

1.1.1 Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc (SHE Transmission) is proposing to construct a new 132 kV overhead transmission line (OHL) between Fort Augustus Substation and Ardmore Substation on the Isle of Skye. The project being promoted is known as the Skye Reinforcement Project.

1.1.2 It is proposed that the project would comprise a double circuit OHL (supported by steel structures) between Fort Augustus Substation and Broadford Substation and a single or double circuit OHL (also supported by steel structures) between Broadford Substation and Edinbane Substation. A new 132 kV double trident H wood pole (H pole) OHL is also required between Edinbane Substation and Ardmore Substation. The existing OHL between Fort Augustus Substation and Broadford Substation[3] would be removed, as well as the existing 132 kV wood pole OHL between Broadford Substation and Ardmore Substation. These sections of new OHL are collectively referred to in this Report on Consultation as "the new OHL".

1.1.3 This Report on Consultation documents the consultation process for the project between mid-November 2019 and end of June 2020, during the route option stage of the project. The programme of consultation was designed to engage with key stakeholders including statutory and non-statutory consultees, local communities, landowners and individual residents in order to invite feedback on the rationale for, and approach to, the selection of the preferred route[4].

1.1.4 The report describes the key responses received and details the actions taken in response to the issues raised.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 The objectives of this report are:

- To document the consultation process between November 2019 and July 2020;
- To summarise feedback received from stakeholders in order to identify key issues;
- To document actions to be undertaken in response to feedback where relevant; and
- To clearly set out the decisions that have been made as a result of the consultation.

1.3 Document Structure

1.3.1 This Report on Consultation is structured as follows:

- Part 1: Introduction - setting out the purpose of the Report on Consultation;
- Part 2: Project Overview – outlines the background to the project, the project need and provides a description of the key elements;
- Part 3: Consideration of Route Options – describes the identification of the preferred route;
- Part 4: The Consultation Process – describes the framework for consultation and methods which have been employed;
- Part 5: Consultation Responses from Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultees – summarises the responses from these bodies on a section by section basis;
- Part 6: Consultation Responses from Local Community – summarises the range of responses and key comments and issues arising from the local community and community representatives through the consultation process;
- Part 7: Project Responses to Consultations – summarises how the comments and issues raised during consultation will be addressed; and

[3] Comprising the 132 kV trident wood pole between Fort Augustus and Skye Tee, and the 132 kV steel lattice OHL between Skye Tee and Broadford Substation, via Quoich.

[4] Identified within the Skye Reinforcement Project: Consultation Document: Route Options (March 2020), produced by SHE Transmission plc

- Part 8: Conclusions and Next Steps – provides a summary of the conclusions reached and actions going forward.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

2.1.1 A summary of the existing infrastructure, the need for the project and the work undertaken by SHE Transmission to assess the electricity transmission infrastructure requirements (system planning pathway) is provided below. More detailed information is set out in the Consultation Document[5] and Reinforcement Strategy[6].

2.2 Existing Transmission Infrastructure

2.2.1 SHE Transmission owns and maintains the electricity transmission network across the north of Scotland and holds a licence under the Electricity Act 1989 to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission that will facilitate competition between current and new generators.

2.2.2 The existing single circuit 132 kV OHL from Fort Augustus to Ardmore on the Isle of Skye extends over 160 km in length and is the sole connection from the mainland national grid to Skye and onwards, via a subsea cable, to the Western Isles. The security of supply on Skye and to the Western Isles is dependent on this circuit. The existing OHL to Skye is made up of distinct sections, which were constructed at different times over the last 65 years in response to changing needs. This comprises the following (see also Plate 2.1):

1. Fort Augustus Substation to Skye Tee (near Invergarry) – a 9 km section of 132 kV OHL from Fort Augustus to the Skye Tee point, of trident wood pole construction and completed in June 2017;
2. Aberchalder to Quoich – recently constructed 132 kV OHL of trident wood pole construction;
3. Skye Tee (near Invergarry) to Quoich – steel lattice towers designed to support a single circuit 132 kV OHL constructed in the mid 1950's to connect the Quoich hydroelectric power station to the grid;
4. Quoich to Broadford – steel lattice towers designed to support a single circuit 132 kV OHL constructed between 1979 and 1980; and
5. Broadford to Ardmore – trident wood pole designed to support a single circuit 132 kV OHL constructed in 1989.

2.3 The Need for the Project

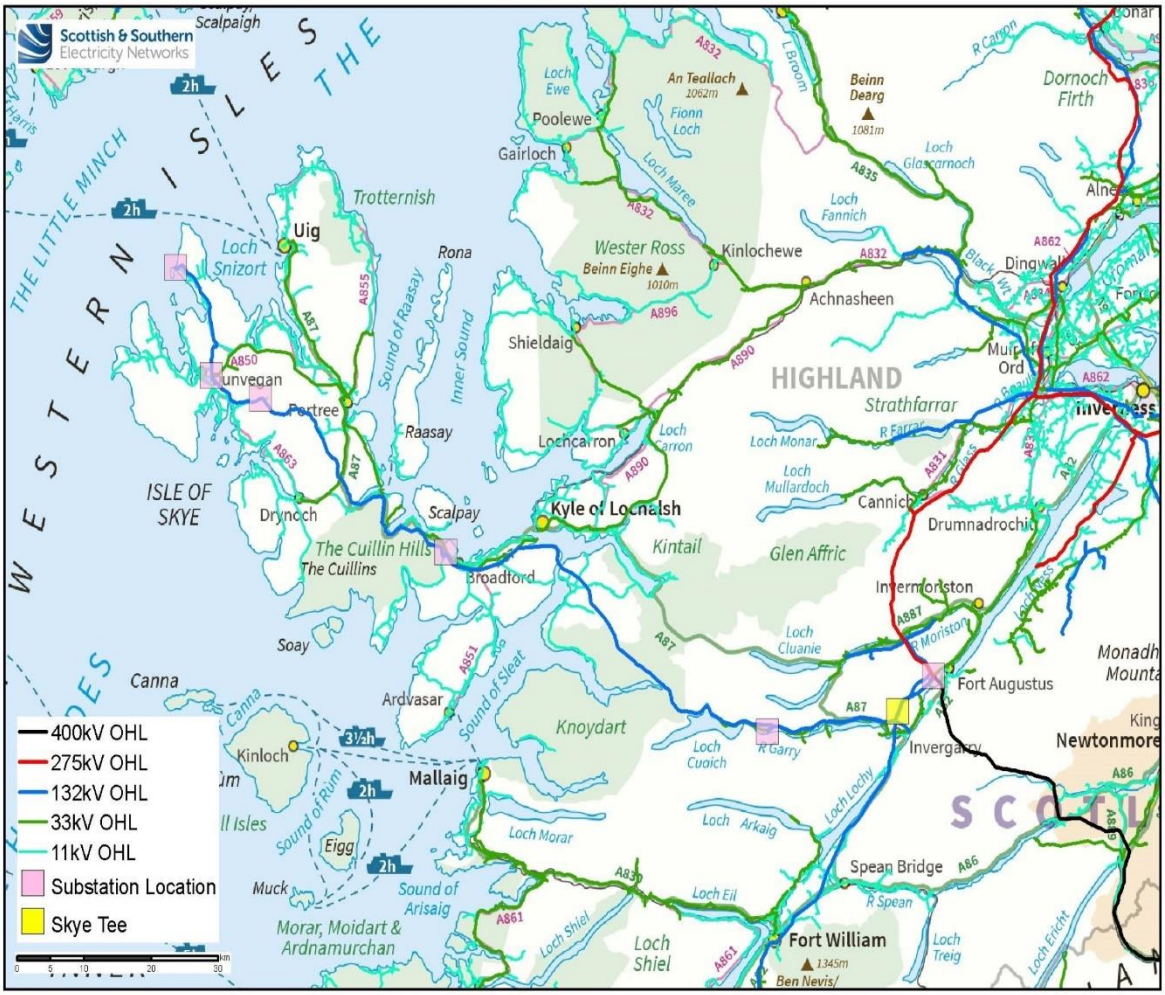
2.3.1 Over the past couple of years, several assessments have been carried out to determine the condition of the existing OHL and associated electricity infrastructure, including existing substation equipment. In addition, more applications for generation and demand connections on Skye have been received over that period. This has caused SHE Transmission to review the needs case for the project and the approach for upgrading the Skye transmission network to ensure that the best sustainable long-term solutions are identified. The need for the Skye Reinforcement Project can be summarised as follows:

- The existing OHL is reaching the end of its operational life and requires replacement in order to maintain security of supply for homes and businesses on Skye, and on the Western Isles that are currently supplied via a subsea cable from the north of Skye;
- There is a requirement to connect new renewable electricity generators on Skye which results in a requirement for an increase in capacity of the existing OHL; and
- Following commitment from both the UK and Scottish Governments to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and 2045 respectively, SHE Transmission plans to make provision for future potential generation growth scenarios by ensuring that the new OHL can accommodate predicted future growth. The planned capacity of the new OHL will allow incremental increases in generation resulting from the development of new wind farms and other renewable development in the area, enabling connection to the transmission network.

[5] SHE Transmission (March 2020). Skye Reinforcement Consultation Document: Route Options

[6] SHE Transmission 2019, Skye Overhead Line Reinforcement Strategy (Document Reference T2BP-STR-0006)

Plate 2.1: Existing Transmission Infrastructure



Meeting the Need – System Planning Pathway

2.3.2 In response to the changes in the needs case for the project, further development work and studies were undertaken to identify viable options to provide the required capacity to meet current and future requirements on this part of the transmission network. A reinforcement strategy[7] has been developed which includes consideration of potential future generation growth scenarios that cover a credible range of possible outcomes, and which takes into account the need to achieve net zero objectives.

2.4 Proposed Development Solution

2.4.1 To facilitate the known connection requirements, the main elements of the proposed development solution are summarised below:

- From Fort Augustus Substation to Broadford Substation, it is proposed to construct a new double circuit 132 kV OHL supported by steel structures. The existing Fort Augustus to Skye Tee 132 kV trident wood pole OHL, and the existing 132 kV steel lattice tower OHL between Skye Tee and Broadford would be dismantled and removed once the new OHL is operational;
- Between Broadford Substation and Edinbane Substation, the existing single circuit wood pole trident 132 kV OHL would be replaced with a new single or double circuit 132 kV OHL supported by steel structures. The existing OHL would be dismantled and removed once the new OHL is operational; and

[7] SHE Transmission 2019, Skye Overhead Line Reinforcement Strategy (Document Reference T2BP-STR-0006)

- Between Edinbane Substation and Ardmore Substation, the existing single circuit wood pole trident 132 kV OHL would be replaced with a new higher capacity 132 kV trident H wood pole OHL. During construction, the existing OHL and its replacement would run in tandem but on energisation of the new OHL, the existing OHL would be dismantled and removed.

2.4.2 Due to the installation requirements, electrical characteristics and economics of underground cable and subsea cable options, along with the requirement for additional substations, it would not be economically viable to consider such options for the entire OHL route. The OHL solution is also preferred as it provides reliable security of supply, with a lower return to service time than underground or subsea cable options in a fault scenario. For these reasons the next stage of the project development process will involve the commencement of the detailed design stage, which will focus on identifying optimal locations for the new OHL support structures and construction methodologies of the design stage. In tandem, assessment of likely significant environmental effects will be undertaken. In that context, consideration will be given to appropriate mitigation measures for predicted likely significant effects. Depending on the outcome of these assessments, localised underground cabling will be considered where such mitigation could address specific issues, subject to engineering, economic and environmental considerations.

2.4.3 Modification of the existing 33 kV distribution network in some areas is likely to be required to accommodate the new OHL, and there will be works required at the existing substations along the route at Quoich, Broadford, Edinbane and Ardmore.

2.4.4 It is anticipated that the supporting steel structures would be approximately 28 m in height. The span lengths between towers would vary depending on topography and altitude but would be approximately 250 m apart. This will be determined at the detailed design stage, albeit further micrositing may be required during the EIA process, and / or prior to construction within a defined Limit of Deviation (LOD).

2.4.5 The proposed new H pole OHL between Edinbane and Ardmore would have a nominal height of approximately 13 m (including insulators and support), depending on ground conditions. The spacing between poles would be approximately 80 m, subject to topography and ground conditions, to be determined at the design stage, albeit further micrositing may be required during the EIA process and / or prior to construction.

2.4.6 Details on the types of construction access likely to be required for this project are included in the Consultation Document[8].

2.4.7 Example OHL support structures that are being considered are shown in Plate 2.2 for illustrative purposes.

[8] SHE Transmission (March 2020). Skye Reinforcement Consultation Document: Route Options, Section 2.4 Access During Construction

Plate 2.2: Example OHL Structures

3. CONSIDERATION OF ROUTE OPTIONS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The Consultation Document[9] sets out the approach to the consideration and appraisal of route options, in line with SHE Transmission's routeing guidance[10] .

3.1.2 The following tasks were undertaken during the consideration and appraisal of route options:

- Review of the route options to determine their suitability for the revised design of the Skye Reinforcement Project, and an updated Red Amber Green (RAG) ratings appraisal carried out by the project team;
- Generation and analysis of 3D modelling software to gain a greater understanding of the terrain throughout the route. This will also be used to inform the detailed design of the new OHL;
- Internal environmental and engineering workshops; and
- Engagement meeting with statutory consultees to advise of the changes in project need, scope, and design and to seek views on the proposed approach.

3.2 Identification of Preferred Route

3.2.1 The preferred route has been selected on the basis that it is considered to provide an optimum balance of environmental, technical and economic factors. The preferred route is shown on Figures 1.0 to 1.6.

3.2.2 It is recognised that the new OHL is routed through sensitive environments with challenging terrain in places. Moving forward, confirmation of the proposed route (generally 1 km wide) and the design solutions will be informed by this and further consultation exercises, and through detailed surveys, which may identify any additional and/or currently unknown engineering, environmental or land use constraints.

9 SHE Transmission (March 2020). Skye Reinforcement Consultation Document: Route Options

10 SHE Transmission (March 2018), Procedures for Routeing Overhead Lines of 132kV and above

4. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 In accordance with SHE Transmission's routeing guidance[11] , a process of consultation on the preferred route option has been undertaken. As discussed below, this process has required to be modified due to the Covid-19 pandemic that has resulted in severe restrictions in public gatherings and face to face meetings since March 2020.

4.2 Approach to Consultation

4.2.1 A variety of methods were used to consult on the preferred route, as set out below. Given the Covid-19 pandemic, planned face to face consultation events were not possible and other methods of consultation were undertaken. This is explained below. SHE Transmission is committed to continued consultation throughout this project and further engagement, taking cognisance of Government guidance at the time in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, will be undertaken during the design stage and EIA stage of the project.

4.2.2 By letter dated 8th October 2020, the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU) issued an update on The Electricity Works (Miscellaneous Temporary Modifications) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020. A copy of the letter is included as Appendix 1. The ECU confirmed that the regulations which can into effect on 24th April 2020, and which made temporary modifications to the usual requirements placed on developers and agents to make physically available application and EIA documentation for public inspection and other actions, had been extended via an amendment to the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 and the Coronavirus (Scotland) (No.2) Act 2020 to extend the expiry date of Part 1 of both Acts from 30 September 2020 to 31 March 2021 with consequential amendment to related regulations. Whilst this removes the requirement to make physical copies of documents available to stakeholders and the public, the Scottish Ministers have asked developers, through the ECU, to assist in any way possible to facilitate public participation in the decision-making process via electronic means and provision of USB / CD copies of documents to limit reliance on the internet in areas where connectivity may be poor.

4.2.3 In addition, and critically with regard to consultation methods, the letter of 8th October 2020 comments on pre-application engagement in relation to applications under the Electricity Act 1989. Whilst recognising such engagement is not a statutory requirement for applications for electricity development consents, it is always promoted and encouraged by the Scottish Ministers in respect of applications made under the Electricity Act 1989. The Scottish Ministers therefore direct developers to follow the Scottish Government's Guidance on pre-application consultation for major planning applications, which was published on 23rd April 2020. This Guidance requires all face to face consultations to cease during the emergency period and promotes the use of innovative and inclusive virtual events / online means of engagement which enable active and meaningful engagement and exchange of information. The Guidance also requires extended consultation periods. The ECU formally state in the letter of 8th October 2020 that: *"While public events and pre-application consultation are not a statutory requirement in terms of Electricity Act applications, we consider such engagement to be important where large scale projects are proposed, and we would ask that the reasonable alternatives and suggestions for additional consultation set out in the document be adopted for projects requiring Electricity Act consent, such as would be required for major planning developments".*

4.2.4 In its approach to consultation in relation to all projects involving applications for consent under the Electricity Act, SHE Transmission has adopted this Guidance since its initial publication in April and will continue to follow this Guidance, and any updates to it, throughout the ongoing pandemic period.

[11] SHE Transmission (March 2018), Procedures for Routeing Overhead Lines of 132kV and above

4.3 Methods of Consultation

Meeting with Statutory Consultees

4.3.1 In November 2019, SHE Transmission invited statutory consultees to a meeting to provide an overview of the Skye Reinforcement Strategy and to explain its proposed approach to developing a long-term solution that would address the requirements of the transmission network serving the Isle of Skye. Attendees included representatives from the ECU of the Scottish Government, The Highland Council (THC), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (now Nature Scot), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Scottish Forestry (SF). Comments were sought from statutory consultees at the meeting ahead of identifying a preferred route option to understand stakeholders' views in identifying an appropriate development pathway.

4.3.2 Responses received from stakeholders following the November 2019 meeting are incorporated into the summary of responses (see Part 5 of this Report).

Consultation Document

4.3.3 The Skye Reinforcement Consultation Document: Route Options (March 2020) detailed the requirement for the project and the selection process for the preferred route, taking account of environmental, economic and technical factors. This was distributed to stakeholders for comment in March 2020, and made available for download from https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/skye-reinforcement/

4.3.4 Table 4.1 details the stakeholders informed of the Consultation Document although not all stakeholders responded:

Table 4-1: List of Stakeholders

Stakeholders	
Statutory Consultees	
The Highland Council	Historic Environment Scotland
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	Scottish Forestry
Nature Scot (previously Scottish Natural Heritage)	
Non-Statutory Consultees	
British Horse Society	British Telecom
Civil Aviation Authority	Defence Infrastructure
Fisheries Management Scotland	Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd
John Muir Trust	Joint Radio Company
Marine Scotland	Mountaineering Scotland
National Air Traffic Services	National Trust for Scotland
Ness District Salmon Fishery Board	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Scottish Forestry	Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society
Scottish Water	Scottish Wildlife Trust
Scottish Wild Land Group	SEERAD
Skye Fisheries Trust	Skye and Lochalsh Environment Forum
Transport Scotland	Visit Scotland
Wester Ross Fisheries Trust	The Woodland Trust Scotland
West Ross Fisheries Trust	West of Scotland Archaeology Service

Stakeholders
Councillors and Politicians
Various
Landowners
Various within the vicinity of route options.

4.3.5 It had been intended to make the Consultation Document available in hard copy at publicly accessible locations along the route. However, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, this was not possible.

4.3.6 Instead, landowners, residents and local communities were made aware of the Consultation Document through a variety of means, including emails to community councils, press advertisements and social media.

4.3.7 Feedback on the Consultation Document was initially requested by 24th April 2020. However, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, this was extended to 22nd June 2020.

4.3.8 Stakeholders were invited to provide feedback through a series of questions requesting comments on specific aspects of the project as follows:

- Have we adequately explained the changes in respect of the need for this Project?
- Are you satisfied that our approach to selecting the required electricity transmission infrastructure has been adequately explained?
- Have we adequately explained the methodology used to re-appraise the preferred route for the new OHL design?
- Are there any factors, or environmental features, that you consider may have been overlooked during the route appraisal process?
- Do you have any other comments in relation to the drivers for the project, related to the transmission infrastructure requirements, or preferred route?

These questions were asked within the Consultation Document, as well as on a feedback form provided on the project webpage.

4.4 Public Consultation Events

4.4.1 Under normal circumstances, consultation on the project would involve public engagement events held in the local area and events were planned to take place in March 2020 at seven locations along the route between Dunvegan on the Isle of Skye, and Fort Augustus. A mail drop was carried out in March 2020 to over 9,500 households within the vicinity of the different route options to provide details of the public exhibitions. However, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic these events were cancelled because of the restrictions on public gatherings and face to face meetings as explained in the Guidance referred to in paragraph 4.2.3 above.

4.4.2 To continue engagement on the project SHE Transmission developed an online consultation tool, to enable the local community and wider interested parties to experience the full exhibition from home on a computer, tablet or mobile device. The online exhibition was designed to look and feel like a real consultation in a community hall, with exhibition boards, maps, interactive videos and the opportunity to share views on the proposals (see Plate 4.1).

4.4.3 Visitors were able to engage directly with the project team, via a live chat function, where they could ask any questions they might have about the project and share their feedback on the current proposals.

4.4.4 The virtual consultation events took place via the project website https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/skye-reinforcement/ at the following times:

- 9th June 2020; 14:00 – 16:00;

- 10th June 2020; 10.00 – 12.00; and
- 11th June 2020; 18:00 – 20:00.

Plate 4.1: Virtual Event Portal

4.4.5 The virtual consultation events were advertised in the Press and Journal (Highlands & Islands) on the 5th June 2020, via local radio advertising campaigns and through social media. Local Councillors, Ward Managers and Community Councils along the route were also informed.

4.4.6 All contacts from previous events and members of the public signing up for project updates from the project webpage were emailed about the virtual consultation events.

4.4.7 The virtual consultation events provided an opportunity for members of the public to view information about the project, ask questions via a live chat function and provide feedback.

4.4.8 A feedback form was provided on the portal and all visitors were invited to complete this.

4.4.9 Visitor counts during the virtual consultation event recorded 60 visitors to the three interactive sessions, of these 54 visitors asked questions to the project team via the live chat function. Over a period of 30 days to 30th June 2020, 4,555 unique visitors to the virtual portal were recorded.

5. CONSULTATION RESPONSES FROM STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY CONSULTEES

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The following part of this report sets out the feedback received from statutory and non-statutory consultees following the consultation period (mid-November 2019 to end of June 2020), together with the response by SHE Transmission, summarising any actions to be taken where relevant. Responses are split on a section by section basis in a series of tables (Table 5.1 to 5.7), with more general comments about the project as a whole included in Table 5.8.

5.1.2 All responses received from statutory and non-statutory consultees have been reviewed by the project team and will be considered in detail during the detailed design stage of the project. It should be noted that out of the list of consultees consulted, as detailed in Table 4-1, not all responded.

5.1.3 The consultation responses received are very much welcomed and will prove valuable during the detailed design stage of the project. However, given the volume and detail of responses, it is not possible or appropriate to address each point raised by consultees in this Report on Consultation. Nevertheless, the key issues identified have been summarised in the following tables.

5.1.4 Furthermore, many of the comments received from statutory and non-statutory consultees (as well as the local community, as detailed in Part 6 of this report), cannot be fully addressed until the work currently being undertaken as part of the next design stage of the project has been further advanced. Where this is the case, this is referred to in the tables below.

5.1.5 Additional targeted consultation will be undertaken as the design progresses over the next 6 months to provide updates on the project during this detailed design stage. In addition, a consultation document will be published in the summer of 2021 to seek further feedback on the design solution prior to finalising the proposed design and commencing the EIA and consenting stage.

Table 5.1: Feedback specific to Section 0 (Ardmore to Edinbane)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
Nature Scot (NS)	Routes 0D (Preferred) and 0E between Dunvegan substation and Edinbane substation has the potential to impact on An Cleireach SSSI notified for its geological interests. NS agree with the opinion stated in the Consultation Document that with careful siting it should be possible to avoid any adverse effects on the interests of this site.	These comments are welcomed and further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the design stage in order to avoid adverse effects on the interests of this site. This will include input by the project geologist / hydrologist on potential alignment options in this area with respect to this SSSI.
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	Concerns raised about the preferred route option (0A) is this section, and in particular the potential to impact on a number of scheduled monuments, including: • Trumpan Church, Burial Ground and Priest's Stone, Hallin (SM 949);	The concerns raised are acknowledged and the cultural heritage sensitivities within this section will be further informed by a detailed desk-based analysis and targeted site walkovers by the project archaeological team. This work will be used during the design stage to consider potential impacts on the historic environment and inform

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
	• Dun Hallin, Broch, Hallin (SM 916); and • Annait, Monastic Settlement on West Bank of Bay River (SM 942). Further work to evaluate and mitigate the potential impacts on the settings of these monuments will be required in order to address concerns by HES. This should include the production of visualisations to illustrate potential impact, and further consultation prior to an application being made.	alignment options and appropriate mitigation. Visualisations will be produced to illustrate potential impacts. Ongoing consultation with HES will be maintained as the project progresses through the detailed design stage, including EIA scoping and will include consultation on viewpoint selection.
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	Between Ardmore and Dunvegan, provided the new OHL is as close as possible to the existing OHL along its entire length (i.e. below the open hill on the spine of the Waternish peninsula, then due south alongside the road to the substation at Dunvegan), this should avoid new conflicts with wildlife arising and will have a minimal impact on deep peat compared to other route options. Similarly, between Dunvegan and Edinbane, following the existing route would skirt around the edge of the moorland and follows a route that is mostly close to the road or croft land where there is a regular level of human activity and disturbance at present. This zone is on lower ground and less well used by species of high conservation value than the alternative route options. RSPB concurs with the assessment that disturbance and displacement effects of construction could be mitigated if timed to avoid the breeding season. Note potential ornithological constraints of preferred route (Option 0A and OD) including corncrake, golden plover, hen harrier and white-tailed eagle. Serious concerns noted regarding other route options and potential for impact on Schedule 1 and Annex 1 Species.	Comments are welcomed and agreement with preferred route in this section is noted. Further work to consider potential impact on ornithological interests and peatlands will continue throughout the design and EIA stages of the project to determine potential for likely significant effects and inform appropriate mitigation measures.

Section 0 (Ardmore to Edinbane) - Summary Overview of Responses / Outcomes

5.1.6 **In summary, the responses received from statutory and non-statutory consultees in relation to this Section of the new OHL provide general support for the preferred route identified, albeit environmental**

sensitivities are highlighted, particularly in relation to designated cultural heritage sites and assets, and ornithological constraints. These, and other environmental constraints, will be considered further by the project team during the next design stage of the project. The nature of the consultation responses are such that it is considered appropriate to adopt the preferred route through Section 0 as part of the proposed route.

Table 5.2: Feedback specific to Section 1 (Edinbane to Sligachan)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
The Highland Council (THC)	During North Planning Applications Committee webcast 9th June 2020 it was noted that the OHL through this area (and Section 2, below) is routed through a scenic area and steel support structures could appear obstructive. Notes potential for significant impacts on environmentally and culturally designated sites (e.g. Dunvegan Castle), amongst other constraints.	These comments are noted, and it is acknowledged that this project is routed through a sensitive landscape and environment. Further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the next detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and design solution. This will include input by the project landscape architect and archaeologist. Dialogue with THC will be maintained through this process.
Nature Scot (NS)	Route Option 1A (Preferred) would be subject to relatively few natural heritage constraints and the potential for significant adverse landscape, visual and ecological impacts appear to be limited. The preferred route is supported. Note also the potential for the Preferred Route to link with Route Option 2B, minimising impacts at Sligachan and on the Cuillin Hills National Scenic Area (NSA).	These comments are welcomed, and agreement from NS in relation to the preferred route in this Section is noted. Further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and design solution through this sensitive landscape and environment (see also Table 5.3 for route options within Section 2). This will include input by the project landscape architect and ecologist. Dialogue with NS will be maintained through this process.
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	Route Option 1A (Preferred) as well as Route Options 1B and 1C have the potential to impact on the setting of Dun Arkaig broch Scheduled Monument (SM 13662). Route Option 1B has the potential for significant impact on the setting of a number of Scheduled Monuments clustered around Bracadale.	This comment is acknowledged and potential impacts on the setting of Dun Arkaig broch SM will be considered during the detailed design stage of the project. The potential for setting impacts on designated sites as a result of Route Option 1B is described in the Consultation Document and is one of the contributing factors in the selection of the preferred route (Route Option 1A).
Scottish Forestry (SF)	Agreement on the preferred route (Option 1A) and notes that new OHL should use the existing operational corridor where possible to minimise woodland removal.	This comment is acknowledged, and agreement with preferred route in this Section is noted. Potential impacts on woodland will seek to be minimised at the

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
		detailed design stage and use of existing operational corridors will be explored.
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	The area of central Skye covered by Section 1 (relevant to all route options) is both intensively and extensively used by both golden and white-tailed eagles, whilst hen harrier breed in close proximity to the western end (towards Edinbane). All route options would involve new development on Class 1 peatlands along significant stretches of their length, affecting blanket bog, pools, heathland and heather moorland. Specifically, in relation to the preferred route (Option 1A), RSPB note that the change from wood poles to steel structures will make a significant change to the impact of this OHL route, both in terms of the habitats and species that will be affected, including increased collision risk for Schedule 1, Annex 1 and SPA species. RSPB agree with the red RAG rating for Route Options 1B and 1C but strongly suggest the amber rating for Route Option 1A should also be red given the substantial changes involved and the number and diversity of nationally and internationally protected species present. RSPB are of the view that this level of risk to so many Schedule 1, Annex 1 and SPA species can only be successfully mitigated by routeing the OHL underground for significant sections of this route option. The eastern spur at the south end of this route would significantly impact on white-tailed eagles roosting in Glen Varigill forest and should be avoided if possible. Serious concerns noted regarding other route options and potential for impact on Schedule 1, Annex 1 and SPA Species.	Detailed comments are welcomed, and concerns in relation to Schedule 1, Annex 1 and SPA species through this Section, as well as Class 1 peatlands, are acknowledged. During the detailed design stage, the alignment will be informed by discussions with the project ornithologist, drawing on known constraints and recent bird survey data collected between 2018 and 2019 to ensure potential impacts on ornithological interests are minimised, and appropriate mitigation measures are determined. Impacts in relation to Class 1 peatlands will also be considered further based on site survey work. In response to RSPB's suggestion to increase the RAG rating for Route Option 1A from amber to red, whilst it is acknowledged that Schedule 1, Annex 1 and SPA species breed and forage in this area, the decision to apply an amber RAG rating to this route option has been informed by consideration of bird survey data collected from vantage points and walkthrough surveys within this area during 2018 and 2019. Consideration has also been given to the likely effectiveness of mitigation measures in minimising potential effects. This route option also follows an existing OHL, thereby presenting fewer 'novel' impacts of a new OHL compared to other route options in this Section, albeit with structures at a greater height. The route also passes through a shorter length of the Cuillin Hills SPA in comparison to other route options. Nevertheless, further consideration of alignment options, design solutions and appropriate mitigation in relation to sensitive bird species will be undertaken during the detailed design stage, with input from the project ornithologist.

Section 1 (Edinbane to Sligachan) - Summary Overview of Responses / Outcomes

5.1.7 **In summary, from the consultation responses received from statutory and non-statutory consultees in relation to this Section of the new OHL, support for the preferred route was provided by NS and SF.**

Potential constraints and environmental sensitivities are highlighted by consultees and these have been noted, particularly in relation to designated cultural heritage sites and assets, ornithological constraints, Class 1 peatlands and the potential for landscape and visual effects. These, and other environmental constraints, will be considered further by the project team during the detailed design stage of the project. The nature of the consultation responses are such that it is considered appropriate to adopt the preferred route through Section 1 as part of the proposed route.

Table 5.3: Feedback specific to Section 2 (Sligachan to Broadford)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
The Highland Council (THC)	During North Planning Applications Committee webcast 9th June 2020 it was noted that the new OHL through this area (and Section 1, above) is routed through a scenic area and steel support structures could appear obstructive. Notes potential for likely significant effects on the Cullin Hills NSA, the Cullins WLA and the Cullins SPA, as well as communities (e.g. Broadford), amongst other constraints.	These comments are noted, and it is acknowledged that this project is routed through a sensitive landscape and environment, which is recognised by the number of designated sites and areas of protected landscapes highlighted by THC. Further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and design solution. This will include detailed input by the project landscape architect, ecologist and ornithologist (and other specialists where needed), considering the potential to reduce likely significant adverse effects through different design solutions that may be available, together with other opportunities for mitigation. Visualisations will be produced from key locations to demonstrate the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed OHL. Dialogue with THC will be maintained through this process, including scoping at the EIA stage.
Nature Scot (NS)	Passes through greatest length of the Cuillins SPA (compared with Route Option 2B), albeit potential risk to golden eagle anticipated to be low due to following A87 and low ground at the edge of the SPA. Potential also for significant impacts on the special qualities of the Cuillin Hills NSA. Impacts will depend on routeing, choice of technology and lasting damage to habitats. Impacts will be better understood once technology options explored and assessed as part of the EIA work. The alternative route would result in the removal of the existing OHL from the NSA and provides an opportunity to reduce impacts on the NSA. Recommend that	As acknowledged and set out in the Consultation Document, further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable route, alignment and/or alternative design solution through this sensitive landscape and environment, which could result in a review of the preferred route for Section 2. Both Route Options 2A and 2B and/or variations of these options are therefore subject to on-going consideration during the detailed design stage, in response to further assessment and consultation. This will include detailed input by the project landscape architect, ecologist and ornithologist (and other specialists where

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
	further consideration be given to Route Option 2B. Due to potential impacts on the NSA, NS may object to an OHL if proposed on Route Option 2A.	needed), considering the potential to reduce likely significant adverse effects through different design solutions that may be available, together with other opportunities for mitigation. Visualisations will be produced from key locations to demonstrate the proposals. Dialogue with NS will be maintained through this process, including scoping at the EIA stage.
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	The preferred route (Option 2A) has the potential for direct and indirect impacts on the Old Corry Scheduled Monument (SM 13673). Indirect impacts are also of relevance to Route Option 3A in Section 3 (see Table 5.4 below). Direct impacts should be avoided but indirect impacts will need to be carefully assessed and mitigated appropriately during the design process. The intervening forest should not be relied upon to provide screening as it will be subject to felling. Wireframes should be prepared to demonstrate impacts and help inform mitigation.	This comment is acknowledged and potential impacts on the setting of the Old Corry SM will be considered during the detailed design stage of the project. Wirelines will be prepared to assist in demonstrating potential impacts, and dialogue with HES will be maintained through the detailed design, including scoping for the EIA.
Scottish Forestry (SF)	Agreement on the preferred route (Option 2A) and notes that the new OHL should use the existing operational corridor where possible to minimise woodland removal.	This comment is acknowledged, and support for the preferred route is noted. Potential impacts on woodland will seek to be minimised at the detailed design stage and use of existing operational corridors will be considered.
John Muir Trust (JMT) via engagement by representative at virtual consultation event on 23 April 2020	Support the preferred route (Option 2A) given it follows the route of the existing OHL, which will concentrate activity in an area that people are used to seeing a transmission line, and the backdrop of the Cuillin Hills should avoid sky lining. Nevertheless, concerned that the upgrade of the line from wood pole to a steel support structure will result in a significant intrusion into the landscape and affect the ability of people to experience its wild qualities. Consideration should be given at the next design stage of how this landscape can accommodate the steel support structures required, and what screening and enhancement measures could be put in place through the project e.g. native woodland planting. Supports the commitment by SHE Transmission in the	These comments are acknowledged, and qualified support for the preferred route is noted. Further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and/or other design solution through this sensitive landscape and environment. This will include detailed input by the project landscape architect, considering the potential to reduce likely significant adverse effects through different design solutions that may be available, together with other opportunities for mitigation. Visualisations will be produced from key locations to demonstrate the likely landscape and visual impacts of the proposals during detailed design and as part of the EIA. Dialogue with JMT will be

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
	Consultation Document to undertake further detailed environmental and engineering studies to identify an acceptable alignment and design solution through this sensitive landscape. Undergrounding in short sections should be considered in this area.	maintained through the detailed design phase.
Mountain-eering Scotland (MS)	Critical areas of concern for MS are the National Scenic Areas and Wild Land Areas in Section 2, 4 and in the areas of wilder qualities in Section 5. Concern lies with the effect of steel lattice towers, creation of stone tracks, removal of redundant infrastructure and reinstatement.	These comments are acknowledged, particularly in relation to the NSA and WLA. Further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and design solution through this sensitive landscape and environment, giving due consideration to the impact of ancillary works such as access and removal of existing structures, as well as reinstatement and enhancement opportunities.
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	Notes that the preferred route (Option 2A) runs within the margins of the Cuillins SPA and RSPB have concerns with some sections of this route. However, large parts of this route coincide with the disturbance corridor along the main A87 road and are therefore less well used by eagles. The key areas of concern are those areas on higher ground where regular eagle flight lines cross such as the ridge at Druim nan Cleochd. Mitigation, including maintaining proximity to the existing disturbance corridor and micro-siting towers within the landscape to reduce prominence along flight lines, would be critical in reducing impacts. The low ground immediately adjacent to the head of Loch Ainort and Loch Sligachan should be avoided to reduce the risk of collision for feeding waders, waterfowl and geese and for protected raptor species hunting in these areas. Sensitive timing of construction activity to avoid disturbance, displacement and collision will be essential for a suite of protected species. Concerns noted regarding Route Option 2B. RSPB of the opinion that Route Option 2B would likely present a higher collision risk	Detailed comments are welcomed. These comments and the information provided by RSPB will be considered during the detailed design stage of the project to seek to minimise potential impacts on protected bird species, in combination with other environmental considerations, whilst also informing appropriate mitigation measures.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
	for a range of seabirds, water birds and sea eagles in comparison to upgrading the existing Section, provided the upgraded route runs close to the existing disturbance corridor.	

Section 2 (Sligachan to Broadford) - Summary Overview of Responses / Outcomes

5.1.8 **The comments received from statutory and non-statutory consultees highlight a number of the environmental sensitivities in this Section. Qualified support for the preferred route is provided by SF, JMT and RSPB, albeit the landscape, visual and ornithological sensitivities and potential for significant effects is noted from their consultation responses. In contrast, NS caution that they may object to Route Option 2A because of potential likely significant effects on designated sites and that further consideration to Route Option 2B should be given. It is as a result of the sensitive nature of this Section that it was noted in the Consultation Document that further environmental and engineering survey work will be undertaken in order to find an acceptable alignment and/or other design solution through this Section, which may result in a review of the preferred route. This work is currently being undertaken and will be reported on during the next design stage. As such, no decision on a proposed route through this section will be made at this stage.**

Table 5.4: Feedback specific to Section 3 (Broadford to Kylerhea)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
The Highland Council (THC)	Notes community concerns raised with preferred route (Option 3A / 3B via Glen Arroch).	Reference to concerns raised by the community are noted and are discussed further in Part 6 of this report. Further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and/or alternative design solution through this sensitive landscape and environment, which could result in a review of the preferred route for Section 3. Engagement with THC and the local community will continue throughout the design and EIA stages of the project. Visualisations will be produced from key locations to demonstrate the landscape and visual impacts associated with the proposals.
Nature Scot (NS)	Based on the current detail, NS are of the view that the preferred route (Option 3A / 3B) is the least-worst option. However, likely significant effects on the features of the Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills SAC / SSSI are still probable which could result in an adverse impact on site integrity. This could lead to an objection from NS.	These comments are acknowledged, and preference for Route Option 3A / 3B (least-worst option) is noted. The sensitivities of this section are recognised, not least through the Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills SAC / SSSI designations and the potential for adverse impact on site integrity.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
	Recommend keeping all options open at this stage. An experienced ecologist will be required to assess options. Woodland restoration is another key point. The removal of the old line would enable the woodland wayleave to recover, which is potentially a net benefit.	Further environmental and engineering survey work is required to fully understand route, alignment and/or alternative design solution options before a proposed route can be identified. On that basis, Route Options 3A and 3B remain under consideration at this stage. An experienced ecologist forms part of the project team, and results from Phase 1 / NVC habitat surveys will be used to inform the route selection process, consideration of potential alignment and/or alternative design solutions, in combination with other environmental considerations. Dialogue with NS will be maintained through the detailed design and EIA stages of the project.
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	As noted above in Table 5.3 above, HES has concerns regarding the potential for indirect impacts on the Old Corry Scheduled Monument (SM 13673) that will need to be carefully assessed and mitigated appropriately during the design process. The intervening forest should not be relied upon to provide screening as it will be subject to felling. Wireframes should be prepared to demonstrate impacts and help inform mitigation. Three additional SMs should be included in future assessments (Broadford Bay chambered cairn; SM 13724, Ashaig remains of church and burial ground; SM 13720, and Ashaig, burnt mound; SM 13721), albeit significant adverse impacts on their setting are not anticipated.	Potential indirect impacts on this SM will be considered at the detailed design stage by the project archaeologist to seek to find an acceptable alignment. Wirelines will be prepared to assist in demonstrating potential impacts. Dialogue with HES will be maintained through the detailed design and EIA stages of the project. Additional SMs are noted and will be included in future assessments.
Scottish Forestry (SF)	Welcomes the proposal to re-direct the OHL from the existing Kyle Rhea crossing through Glen Arroch and to Broadford. Such an approach would avoid sensitive woodlands of SAC and will reduce area of permanent woodland removal associated with the project.	This comment is acknowledged, and support for the preferred route is noted. Further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and/or alternative design solution through this sensitive landscape and environment. Detailed consideration will be given to minimising potential impacts on woodland during the next design stage.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
John Muir Trust (JMT) via engagement by representative at virtual consultation event on 23 April 2020	Recognises sensitivity through the SAC / SSSI and suggests support from NS will be important in the further detailed environmental survey work that is needed for this Section, and, JMT highlights the potential for impacts on wildness qualities.	Comments are acknowledged and as suggested by JMT, consultation with NS will be maintained throughout the next detailed design and EIA stages of the project.
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	Preference is Route Option 3A, substantial concerns with all other route options (apart from the short alternative of Route Option 3C). In relation to the preferred route set out in the Consultation Document (Route Option 3B), RSPB have substantial concerns. This would be a new OHL route in an undeveloped glen with no infrastructure currently and a very narrow, seasonally restricted and low-level disturbance corridor at present. This raises concerns for disturbance, displacement and collision risk for several high priority species (including golden eagles and sea eagles, and their territories). Also knock on effect and serious impact on the wildlife experience enjoyed by over 5,000 visitors annually at the eagle hide visitor attraction operated by RSPB at Kylerhea. Pine marten presence noted in woodlands at Kylerhea. Strongly disagree with the RAG ratings assigned to ornithology and recreation with regard to this route. In contrast, preference for Route Option 3A given that the new OHL will replace an existing steel lattice tower along this route. The species using this area are assumed to have habituated to the presence of the existing OHL and provided the replacement OHL is located as close to this existing route as possible this would minimise concerns regarding the introduction of new collision risks. Substantial concerns noted regarding Options 3D and 3E, particularly in relation to golden eagle.	These comments are acknowledged, and preference for Route Option 3A / substantial concerns for Route Option 3B, 3D and 3E are noted. Further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and/or other design solution through this sensitive landscape and environment, which could result in a review of the preferred route option for Section 3. This will include input by the project ornithologist and the consideration of recent survey data and known constraints in this area. For these reasons, Route Options 3A and 3B remain under consideration at this stage. In relation to the preference by RSPB for Route Option 3A, it is worth noting that it is unlikely that the new OHL could be located within close proximity to the existing OHL. This is in part due to terrain, topography and the technical challenges of constructing a new OHL in this location, but also the significant impact this would have on the woodland habitats which are primary qualifying features of the Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills SAC. As a result, it is more likely that if a new OHL was constructed within this route option, it may be located further up the hillside to minimise impacts on the woodland resource. In relation to RSPB's comments on the RAG ratings for Route Option 3B for ornithology; whilst it is acknowledged that golden eagle and white tailed eagle are present in the area, data collected from vantage points and walkthrough surveys of this route option during 2018 and 2019

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
		noted that flight activity of golden eagle was generally at higher elevations than this lower level route, and white tailed eagles were mainly active over the coast suggesting careful routeing could lower risk. Nevertheless, further consideration of alignment options, alternative design solutions and appropriate mitigation in relation to sensitive bird species will be undertaken during the detailed design stage, with input from the project ornithologist. In relation to RSPB's comments on the RAG ratings for recreation; the potential visual effects of the route are acknowledged and reflected in the red RAG rating for visual amenity, however it is not considered that the route option would compromise recreational use of this area. However, it is recognised that this is a key area of concern for RSPB and others (see Community responses in Part 6 of this report) and will be given due consideration in the continuing review of route, alignment and design solutions through this Section. Dialogue with RSPB will be maintained throughout the next detailed design and EIA stages of the project.
British Telecom (BT)	Project not likely to cause interference with respect to electromagnetic compatibility and related problems to BT point to point microwave radio links. However, there are two existing core radio links that pass directly over options within this Section to the north of Glen Arroch.	This comment is noted and further engagement with BT will be undertaken throughout the process to ensure due consideration is given to existing radio links.

Section 3 (Broadford to Kylerhea) - Summary Overview of Responses / Outcomes

5.1.9 **It is recognised that this is an environmentally sensitive Section, and this is highlighted in the responses received from statutory and non-statutory consultees, and the key issues raised. It is also noteworthy that there are contrasting views expressed by consultees on the preferred route. For example, NS (least worst option) and SF state a preference for Route Option 3A / 3B, but this is not shared by RSPB or the bulk of local Community responses (see Table 6.4) who state a strong preference for Route Option 3A following the existing OHL. It is as a result of the sensitive nature of this Section that it was noted in the Consultation Document that further environmental and engineering survey work will be undertaken in order to find an acceptable alignment and/or other design solution through this section, which may result in a review of the preferred route. This work is currently being**

undertaken and will be reported on at the next design stage. Consequently, no decision on a proposed route through this section will be made at this stage.

Table 5.5: Feedback specific to Section 4 (Kylerhea to Quoich)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
Nature Scot (NS)	The preferred route crosses through the Knoydart NSA and WLA 18 (Kinlochhourn – Knoydart – Morar). The extent and nature of impacts on both of these designated landscapes will be better understood when the technical solutions are fully considered within the LVIA for the preferred route. Assessment should be undertaken in line with NS assessment guidance for NSAs and WLAs. Due to the potential impact on the NSA and WLA, NS may object to an OHL through this Section.	This comment is acknowledged, and the sensitive landscape through which this route passes is recognised. The potential for NS to object is noted. Further environmental and engineering studies, including detailed input by the project landscape architect, will be undertaken at the detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and/or other design solution through this sensitive landscape and environment, together with appropriate mitigation. Visualisations will be produced from key locations to demonstrate the proposals. Dialogue with NS will be maintained throughout the next detailed design and EIA stages of the project.
The Highland Council (THC)	Residents in Upper Glen Garry without mains electricity supply. Does this project present an opportunity for community benefit? Consideration of landslip risk given recent examples of landslips in this area, and importance of the road to residents at Kinlochhourn.	Opportunities for connection to the mains electricity supply is not within the remit of this transmission project. This matter would fall under the licence obligations of Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution, which is a separate regulated business from SHE Transmission. Consideration of landslip risk will form part of environmental and technical studies during the detailed design and EIA stages of the project.
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	Content that the preferred route (Option 4A) is likely to have very little impact on SMs and their settings. Highlights national interests and sensitivity of Route Option 4B being routed through historic battlefield site at Glen Shiel (amongst other designated assets).	This comment is noted and the preferred route identified through this Section is Route Option 4A, in part due to the cultural heritage sensitivities of Route Option 4B.
Scottish Forestry (SF)	Agreement on the preferred route (Option 4A) and notes that new OHL should use the existing operational corridor where possible to minimise woodland removal.	This comment is acknowledged. Potential impacts on woodland will seek to be minimised at the detailed design stage and use of existing operational corridors will be considered.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
John Muir Trust (JMT) via engagement by representative at virtual consultation event on 23 April 2020	Sensitive tree planting could be appropriate mitigation for this Section where areas of native woodland could be lost, if removal of woodland could not be avoided. The preferred route (Option 4A) raises concerns due to the impact on the remote, rugged and wild qualities of the landscape, WLA and Knoydart NSA. Undergrounding in short sections should be considered in this area.	This comment is acknowledged, and the remote, rugged and wild qualities of this landscape highlighted by JMT are recognised. Further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and/or other design solution through this sensitive landscape and environment, which will include consideration of appropriate mitigation.
Mountain-eering Scotland (MS)	Critical areas of National Scenic Areas and Wild Land Areas are in Section 2, 4 and in the areas of wilder qualities within Section 5. Concern lies with the effect of steel lattice towers, creation of stone tracks, removal of redundant infrastructure and reinstatement.	This comment is acknowledged. Further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and/or other design solution through this sensitive landscape and environment, together with appropriate mitigation.
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	Preference for Route Option 4A, following the existing OHL. Sensitive timing of construction activity, including the delivery of materials on site, will be crucial in minimising disturbance and displacement in the immediate to medium term for a range of protected species, including golden eagle. Since upgrading of this Section of the route will effectively involve the replacement of existing infrastructure rather than a new development, the wildlife present has habituated to the presence of an OHL. Provided the replacement infrastructure remains on low ground as close to the existing infrastructure as is possible, the impacts, including collision risk for protected species will be minimised. Serious concerns noted for Route Option 4B (Glen Shiel). While there are existing roads along part of this route, the infrastructure involved would form a new development with significant impacts in undeveloped areas where disturbance is limited to narrow linear pedestrian and vehicular routes. Disturbance, displacement and a high risk of collision likely for Schedule 1 and Annex 1 species, including golden eagle.	Comments and agreement with preferred route is noted, as too are concerns noted with Route Options 4B and 4C. Further work and input by the project ornithologist to consider potential impacts on ornithological interests will continue throughout the design and EIA stages of the project and will inform appropriate mitigation measures.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
	Moderate concerns also noted for Route Option 4C, and particularly the potential for this option to present a barrier for a range of resident, passage migrant and breeding migrant species.	

Section 4 (Kylerhea to Quoich) - Summary Overview of Responses / Outcomes

5.1.10 **It is recognised that this is also a sensitive section and this is highlighted in the responses received from statutory and non-statutory consultees, and through the key issues raised. There appears to be general support for the preferred route put forward, albeit consultees advise caution given the sensitive landscape the new OHL would be routed through, and NS advise they may object once a fuller understanding of impacts is known. Further environmental and engineering survey work will be undertaken in order to find an acceptable alignment and/or design solution through this Section. This work is currently being undertaken and will be reported on during the next design stage. However, the nature of the consultation responses are such that it is considered appropriate to adopt the preferred route through Section 4 as part of the proposed route.**

Table 5.6: Feedback specific to Section 5 (Quoich to Invergarry)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
The Highland Council (THC)	Consideration of landslip risk given recent examples of landslips in this area, and importance of the road to residents at Kinlochhourn.	Consideration of landslip risk will form part of environmental and technical studies that will be carried out as part of the more detailed design and the EIA stages of the project.
Nature Scot (NS)	All route options pass close to the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA and the preferred route, following the existing OHL, presents the lowest risk of a significant increased impact on the SPA qualifying features. There are no major landscape sensitivities along any of the routes through this Section.	These comments are acknowledged, and the preferred route follows the existing OHL in this Section. Further work to consider potential impacts on the qualifying features of the SPA will continue throughout the design and EIA stages of the project, so as to mitigate effectively identified potential adverse effects. This will include input by the project ornithologist and the consideration of recent survey data and known constraints in this area. Ongoing consultation with NS will be maintained throughout these stages.
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	No particular concerns stated with the preferred route (Route Option 5A). Potential direct impacts on two SMs for Route Option 5C. If this option is to be taken forward further assessment would be required.	The preferred route through this Section remains Route Option 5A. Whilst cultural heritage sensitivities may be less in this Section in comparison with others, further desktop and targeted site surveys will be undertaken during the detailed design and EIA stages of the project to minimise potential impacts.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
Scottish Forestry (SF)	Agreement on the preferred route (Option 5A) and notes that new OHL should use the existing operational corridor where possible to minimise woodland removal.	This comment is acknowledged. Potential impacts on woodland will seek to be minimised at the detailed design stage and use of existing operational corridors will be considered.
Mountain-eering Scotland (MS)	Critical areas of National Scenic Areas and Wild Land Areas are in Section 2, 4 and in the wilder qualities of Section 5. Concern lies with the effect of steel lattice towers, creation of stone tracks, removal of redundant infrastructure and reinstatement.	This comment is acknowledged. Further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and design solution through this sensitive landscape and environment, together with effective mitigation.
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	Substantial concerns with the preferred route (Option 5A), but if the critical section between Loch Garry and Loch Loyne can be undergrounded this option is preferred. While normally the replacement of existing OHLs is of less concern than a new route since the species using the area are presumed to have habituated to this long-established hazard, RSPB does have concerns that lateral displacement or changes in altitude of the lines and steel towers could have implications for the SPA protected species commuting between different lochs within the SPA and regularly crossing the existing OHL in its current position. Collision risk is therefore a concern for SPA protected species and other protected species. RSPB therefore considers that undergrounding should be considered between Loch Garry and Loch Loyne. Sensitive timing of construction operations will be essential to avoid disturbance. RSPB disagrees with the amber RAG rating and feel this should be elevated to red given the concerns and degree of consideration / mitigation required for the SPA designated species in particular. Substantial concerns noted for Options 5D and 5E, and serious concerns noted for Options 5B, 5C and 5F.	Various issues are raised in this consultation response from RSPB on the preferred route (and other routes), and suggestions for undergrounding are noted. Further work to consider potential impact on ornithological interests will continue throughout the alignment and EIA stages of the project to assess potential likely significant effects and inform the design of appropriate mitigation measures. This will include input by the project ornithologist and the consideration of recent survey data and known constraints in this area. In response to RSPB's disagreement with the RAG rating for Route Option 5A, whilst it is acknowledged that SPA protected species may fly between the composite lochs of the SPA and could therefore be vulnerable to collision, following existing OHLs will minimise any 'novel' impacts. Furthermore, following review and analysis of bird survey data collected between 2016 and 2018 in this area, it has been determined that the potential for collision risk and disturbance is low, albeit mitigation measures will need to be considered. As a result, an amber RAG rating has been applied. Further consideration of alignment options, design solutions and appropriate mitigation in relation to sensitive bird species will be undertaken during the detailed design stage, with input from the project ornithologist.

Section 5 (Quoich to Invergarry) - Summary Overview of Responses / Outcomes

5.1.11 **In summary, the responses received from statutory and non-statutory consultees in relation to this Section of the proposed new OHL provide general support for the preferred route identified, albeit environmental sensitivities are highlighted, particularly in relation to ornithological designations and constraints. These, and other environmental constraints, will be considered further by the project team during the detailed design stage of the project. The nature of the consultation responses are such that it is considered appropriate to adopt the preferred route through Section 5 as part of the proposed route.**

Table 5.7: Feedback specific to Section 6 (Invergarry to Fort Augustus)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
The Highland Council (THC)	Consideration of wirescape around Aucherawe required, and opportunities for rationalisation of existing OHLs.	Consideration will be given to the cumulative impact of wirescape and opportunities to provide rationalisation will be considered provided that network security or supply is not negatively impacted, and it can be established that there are recognised landscape and visual benefits provided by such mitigation.
Nature Scot (NS)	For Annex 1 protected bird species known to be present in this area, impacts can be avoided and/or minimised by mitigation around pre-construction surveys, working buffers and timing of works.	This comment is noted and mitigation measures for the construction stage will be outlined in the EIA Report, drawing upon recent experience of working in this area.
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	Potential for impact on Torr Dhuin SM (SM 794) and any new OHL through this area would need to take cognisance of setting impacts from this site. Particular care should be taken to ensure that the infrastructure is not skylined in inward views towards the fort from the valley floor. Visualisations should be produced showing both outward and inward views associated with the monument. Concerns regarding Route Option 6C and crossing the Caledonian Canal, comprising three scheduled sections.	Comments in relation to Torr Dhuin SM are noted. Further work to consider potential impacts on the historic environment will continue throughout the design and EIA stages of the project, so as to mitigate adverse effects on designated assets. This will include desk-based analysis and targeted site walkovers by the project archaeologist. Visualisations will be produced to illustrate potential impacts on Torr Dhuin SM. Ongoing consultation with HES will be maintained throughout the detailed design and EIA stages.
Scottish Forestry (SF)	Would like the line to avoid the afforested area in Section 6 where possible.	This comment is acknowledged. Potential impacts on woodland and commercial forestry will be considered and sought to be minimised at the detailed design stage, where practicable.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	Agree with preferred route (Option 6A / 6C), albeit with some concerns that could be mitigated. At its southern end this route runs parallel and within 500m of Loch Lundie which is part of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA designated for its black-throated diver and common scoter. The existing route runs through or adjacent to commercial forest for much of its length. Maintaining this association with forest habitat will reduce the collision risk for open ground species. Positioning of the new OHL immediately adjacent on the lower side of the existing wayleave would be crucial in avoiding the threat of introducing new collision risk, particularly for black-throated divers breeding at Loch Lundie and black grouse breeding on the open ground and using the birch woodland around Loch Lundie. Sensitive timing of all construction and maintenance activities would be necessary to avoid disturbance to protected breeding species, including black-throated divers within the SPA. Line marking, especially in the proximity of lek sites would be required to reduce collision risk. Concerns noted for other route options.	Comments and agreement with preferred route is noted. Further work to consider potential impact on ornithological interests will continue throughout the design and EIA stages of the project to determine potential for impact and inform appropriate mitigation measures. This will include input by the project ornithologist and the consideration of recent survey data and known constraints in this area.

Section 6 (Invergarry to Fort Augustus) - Summary Overview of Responses / Outcomes

5.1.12 **In summary, the responses received from statutory and non-statutory consultees in relation to this Section of the proposed new OHL provide general support for the preferred route identified. Albeit that environmental sensitivities are highlighted, particularly in relation to wirescape impacts at Auchterawe, ornithological designations and constraints, cultural heritage sites and forestry. These, and other environmental constraints, will be considered further by the project team during the detailed design stage of the project. The nature of the consultation responses are such that it is considered appropriate to adopt the preferred route through Section 6 as part of the proposed route.**

Table 5.8: General Feedback

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
The Highland Council (THC)	Across all route options, potential for impact on designated landscapes and sites designated for nature conservation, settlements, cultural heritage, priority peatlands, conservation areas and ancient woodland, amongst other constraints. Key to the design approach will be to balance the potential environmental impacts and ensuring appropriate mitigation. Transport Planning will be a key issue, especially on smaller roads. Early consideration should be given to potential road upgrade requirements, and impact on residents. SHE Transmission should speak to Transport Planning and Local Members when agreeing the scope of the TA. Very clear directives around working times, and conditions, required. Visual impact of the line in general and consideration of undergrounding due to potential impact on scenic areas. Clarity sought on whether this would form the route of the Western Isles connection, or whether a different route would be required.	The more general terms of the consultation response are acknowledged and will be given further consideration. Further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and design solution through this sensitive landscape and environment, together with the identification of appropriate mitigation. Construction access will be given due consideration during the alignment and EIA stages. Further consultation will be undertaken with Transport Planning and Local Members. As noted previously in relation to specific Sections, mitigation of visual impacts will be considered in greater detail during the detailed design stage. Visualisations will be produced from key locations to demonstrate the potential visual impacts that could result from the new OHL. Currently this route provides transmission supply to the Western Isles and this would remain. However, this is separate to the potential HVDC link which is for the purpose of connection of new generation to the UK transmission national grid. Any change to this would result in a significant change to the proposed scope of the Skye Reinforcement Strategy and is not part of this project.
Nature Scot (NS)	Detailed comments provided on Section by Section basis. Particular concerns relating to potential impacts on Kinloch and Kyleakin Hills SAC, Cuillin Hills NSA, Knoydart NSA and wild land quality of the Kinlochhourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA.	Response to comments provided in Tables 5.1 to 5.7.
Scottish Environment	Support the approach to the project of addressing asset condition and future	Comments from SEPA are noted, and these points will be addressed during the detailed

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
Protection Agency (SEPA)	connection capacity requirements as part of a long term solution. Refer back to previous consultation responses in which SEPA requests that SHE Transmission consider flood risk, GWDTEs, peat depth, disturbance and re-use, and engineering activities which may have an adverse effect on the environment are all given consideration during future stages of the project. Refer to SEPA guidance as appropriate.	design and EIA stages of the project. Further consultation will be undertaken with SEPA during these stages.
Historic Environment Scotland (HES)	Detailed comments provided on Section by Section basis. Recommends that further consultation is undertaken with HES as the project progresses, in relation to potential impacts on the cultural heritage resource, and mitigation. In previous consultation (November 2019) HES states that the condition of the existing infrastructure is approaching the end of its life and the requests for additional connections to an already over capacity transmission infrastructure clearly demonstrate the need for this project. HES considers that the balanced long term strategic approach appears to be the best fit for the project, with less repeated interventions into the environment. HES considers that a collaborative approach to the project will be essential to achieving a good outcome, and welcome regular consultation as the project moves forward.	Detailed comments are noted and summarised in Tables 5.1 to 5.7. Further consultation will be undertaken with HES throughout the design and EIA stages. Further comments are welcomed. Consultation with HES will continue as the project progresses.
Transport Scotland (TS)	Unable to comment on impact on the trunk road network at this stage until further details are known. Consider it unlikely that there will be a significant impact resulting from construction works. Further discussion required with TS on potential impacts to trunk road network once details known.	Further consultation will be undertaken with TS during the detailed design and EIA stages of the project once further details on construction access are known.
Scottish Forestry (SF)	The Scottish Government's Control of Woodland Removal Policy (CoWRP) includes a strong presumption in favour of protecting Scotland's woodland resources. Woodland removal to accommodate development should be allowed only where	Woodland removal would be kept to a minimum where practicable. Compensatory planting proposals would be considered where required.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
	it would achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits, and compensatory planting proposals designed to mitigate impact of any proposal permanent should form part of the development proposals.	
Marine Scotland (MS)	Recommends referral to MS scoping guidelines which outlines the potential impacts on fish populations from such projects.	MS scoping guidelines will be reviewed to inform the scope of the EIA Report.
John Muir Trust (JMT) via engagement by representative at virtual consultation event on 23 April 2020	If the project is to reduce impacts on areas of land with wildness qualities and ecosystems, careful consideration and successful implementation of mitigation measures e.g. sensitive construction practices, restoration, undergrounding, screening and habitat restoration, will be important for each Section of the preferred route. Welcome assurances that all temporary tracks for this project will be removed and the land restored. Separate correspondence on behalf of John Muir Trust queried whether visualisations to understand how the steel support structures will look in the landscape of each Section will be made available during future consultation.	The general comments in the consultation response are acknowledged. Further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and design solution through the sensitive landscapes and environment, together with effective mitigation. The consideration of construction access solutions will be undertaken at the detailed design stage. All temporary tracks would be restored as closely as possible to their pre-existing condition using natural regeneration techniques on completion of the works. Permanent access tracks would only be required in more remote areas where access during construction requires a higher specification track, and where long-term maintenance needs require permanent access. It is intended to keep requirements for permanent access tracks to a minimum. Visualisations will be produced to illustrate potential impacts.
Scottish Water (SW)	SW did not provide specific comments on this consultation. However, SW have provided comments previously in relation to the project and these comments have been carried forward for the purposes of this consultation exercise. Drinking Water Protected Areas and Scottish Water assets should be identified and considered to ensure the quality and quantity of drinking water in the area are not affected.	Comments from Scottish Water are noted and will be given due consideration during the detailed design and EIA stages of the project.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
Ministry of Defence (MOD)	Project falls within the safeguarding Low Flying Tactical Training area. Following review, MOD has no safeguarding objections to this proposal. MOD requests further detail of the project prior to construction commencing to ensure charts and mapping records are amended.	Further details will be provided to MOD once available.
Highlands and Islands Airport (HIAL)	This project would not impact the safeguarding criteria for HIAL.	This comment is noted.
Mountain-eering Scotland (MS)	Main focus on NSAs and WLAs (see Section by Section comments in Tables 5.1 to 5.7 above). Route selection process has been adequately explained, and no significant omissions apparent. MS expects permanent tracks to be kept to a minimum and supported by detailed justification. Expect no new permanent tracks in Special Areas of Conservation or Wild Land Areas. Restoration of temporary tracks should draw on examples in local area, and temporary tracks should be temporary. Urge SHE Transmission to consider how project could achieve no net loss of wild qualities in National Scenic Areas and Wild Land Areas and consider where increases in wild qualities could be achieved. Notes recognition of challenges for the reinforcement project through sections of this landscape, and the intention to work sensitively.	Comments acknowledged in Tables 5.1 to 5.7 above. Access requirements will be considered during the detailed design and EIA stages. SHE Transmission will explore opportunities in order to balance the potential loss of wild qualities in the WLAs and NSAs affected. This could include rationalisation of existing infrastructure or considering opportunities for new woodland planting to mitigate effects in these WLAs and NSAs, where possible.
Woodland Trust (WT)	Requests that all areas of woodland designated on the Scottish Ancient Woodland Inventory alongside any woodlands that show a significant number of ancient woodland indicator species and/or are present on old mapping (as outlined by Scottish Natural Heritage in their advice note) are avoided by the proposed route, and that all infrastructure is kept at least 30 metres away. This is to ensure that the woodlands do not suffer from root encroachment or noise/dust pollution during both construction and operation.	Woodland removal would be kept to a minimum where practicable, and potential impacts on woodland will be considered during the detailed design and EIA stages of the project.

6. CONSULTATION RESPONSES FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The following part of this Report on Consultation sets out the feedback received from the local community following the consultation period (March to June 2020), including comments received during the live virtual consultation events. The Tables below also include responses by SHE Transmission, setting out the action to be taken where relevant. Responses are split on a Section by Section basis in a series of tables (Table 6.1 to 6.7), with more general comments about the project as a whole included in Table 6.8.

6.1.2 All responses received from the local community and community representatives are welcomed and will be considered in detail during the next design stage of the project. As referred to in Part 5 of this report in relation to the statutory and non-statutory consultee responses, given the volume and detail of responses received, it is not possible or appropriate to address fully each comment in this report. Nevertheless, the key issues identified have been summarised in the following Tables.

6.1.3 Additional targeted consultation will be undertaken with local councillors and local communities as the design progresses over the next 6 months to provide updates on the project during this detailed design stage. In addition, a consultation document will be published in the summer of 2021 to seek further feedback on the design solution prior to finalising the proposed design and commencing the EIA and consenting stage.

6.1.4 Furthermore, many of the comments received cannot be fully addressed until the work currently being undertaken as part of the detailed design and EIA stages of the project have been further advanced. Where this is the case, this is referred to in the Tables below.

6.1.5 Plate 6.1 provides an indication of the number of responses received on a Section by Section basis, as well as general feedback, as a percentage of total number of responses.

Plate 6.1: Responses as a Percentage

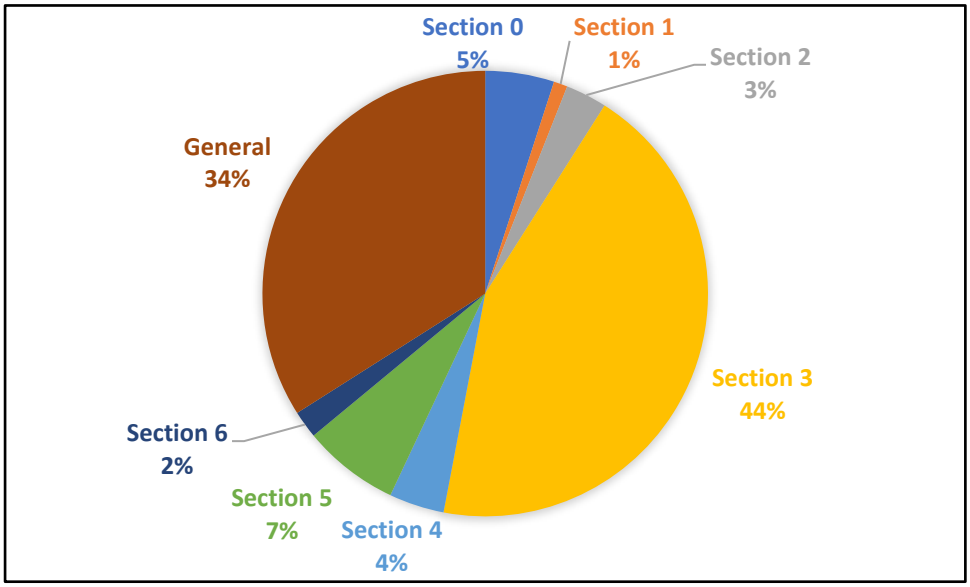


Table 6.1: Feedback specific to Section 0 (Ardmore to Edinbane)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
Resident	Would like to understand the present and future capacity of the proposed OHL for new generation in this area.	The replacement line will have increased generation capacity to facilitate the connection of new renewable energy to connect to the national grid. The current capacity is 69MVA with no capacity to connect additional generation. The new line in this Section will have a capacity of 176MVA.
Residents	Two residents asked where in relation to the existing OHL will the proposed OHL be located, and will the poles be of a similar size.	The preferred route through Section 0 runs within the vicinity of the existing OHL. The alignment of the OHL will be determined during the detailed design stage of the project. Poles will be of a similar size to the existing OHL, with a nominal height of approximately 13 m.
Resident	Queried why wooden poles are sufficient between Ardmore and Edinbane, but not from Edinbane to south end of Skye. Also, why is it that underground cables are not being considered at Waternish, and what benefit will the community at Waternish reap from the presence of bigger more intrusive power lines.	Wooden H poles are sufficient to carry the required capacity from Ardmore to Edinbane, but south of this steel support structures are required due to the increased generation requirements seeking connection at this point. It would not be economically viable to consider undergrounding the whole route, although it will be considered as mitigation in short sections, where required. This will be identified through detailed design which will consider this location. The proposals for this part of the line is to replace the existing wooden pole line with one of a similar size and structure.
Resident	Queried green RAG rating applied for agriculture for the preferred route (Route Option 0A) given that the route would run through agricultural land and disruption would be considerable. Route Option 0B would avoid this disruption. Also concerned about visual impact of preferred route, particularly around the village of Stein which is historically significant and could adversely affect tourism and the local economy. Local community have been unable to hold meetings and it is inappropriate to make	A green RAG rating has been applied as whilst, much like the existing OHL, a new replacement OHL following this route would cross land used for grazing, it is typically lower quality agricultural land and would not likely be compromised by a new OHL. The proposals for this part of the line is to replace the existing wooden pole line with one of a similar size and structure. Comments are acknowledged, and through the detailed design stage further work and engagement with landowners and the community will be undertaken in determining the proposed alignment,

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
	decisions without allowing the community an opportunity to discuss.	seeking to minimise disruption as far as practicable. The approach to consultation and the reasons for online consultation rather than face to face meetings are explained in Part 4 of this Report on Consultation, which have been in line with current Government Guidance.

Section 0 (Ardmore to Edinbane) - Summary Overview of Responses / Outcomes

6.1.6 **General comments from the local community in relation to this Section ranged from queries on capacity and future generation, the alignment of the OHL and design solution, and community consultation. One resident queried the visual and land use impacts of the line and suggested Route Option 0B could minimise these effects. These, and other environmental constraints, will be considered further by the project team during the detailed design stage of the project. The nature of the consultation responses are such that it is considered appropriate to adopt the preferred route through Section 0 as part of the proposed route.**

Table 6.2: Feedback specific to Section 1 (Edinbane to Sligachan)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
Resident	Queried where in this Section the proposed OHL would transition from wood pole to steel structure. Interested in the present and future capacity for new renewable generation on the transmission network in this area.	It is proposed that this transition would occur at Edinbane substation. The current capacity is 69MVA with no capacity to connect additional generation. The new line in this section will have a capacity of 348MVA. The proposed OHL would be designed to support the connection of additional renewable generation.

Section 1 (Edinbane to Sligachan) - Summary Overview of Responses / Outcomes

6.1.7 **Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on capacity and the transition from wood pole to steel support structure. No specific comments on route options were received. The nature of the consultation responses are such that it is considered appropriate to adopt the preferred route through Section 1 as part of the proposed route.**

Table 6.3: Feedback specific to Section 2 (Sligachan to Broadford)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
Local Trust	In relation to development of a hydroelectric scheme, queried effect of project on local renewable generation constraints on the electricity network, including at Broadford substation.	Broadly speaking the aim is to increase the capacity for renewables generation from Skye, including at Broadford Substation. The current timeline is for completion of the line by December 2025.
Resident	Concerned about visual effects of pylons and consequences for tourism, particularly near the Cuillins. Can SHE Transmission provide a visualisation showing the new pylons in comparison with existing infrastructure.	The comment is noted and the sensitivities of the landscape and environment through this Section is recognised. Further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and/or other design solution, together with appropriate mitigation. This will include detailed input by the project landscape architect. Visualisations will be produced from key viewpoint locations to demonstrate the likely effects of the proposals.
Resident	Queried if the high voltage line from Broadford substation to North Skye could be a 132 kV wood pole line as the proposed steel structures would ruin the scenery of the Cuillins.	The proposed OHL (including the steel support structures) is required to meet new and future generation requirements. As noted in the response above, further environmental and engineering studies will be undertaken at the detailed design stage to seek to find an acceptable alignment and/or other design solution through this sensitive landscape and environment, together with appropriate mitigation.

Section 2 (Sligachan to Broadford) - Summary Overview of Responses / Outcomes

6.1.8 **The comments received from local residents and a community trust in relation to this Section focussed on the landscape and visual sensitivities of this Section, and capacity for local generation. In relation to the landscape and visual sensitivities, it is as a result of the sensitive nature of the receiving environment for this Section that it was noted in the Consultation Document that further environmental and engineering survey work will be undertaken in order to find an acceptable alignment and/or design solution through this Section, which may result in a review of the preferred route. This work is currently being undertaken and will be reported on during the detailed design stage. On that basis, no decision on a proposed route through this Section will be made at this stage.**

Table 6.4: Feedback specific to Section 3 (Broadford to Kylerhea)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
Residents, Kylerhea Community Forum, Glenelg and Arnisdale Community Council Committee, Tourist and MP	Many residents from the Kylerhea and Glenelg areas, the Kylerhea Community Forum, the Glenelg and Arnisdale Community Council Committee, a tourist and Ian Blackford MP expressed their concern and strong opposition to new steel pylons in Kylerhea Glen on the basis of ruining a place of beauty and abundant wildlife. Residents note that the need to upgrade the line is explained, but not the need to move from uninhabited terrain (Route Option 3A) to inhabited settlement (Route Option 3B). Comments highlight that the Scottish Secretary of State decided in the 1970s that the route through Kylerhea Glen / Glen Arroch would cause permanent damage to a scenic area and so the existing, northern route was chosen. Both options cross SSSI and SAC designations and progressing with Route Option 3B will cause damage in both options given the requirement to dismantle the existing OHL which would cause significant damage, rather than just Route Option 3A. Concerns related to visual impacts of large steel structures, particularly in views from Bealach Udal, Beinn Aslak and Beinn Bhuidhe. Potential effects on sensitive species, including adders, owls, pine martens and otters. Note that golden eagles and sea eagles nest in the area. Concerns relating to disruption of private water supplies, noise, transport, impact on old military / drove road of cultural significance, proximity to dwellings, health and wellbeing of residents, detrimental to tourism (particularly the ferry route) and the setting of listed buildings and assets at Kylerhea. Requests consideration of the long term effects on the Glen and Kylerhea / Glenelg community. The rewilding of the Glen over the last twenty years through native woodland planting is also noted. This has in part been done to reduce the risk of landslides which have been recorded and are a known risk on the north side of the Glen, above the road.	Comments received from the local community and Community representatives are acknowledged and it is recognised that this is a particularly sensitive Section of the route with a number of factors to consider. As outlined in the Consultation Document, further detailed consideration will be undertaken within this Section during the detailed design stage to identify an acceptable solution, which could result in a review of the preferred route option. This will include detailed input by the project engineering team, landscape architect, ecologist, geologist, hydrologist, ornithologist and archaeologist (and other specialists as required), considering the potential the potential to reduce likely significant adverse effects through different design solutions that may be available, together with other opportunities for mitigation. Visualisations will be produced from key locations to demonstrate the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed OHL. The route of the existing line passes through both woodland and open ground habitats, which are qualifying features of the Special Area of Conservation / Site of Special Scientific Interest. It also presents significant technical challenges due to lack of existing access opportunities and areas of steep slope and ravines. The existing line was built in the 1970's prior to there being a higher duty of care to the environment and more stringent protection for the health and safety of workers, compared with when the OHL was originally built. The preferred route has changed following further constructability studies and consultation with statutory consultees, which has suggested that the preferred route at this stage is Route Option 3A (western extent) and 3B. However, as noted above, further detailed consideration will be undertaken within this Section during the detailed design stage to identify an

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
	Many residents also queried why the route has changed, following previous consultation and concerns expressed by the Community in 2017. Urge change back to Route Option 3A and / or consideration of alternative design solutions. Understood technical difficulties in constructing around the headland (Route Option 3A), but if it could be done 40 years ago why not today? Questions why comparative costs of routes have not been made available. Suggests Route Option 3B is preferred on access or maintenance costs alone. The Kylerhea Community Forum strongly objects to the failure of SHE Transmission to adequately acknowledge and weigh the interests of the inhabited settlement of Kylerhea in their choice of route, and to their failure to enable participation in a fair consultation, and to omissions (e.g. cost comparison), misleading and prejudicial language in the documents produced for the consultation. Also note insufficient consideration of environmental impact under the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.	acceptable solution, which could result in a review of the preferred route option. A high level assessment of technical, environmental and cost considerations have informed the choice of the preferred route. The assessment work will be further developed and refined as the project progresses and this information can be shared once greater detail and certainty becomes known. As part of the design process, SHE Transmission has a number of legal obligations and policy requirements that will require to be fulfilled in the design of the project. The Kylerhea Community Forum comments are noted, and largely addressed in the responses above. Further consultation with the local community will be undertaken at the detailed design stage. Once a final design solution has been selected, an Environmental Impact Assessment will be carried out in line with the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
Resident	Asked whether the NS opinion on Route Option 3A (Existing) is available for the public to see and was it formed after an Appropriate Assessment (AA), as this appears to be the reason for the selection of Route Option 3B (Glen Arroch).	This Report on Consultation in Part 5 above summarises the consultation responses received to date, including the response from NS. An AA has not been carried out at this early stage of the project and would not be carried out until the EIA Report is prepared. Nonetheless, SHE Transmission has committed to carrying out preliminary environmental assessment work during the next design stage of the project to determine potential impacts of both Route Options 3A and 3B. This will include considering the availability of mitigation measures.
Resident	Queried how the heavy equipment would get to site and whether a temporary road would be built (through Glen Arroch).	The use of the existing road networks for construction purposes will be addressed during the next design stage and also as part of the EIA work. Interaction with the local road network would be limited as far as possible. A combination of different types of access will be investigated including use of helicopters.
Resident	Queried whether there is a method to install a temporary power supply so that the existing pylons (along headland to the north) can be dismantled to then install the new pylons on the existing route to avoid a second environmental footprint.	The current powerline serves residential and business properties between Fort Augustus and Stornoway. It would not be feasible to install a temporary power supply in this area to all the customers currently supplied by the existing OHL on an interim basis while the new OHL is constructed in the exact footprint of the existing OHL.
Resident	Welcomed realignment between Kylerhea and Loch na Beiste; first view of Skye from the A87 is badly affected by existing powerlines. Acknowledges adverse effect on Kylerhea village but notes that this is a tiny fraction of those on the A87. Questions whether a cost benefit analysis has been carried out for undersea cable at Dunan / Luib to reduce visual impact in a high priority and sensitive landscape. Another resident queried whether a cost benefit analysis had been carried out for other routes in Section 3.	Comments are noted and it is acknowledged this is a sensitive Section of the preferred route. Further detailed consideration will be undertaken during the detailed design stage to identify an acceptable solution. A cost benefit analysis for a subsea cable option has not been undertaken at this stage, but further investigation of the design solution will be required to minimise impacts.
Resident	Queried what will happen to the existing line through Mudalach along Loch Alsh if the alternative route through Kylerhea is	The existing line would be removed upon completion of the new OHL. A robust EIA will be carried out and mitigation measures

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
	adopted. Concerned about impacts to adder colonies and golden eagle flight routes.	proposed in relation to dismantling of the existing OHL.

Section 3 (Broadford to Kylerhea) - Summary Overview of Responses / Outcomes

6.1.9 **This Section has generated a considerable number of responses from the local community and community representatives, highlighting the sensitivities of this Section. The vast majority of views expressed are of concern for the preferred route put forward in the Consultation Document (Route Option 3A / 3B through Glen Arroch and Kylerhea), with many requesting this is reviewed and the existing OHL route (Route Option 3A) considered again. These views contrast to those expressed by NS (least-worst option) and SF (see Table 5.4), both of whom state a preference for Route Option 3A / 3B. It is as a result of the sensitive nature of the environment in this Section that it is noted in the Consultation Document that further environmental and engineering survey work will be undertaken in order to find an acceptable alignment and/or alternative design solution through this Section, which may result in a review of the preferred route. This work is currently being undertaken and will be reported on during the detailed design stage. Consequently, no decision on a proposed route through this Section will be made at this stage.**

Table 6.5: Feedback specific to Section 4 (Kylerhea to Quoich)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
Resident	Felt there has not been enough consideration for residents at Kinlochhourn. Opportunity for SHE Transmission to put in mains electric and broadband connection for Kinlochhourn residents. Also, if a new substation was constructed at Kinlochhourn this would also open up possibility of small scale hydro in the area.	Further consultation with residents and local communities will be undertaken during the detailed design stage of the project. Opportunities for connection to the mains electricity supply or broadband are not within the remit of this transmission project. The provision of a connection to the distribution system would fall under the licence of obligations of Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution, which is a separate regulated business from SHE Transmission.
Resident	Concerned about previous landslip near Quoich Dam (and power disruption), and potential for new line to pose future risk of further landslips, and power loss to the area.	Consideration of landslip risk will form part of environmental and technical studies during the detailed design and EIA stages of the project.
Estate	Queried whether the existing towers will be removed, or will they remain in parallel with the proposed new OHL. Will the proposed OHL follow a similar line to the existing OHL (maintaining safe distance for construction).	The existing OHL would be removed once the new OHL is constructed and commissioned. This will be determined during the design stage. Unable to confirm exact timescales at this early stage of the development process but

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
	Queried how long the construction phase will be, specifically for the Quoich route. Queried whether there is sufficient flexibility in the scheme to allow installation of substations and subsequent export of power from renewable generation (hydro) directly into the new line.	can provide more information as the project develops. The overall construction programme is 2.5 years for the whole route. One of the reasons for building a higher capacity line is to accommodate additional growth in renewables generation.
Resident	Queried the options in the Glen More, Glenelg area and whether the plan will be to run the new line through the crofts and townships up the glen (Beolary and Scalasaig) and whether the option of going out of Glen More has been discounted.	The preferred route in this Section is Route Option 4A, crossing Glen More within the vicinity of the existing OHL at Creag Mhor.
Local Interest Group	Project should give serious consideration to undergrounding the line west of the watershed above Loch Coire Shubh due to landscape sensitivity and presence of the national scenic area; concerns about the effect of construction traffic on the single track road.	Given ground conditions and complex topography an overhead solution is preferred through this Section. Potential impacts of construction traffic on the road to Kinlochhourn will be considered during the detailed design and EIA stages of the project, and appropriate mitigation and traffic management measures would be put in place.

Section 4 (Kylerhea to Quoich) - Summary Overview of Responses / Outcomes

6.1.10 **Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on consultation, landslip risk, alignment and design solutions, and construction related queries. It is recognised that this is a sensitive section however, based on experience, the project team is confident that the nature of the issues raised can be appropriately addressed through detailed design and established mitigation measures. Further environmental and engineering survey work will be undertaken in order to find an acceptable alignment and/or design solution through this Section. This work is currently being undertaken and will be reported on during the next design stage. The nature of the consultation responses are such that it is considered appropriate to adopt the preferred route through Section 4 as part of the proposed route.**

Table 6.6: Feedback specific to Section 5 (Quoich to Invergarry)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
Resident	Concerned about impact on local infrastructure and the single track road to Kinlochhourn. Notes that Quoich bridge has a 10 tonne limit. Asks about compensation for disruption to the local community.	Potential impacts of construction traffic on the road to Kinlochhourn will be considered during the detailed design and EIA stages of the project, and appropriate mitigation and traffic management measures will be put in place.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
		A community liaison forum will be established prior to construction starting. This will aim to work with local communities to ensure any disruption is avoided /minimised.
Local Interest Group	Initial concerns with the notice period for online consultation, and requests new dates with much greater notice. The online presentation was interesting but encountered some difficulties with the user interface. Queried height of new towers compared to existing and stated that any higher than 28m would likely receive local objections. Reassurance requested that the line will not pass any closer to houses than it does at present, particularly at Inchlaggan.	This comment in relation to the consultation process is acknowledged. Further consultation will be held during the detailed design and EIA stages of the project. The approach to consultation and the reasons for online consultation are explained in Part 4 of this Report on Consultation, which have been in line with current Government Guidance. It is anticipated that new towers would be approximately 28 m in height. Exact heights of, and distances between, towers would be determined after a detailed line survey and confirmed following micrositing prior to construction. Similarly, the alignment of the OHL will be subject to further review at the detailed design stage. Proximity to dwellings will be an important consideration during the design stages of the project.
Resident	Queried that for Section 5, upon completion there would be one pylon line with two circuits and the old pylons and temporary wooden H poles would be removed. Reassurance that all will be done to mitigate the visual impact along the length of the line and remediation work as it passes through the remotest wilderness areas in the UK, including burying as much as possible, and towers to follow the existing line and be no bigger, ideally smaller, than the existing.	A permanent new OHL would be built and it is expected that a rationalisation of existing infrastructure in the future may include dismantling of the woodpole line. This will be determined during the detailed design stage. It is recognised that the project is routed through a sensitive landscape and environment, and further environmental and engineering survey work will be required to seek to find an acceptable alignment and/or other design solution. The use of appropriate localised mitigation methods such as underground cable will be given due consideration. Visualisations will be produced from key locations along the route to demonstrate the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed new OHL.
Resident	Noted that the properties of Kingie (10 houses) and Poulary (4 houses) be added to mapping, as they would be significantly affected by proposed works. Asked for further clarification of what structures would	Comments are acknowledged. The mapping used enables a large area to be included on the plans, and not all properties are shown on the base mapping. However, proximity to dwellings will be an important

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
	be visible upon completion of the project and copies of paper documents due to issues understanding information on the website.	consideration during the design stages of the project. Further clarification will be provided at the detailed design stage in relation to the design and visibility of support structures. The approach to consultation and the reasons for online consultation are explained in Part 4 of this Report on Consultation (Section 4.2.2 specifically related to paper documents), which have been in line with current Government Guidance.
Resident	Concerned about previous landslip near Quoich Dam (and power disruption), and potential for new line to pose future risk of further landslips, and power loss to the area.	Consideration of landslip risk will form part of environmental and technical studies during the detailed design and EIA stages of the project.
Resident	Confusion about the wooden pole (Quoich to Aberchalder 132 kV OHL) currently under construction and whether this will be a temporary line only for when the new pylon line is constructed and will be removed afterwards, or whether it will be permanent one way line with the new pylon line taking the reverse current. Concerned about proximity of existing line to their property (tower in garden) and would be unhappy if a new taller pylon were built in the same place.	A permanent new OHL would be built and it is expected that a rationalisation of existing infrastructure in the future may include dismantling of the woodpole line. This will be determined during the detailed design stage. The alignment of the new OHL will be subject to further review at the next design stage. Proximity to dwellings will be an important consideration during the detailed design stage of the project.

Section 5 (Quoich to Invergarry) - Summary Overview of Responses / Outcomes

6.1.11 **Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on consultation, landslip risk, alignment and design solutions (in particular proximity to dwellings), and construction related queries. No specific comments on route options were received. These issues, along with other environmental and technical constraints, will be considered further by the project team during the detailed design stage of the project. The nature of the consultation responses are such that it is considered appropriate to adopt the preferred route through Section 5 as part of the proposed route.**

Table 6.7: Feedback specific to Section 6 (Invergarry to Fort Augustus)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
Residents	Two residents noted that the new OHL should be undergrounded on the approach to and into Auchterawe Substation. Agreement on Preferred Route (assumed to mean in relation to Section 6).	Undergrounding will be considered where there is an identified technical need or identified as necessary environmental mitigation.

Section 6 (Invergarry to Fort Augustus) - Summary Overview of Responses / Outcomes

6.1.12 **Whilst the preferred route was supported in this Section, comments received from local residents focussed on the connection into Auchterawe Substation, with a preference for this to be undergrounded. This will be considered further by the project team during the detailed design stage of the project. The nature of the consultation responses are such that it is considered appropriate to adopt the preferred route through Section 6 as part of the proposed route.**

Table 6.8: General feedback

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
Resident	General queries relating to the size of the new steel structures in comparison to the existing steel lattice towers, and how much of a difference that makes at ground level. Also, how close to the existing route will the new OHL be.	The support structures have not been selected at this stage, but it is expected that the replacement towers would be approximately 28 m high (existing towers are on average 26 m high). The footprint at ground level will be similar to the existing but the exact details can only be confirmed once tower positions are known. The location of the new OHL would be determined during the detailed design stage of the project.
Resident	The whole of Skye is a sensitive area, particularly around the Cuillins. Entire connection should be underground, and more detail is required.	Further detailed environmental and engineering survey work will be required to seek to find an acceptable alignment and/or another design solution through the most sensitive parts of protected landscapes and environment. This could result in localised mitigation measures, such as underground cable. Visualisations will be produced from key locations along the route to demonstrate the landscape and visual impacts of the proposals.
Councillor and Residents	Queried whether alternatives such as undergrounding of the new OHL has been considered, and how localised mitigation measures would be used (e.g. large sections being reviewed or just on an ad-hoc basis of small sections). Aware that the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Parks have underground cables to mitigate impacts on special qualities. Could this be considered for similar sections of the island route?	The use of appropriate localised mitigation measures, such as underground cable, will be considered during the detailed design stage of the project. Due to the differences in the sensitivities along the route, the mitigation is likely to be quite targeted and bespoke to ensure the best outcomes. The work in the National Parks has been undertaken making use of a fund set up by the energy regulator Ofgem, to mitigate the impact of existing infrastructure that was historically constructed before modern environmental consenting regulations were established. The fund could not be used to finance undergrounding sections with regards to this project, however this form of mitigation may be required as the project

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
		develops.
Local Councillors and Residents	Discussion on merits of Microsoft Teams meeting offered by SHE Transmission for local residents (in the Kylerhea / Glenelg area) to discuss the project. This was rejected by residents as they would prefer a face-to-face meeting with the whole community.	SHE Transmission is committed to engaging with local residents and Councillors. Further engagement will be organised, including face to face meetings, when it is safe to do so. The approach to consultation and the reasons for online consultation rather than face to face meetings are explained in Part 4 of this Report on Consultation, which have been in line with current Government Guidance.
Representative from Community Renewables Group	Following review of Skye Reinforcement Strategy[12], raised queries in relation to flexibility services initiative, findings of the condition assessment of subsea cables from Ardmore, and a broken footer link.	This is not within the remit of this project.
Resident	Given objective of supporting the UK's transition to Net Zero, queried the status of the inequitable surcharge on the north of Scotland electricity charges compared to the rest of the UK. Can SHE Transmission use this consultation process to bring its influence to bear on rectifying this position?	This is not within the remit of this project.
Resident	Queried the reason for an above ground connection following review of directional boring advantage techniques and whether all new supply could be underground. Questioned the timing of virtual consultation events, noting only one working days' notice was being given and asking for reconsideration of the time scale.	It is not practical or cost effective to underground the whole route, although the use of appropriate localised mitigation measures, such as underground cable, will be considered in some areas. Consultation events in the local area were planned during March 2020, however these had to be cancelled as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. SHE Transmission is committed to engaging with the local community. Under the circumstances, the virtual consultation events were considered an opportunity to reach a large number of stakeholders and provide a forum for the community to engage with the project team and ask questions via phone, skype and email. The approach is set out in Part 4 of this Report on Consultation.
Residents	A number of residents raised concerns that the public consultation process designed by SHE Transmission under COVID-19 failed to take account of constraints to the	Comments are acknowledged, and SHE Transmission is committed to engaging with the local community.

[12] SSEN 2019, Skye Overhead Line Reinforcement Strategy (Document Reference T2BP-STR-0006)

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
	community, favours SHE Transmission's interests over the community and does not give fair opportunity for representation. A poor substitute for face to face consultation, particularly given poor internet speeds in the area which can limit engagement in such events by the local community. Requested confirmation that SHE Transmission will engage the whole community and details of how this would be carried out safely. Residents asked why consultation being held now with the various implications of COVID-19 and whether this could be delayed. One resident asked whether there would be face to face consultation on the preferred route again prior to face to face consultation on the preferred alignment. Queried why the timetable for the reinforcement project had not changed in light of COVID-19. Queried what standards have been applied in the design of the virtual consultation for fairness and accessibility. Queried why the Kylerhea community was not asked for its views on how consultation could be best managed under COVID-19.	Consultation events in the local area were planned during March 2020, however these had to be cancelled as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Under the circumstances, the virtual consultation events were considered an opportunity to reach a large number of stakeholders and provide a forum for the community to engage with the project team and ask questions via phone, skype and email. The approach to consultation and the reasons for online consultation are explained in Part 4 of this Report on Consultation, which have been in line with current Government Guidance. Further engagement will be organised, including face to face meetings, when it is safe to do so. It is anticipated that this will be at the detailed design stage, although the community will be kept informed throughout this process as further studies in relation to Sections 2 and 3, and to inform alignment work in the other Sections, continue.
Resident	Requested explanation why the terms used in the environmental appraisal are not the proper terms used in the EIA Directive and the Electricity Works (Scotland) Regulations.	A full EIA has not been undertaken yet as the project is still at optioneering stage. The assessment undertaken to date follows SHE Transmission's internal guidance which looks to identify the least constrained option based on a number of environmental, technical and cost issues. The intention is to carry out some early impact assessments to inform the detailed design, including the identification of any required mitigation.
Residents	Some residents raised an issue with access to the virtual consultation, and the fly through. Only a vague outline of the route available on the website, further detail requested.	Where connection issues were brought to the attention of SHE Transmission during the virtual consultation events, SHE Transmission contacted individuals to ask for a contact number to help resolve connection issues.
Resident	Queries regarding the future capacity of the proposed OHL for new power generation.	The new OHL will have increased generation capacity to facilitate the connection of new renewable energy to connect to the national grid. The new OHL between Fort Augustus and Edinbane will have a capacity of 348 MVA to accommodate new renewables generation.

Stakeholder	Summary of Feedback	Response by SHE Transmission
		The new OHL between Edinbane and Ardmore will have a capacity of 176MVA.
Resident	Queried how extensive the use of the NeST monopole structures will be and wanted confirmation that SHE Transmission are considering a combination of NeST and steel lattice structures to Edinbane, and trident wood pole from Edinbane to Ardmore.	Appropriate design solutions will be considered during the detailed design stage of the project. The proposals are to replace the trident wood pole line from Edinbane to Ardmore with a new wood pole line.
Resident	Skye and its surrounds are a place of natural beauty, tourism is a major industry due to its wild beauty, the weather is extreme and the size of pylons will cause very large maintenance costs, the wild life will be disrupted and damaged by the process and there will be health risks to people who live near the pylons - the use of pylons should be written off and only cables used.	It is not practical or cost effective to underground the whole route, although the use of appropriate localised mitigation measures, such as underground cable, will be considered in some areas.

7. PROJECT RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 This part of the Report on Consultation documents how the project team has considered the consultation responses received following publication of the preferred route as described within the Skye Reinforcement Project: Consultation Document, March 2020 (see Figure 1).

7.2 Actions to be Taken by the Project Team

7.2.1 The consultation process for the project thus far has raised a number of issues that will require further assessment and action prior to clarification being provided during the detailed design stage of the project.

7.2.2 The following actions are being undertaken to address the issues raised in relation to the preferred route and the next design stage of the project:

- An overhead line engineering consultancy and contractor have been engaged by SHE Transmission. This is a very early stage in a project to engage a contractor compared to other projects but given the sensitivities and challenges of this project SHE Transmission believes that early engagement of a contractor will ensure that construction methods, including the limitations and opportunities associated with them, are fully understood in detail from the outset. In addition to advising on route and alignment options, part of their brief will be to consider alternative solutions where practicable, and appropriate technological options along the route, as well as addressing construction access solutions. The results of these studies will be reported during the detailed design stage;
- Further environmental survey and assessment work will be undertaken in parallel with the engineering studies to enable a collaborative approach to identifying an acceptable alignment and design solution through the sensitive landscapes and environment. In particular, this will involve further survey effort and advice relating to landscape and visual, ecology, ornithology, hydrology, peat, soils, forestry and cultural heritage matters. The results of these studies will be reported during the detailed design stage; and
- Further targeted consultation will be undertaken with key statutory and non-statutory consultees, local councillors and local communities as the design progresses over the next 6 months to provide updates on the project during the detailed design stage. A wider consultation, via a consultation document anticipated to be published in the summer of 2021, will be undertaken on completion of the further studies to enable comments to be sought on the design solution, including decisions on OHL routeing and/or alternative design solutions in Sections 2 and 3 of the preferred route, which will involve engagement with the wider stakeholder community on issues raised in this consultation exercise. These consultations will be undertaken in line with current Government Guidance during the pandemic. In that regard it is expected that until April 2021 at the earliest, all consultations are required to be undertaken virtually.

7.3 Summary of Responses and Progression to the Detailed Design

7.3.1 The following paragraphs provide a summary of the responses received from stakeholders on a Section by Section basis, and the decision by SHE Transmission on the progression to the next stages of the design process.

Section 0

7.3.2 Responses received from statutory and non-statutory consultees provided general support for the preferred route identified, albeit environmental sensitivities highlighted, particularly in relation to designated cultural heritage sites and assets, and ornithological constraints.

7.3.3 Comments from the local community ranged from queries on capacity and future generation, the alignment of the OHL and design solution, and community consultation, one resident queried the visual and land use impacts of the line and suggested Route Option 0B could minimise these effects.

7.3.4 Whilst the environmental sensitivities are noted and will be considered further during the detailed design stage of the project, on balance it is considered that the preferred route in this Section (Route Option 0A / 0D) is taken forward as the proposed route.

Section 1

7.3.5 Support for the preferred route was provided by NS and SF. Potential constraints and environmental sensitivities highlighted, particularly in relation to designated cultural heritage sites and assets, ornithological constraints, Class 1 peatlands and the potential for landscape and visual effects.

7.3.6 Comments received from the local community in relation to this Section focused on capacity and the transition from wood pole to steel structure. No specific comments on route options were received.

7.3.7 Whilst the environmental sensitivities are noted and will be considered further during the detailed design stage of the project, on balance it is considered that the preferred route in this section (Route Option 1A) is taken forward as the proposed route.

Section 2

7.3.8 Comments received from statutory and non-statutory consultees highlight some of the sensitivities of this Section. Qualified support for the preferred route is provided by SF, JMT and RSPB, albeit the landscape, visual and ornithological sensitivities and potential for significant effects is noted in this support. In contrast, NS caution that they may object to Route Option 2A and that further consideration to Route Option 2B should be given.

7.3.9 The comments received from local residents and a community trust in this section focussed on the landscape and visual sensitivities of this section, and capacity for local generation.

7.3.10 It is as a result of the sensitive nature of this section that the Consultation Document noted that further environmental and engineering survey work will be undertaken in order to find an acceptable alignment and/or design solution through this Section, which may result in a review of the preferred route. This work is currently

being undertaken and will be reported on during the detailed design stage. As such, no decision on a proposed route through this section will be made at this stage.

Section 3

7.3.11 There were contrasting views expressed by statutory and non-statutory consultees in this section. NS and SF state a preference for Route Option 3A / 3B, whilst RSPB state a strong preference for Route Option 3A following the existing OHL.

7.3.12 This section generated a considerable number of responses from the local community and community representatives. The vast majority of views expressed are of concern for the preferred route put forward in the Consultation Document (Route Option 3A / 3B through Glen Arroch and Kylerhea), with many requesting this is reviewed and the existing OHL route (Route Option 3A) considered again.

7.3.13 It is as a result of the sensitive nature of this Section that the Consultation Document noted that further environmental and engineering survey work will be undertaken in order to find an acceptable alignment and/or design solution through this section, which may result in a review of the preferred route. This work is currently being undertaken and will be reported on during the design stage. As such, no decision on a proposed route through this section will be made at this stage.

Section 4

7.3.14 There appears to be general support for the preferred route put forward by statutory and non-statutory consultees, albeit consultees advise caution given the sensitive landscape the OHL would be routed through, and NS advise they may object once a fuller understanding of impacts is known.

7.3.15 Comments received from the local community in relation to this section focused on consultation, landslip risk, alignment and design solutions, and construction related queries.

7.3.16 Whilst the environmental sensitivities are noted and will be considered further during the detailed design stage of the project, on balance it is considered that the preferred route in this Section (Route Option 4A) is taken forward as the proposed route.

Section 5

7.3.17 Responses received from statutory and non-statutory consultees in relation to this Section of the project provide general support for the preferred route identified, albeit environmental sensitivities are highlighted, particularly in relation to ornithological designations and constraints.

7.3.18 Comments received from the local community focused on consultation, landslip risk, alignment and design solutions (in particular proximity to dwellings), and construction related queries. No specific comments on route options were received.

7.3.19 Whilst the environmental sensitivities are noted and will be considered further during the detailed design stage of the project, on balance it is considered that the preferred route in this Section (Route Option 5A) is taken forward as the proposed route.

Section 6

7.3.20 Responses received from statutory and non-statutory consultees in relation to this section provide general support for the preferred route identified, albeit environmental sensitivities are highlighted, particularly in relation

to wirescape impacts at Auchterawe, ornithological designations and constraints, cultural heritage sites and forestry.

7.3.21 The preferred route was supported in this section by the local community, albeit comments received from local residents focussed on the connection into Auchterawe Substation, with a preference for this to be undergrounded.

7.3.22 Whilst the technical solution for connection into Auchterawe Substation, along with the environmental sensitivities will be considered further by the project team during the detailed design stage, on balance it is considered that the preferred route in this Section (Route Option 6A / 6C) is taken forward as the proposed route.

Summary

7.3.23 The preferred route identified within the Skye Reinforcement Consultation Document, March 2020 is shown on Figures 1.0 to 1.6. As discussed in this report, further work is being undertaken to evaluate route, alignment and design solutions in order to finalise the route option studies in Sections 2 and 3 and to find an acceptable solution which minimises potential likely significant adverse environmental effects where possible. In all other Sections (Section 0, 1, 4, 5 and 6) the preferred route put forward in the Consultation Document is taken forward as the proposed route.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

8.1 Conclusions

8.1.1 This Report on Consultation documents the consultation process which has been undertaken for the project between mid-November 2019 and end of June 2020. The programme of consultation was designed to engage with stakeholders including statutory and non-statutory consultees, local communities / residents, landowners and wider interested parties in order to invite feedback on the rationale for, and approach to, the selection of the preferred route.

8.1.2 This report has described the key responses received, in terms of the main issues raised, and provides detail on the actions to be taken in response to the issues raised. This has included a requirement for further environmental and engineering survey, particularly in Sections 2 and 3, to find an acceptable alignment and design solution which minimises potential likely significant adverse environmental effects where possible. In all other sections (Sections 0, 1, 4, 5 and 6) the preferred route put forward in the Consultation Document is taken forward as the proposed route.

8.2 Next Steps

8.2.1 The further work summarised in Part 7 of this report will be undertaken by Summer 2021. At this point, a preferred alignment within the proposed route for Sections 0, 1, 4, 5 and 6 will be presented and the decisions on the proposed design solution for Sections 2 and 3 will be presented for further consultation. This will be presented to stakeholders in a similar manner to the consultation exercise carried out for the preferred route, prior to progressing to the EIA stage.