

By email: martin.godwin@sse.com

Martin Godwin
Community Liaison Manager
SSEN Transmission
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11 April 2023

Dear Mr Godwin

Spittal - Beauly 400 kV OHL Project Consultation

1. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your proposed Corridor Selection options for the Spittal - Beauly 400 kV OHL project.
2. Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with more than 15,000 members and is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers, mountaineers and ski-tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains. We represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering, and provide training and information to mountain users for safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.
3. Our interests lie with the perceptions of landscape and its scenic and wild qualities, and the wildlife that lives there. Walkers and climbers move through the landscape to mountain destinations, they are not stationary observers of landscape. It is therefore the overall effect of the proposed project as it is viewed in the landscape that is important, and not only from static viewpoints.
4. Our main focus is on the potential effects of construction on the landscape qualities, and visual impact in the area that the route traverses. This includes the line itself and any permanent stone roads, with the effects of construction and quality of restoration of temporary access roads being a key consideration in this.
5. You ask for consideration of a number of questions.
6. Regarding the process of route selection, we think that you have adequately explained your reasoning behind this assessment.
7. Regarding your OHL Route Options and Preferred Route selection we have some comments for your consideration.
8. For Section A we are content with your route selection justification and support the decision to avoid selection of Route A1.6 which goes uncomfortably close to Beinn Dhorain.
9. Section B has a neutral assessment. From our mountaineering perspective, seen from the Wild Land Area the B2 option lies below the windfarm at Kilbraur, and wet conductors gleaming in low sun is possibly an issue, but in the context of a settled landscape may not be significant.
10. Section C raises no obvious concerns with us.


11. Section D is a more difficult one to assess, and we support your assessment for D3 to be included in the Phased Out Routes. This potential Option would be the most damaging to the wild qualities of the landscape, potentially traversing areas without significant existing infrastructure and could have significant visual impact northwest from the popular Munro of Ben Wyvis and the Corbett Beinn a'Chaisteil. From the viewpoint of Beinn Tharsuinn (Ardross), the landscape is already compromised by a windfarm to the northeast and another lying to the northwest of the summit, with Options D1 or D2 potentially contributing to a landscape with already existing infrastructure.

12. Section E has a couple of points of consideration from our mountaineering perspective. Option E3 would run very close to the popular climbing crags of Moy Rock, and E2 would bring the route closer to the Wild Land Area. We support their inclusion as Non-Preferred Routes. We have no preference of Options E1 or E1.1 as they would both be seen from the Wild Land Area lying behind a windfarm.

13. Our main concern is, as always, the visibility of new construction tracks and their restoration proposals, but that is part of a later stage of the process.

We hope these comments are helpful to you in your further consideration of this project.

Yours sincerely



D. Black

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