

VOLUME 5: CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION – ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENT

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Figure V1-Figure 1.1: Overview of the Proposed Development

Appendices

There are no appendices associated with this Chapter.

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1. INTRODUCTION – ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENT

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 As outlined in **Volume 1: Chapter 1: Introduction and Background**, the Applicant is presenting an Alternative Alignment as part of the consent application. The decision taken by the Applicant to include both options within the consent application has been made given the route of the Proposed Alignment passes through the footprint of the proposed Melvich Wind Energy Hub. The minimum distance required between the proposed wind turbines and an overhead line (OHL) capable of operating at 275 kV could not be maintained along the route of the Proposed Alignment and therefore, should Melvich Wind Energy Hub be granted consent in accordance with the proposals currently submitted, an alternative OHL alignment would need to be considered.
- 1.1.2 The Applicant's preference is to construct and operate the Proposed Alignment, as presented in **Volume 2: Figure V1-1.1: Overview of the Proposed Development**. The Applicant requests that the Scottish Ministers consider both the Proposed Alignment and the Alternative Alignment whilst noting that only one of the options would be built.
- 1.1.3 In order to ensure the Scottish Ministers, as consenting authority, are provided with sufficient detail regarding both options, environmental information in relation to the Alternative Alignment is provided within this volume of the EIA Report. This approach avoids the need to bring forward a separate application and allows all relevant issues to be considered together. Doing so is important to ensure that consented renewable developments in support of Net Zero targets can be accommodated within reasonable timescales.
- 1.1.4 A full description of the project and its ancillary works is set out in **Volume 1: Chapter 3: The Proposed Development** of this EIA Report. A description of the project specifically in relation to the Alternative Alignment is set out in **Volume 5: Chapter 3: The Proposed Development - Alternative Alignment** (this volume), with cross referencing to **Volume 1: Chapter 3** where appropriate.
- 1.1.5 The Alternative Alignment comprises a complete alternative connection for the Proposed Development (i.e. it originates near Dallangwell (Tower 19) and terminates at the existing Connagill 275/132 kV substation (Tower 64)). The Alternative Alignment would be consistent with the Proposed Alignment between Towers 19 to 31. From Tower 31, the Alternative Alignment would deviate away from the Proposed Alignment for approximately 8 km to avoid the proposed Melvich Wind Energy Hub. The Alternative Alignment would rejoin the Proposed Alignment to the north of the Achridigill Burn and would follow the same alignment (between Towers 47 to 64) to the proposed new CSE compound. The Alternative Alignment would connect into Connagill 275/132 kV substation via two short sections of single circuit 132 kV UGC, as per the Proposed Alignment.
- 1.1.6 Where there is overlap between the Proposed Alignment and the Alternative Alignment, the tower numbering is consistent for ease of reference. Where the Alternative Alignment deviates away from the Proposed Alignment, these tower numbers include the prefix 'A', as included in **Volume 5: Appendix V5-3.1: Indicative Tower Schedule - Alternative Alignment** and displayed on **Volume 2: Figure V5-3.1: The Proposed Development - Alternative Alignment**.
- 1.1.7 The key differences between the Proposed Alignment and Alternative Alignment are set out in **Table V5-1.1** below.

Table V5-1.1: Key differences between the Proposed Alignment and the Alternative Alignment

Item	Proposed Alignment	Alternative Alignment
Length of OHL Alignment	10.5 km	13.5 km
Number of Steel Lattice Towers	46 No.	58 No.

Item	Proposed Alignment	Alternative Alignment
Length of Underground Cable (permanent)	780 m	780 m
Approximate length of existing track	5.7 km	5.7 km
Approximate length of existing track to be upgraded	13.3 km	10.9 km
Approximate length of new permanent access track	7.4 km	7.9 km
Approximate length of new temporary access track	5.8 km	6.0 km
Length of temporary wood pole OHL diversion	None	2.2 km
Number of temporary wood poles	None	30 No.
Length of temporary underground cable diversion	None	485 m
Length of existing Strathly North 132 kV trident 'H' wood pole OHL to be dismantled	7.1 km	7.1 km
Length of existing Strathly North 132 kV trident 'H' wood pole OHL to be retained	4.8 km	4.8 km
Number of watercourse crossings	Access Tracks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one new temporary crossing four new permanent crossings 16 existing crossings on tracks to be upgraded UGC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> two permanent crossings 	Access Tracks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> one new temporary crossing six new permanent crossings 18 existing crossings on tracks to be upgraded UGC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> two permanent crossings
Woodland felling to create an Operational Corridor	5.75 ha	5.75 ha

1.2 Purpose of this Volume of the EIA Report

- 1.2.1 This Volume 5 of the EIA Report comprises information relating to the Alternative Alignment, including a description of the works related to this option, and an assessment of the likely significant effects that are predicted were the Alternative Alignment to be constructed and operated as part of the Strathly South Wind Farm Grid Connection.

1.3 Structure of this Volume of the EIA Report

- 1.3.1 This volume of the EIA Report is structured as per **Table V5-1.2** below:

Table V5-1.2: Structure of Volume 5 of the EIA Report

Chapter Number	Chapter Name	Purpose
1	Introduction - Alternative Alignment	A brief overview of the Alternative Alignment and the purpose and structure of Volume 5 of the EIA Report.
2	The Routeing Process and Alternatives – Alternative Alignment	Describes the consideration of alternatives that have been undertaken for the Alternative Alignment.

Chapter Number	Chapter Name	Purpose
3	The Proposed Development - Alternative Alignment	Providing a description of the Alternative Alignment.
4	Landscape and Visual - Alternative Alignment	An assessment of the Alternative Alignment on landscape and visual receptors.
5	Ecology - Alternative Alignment	An assessment of the Alternative Alignment on terrestrial ecology, including habitats and protected species.
6	Ornithology - Alternative Alignment	An assessment of the Alternative Alignment on ornithological sensitivities.
7	Soils, Geology and Water - Alternative Alignment	An assessment of the Alternative Alignment on the soils, geology and water environment.
8	Cultural heritage - Alternative Alignment	An assessment of the Alternative Alignment on cultural heritage.
9	Traffic and Transport - Alternative Alignment	An assessment of the Alternative Alignment on traffic and transport related effects.
10	Forestry - Alternative Alignment	An assessment of the Alternative Alignment on forestry.
11	Schedule of Mitigation – Alternative Alignment	Summarises the mitigation measures to identified throughout Volume 5 to minimise or offset the potential effects on the receiving environment

- 1.3.2 The scope of each assessment is set out in the relevant chapter and has been informed by a scoping exercise to determine the scope of the EIA Report, further details of which are contained in **Volume 1: Chapter 4: Scope and Consultation**.