

SP Energy Networks

**132kV Overhead Line Grid
Connection for Harestanes
West Wind Farm
Consultation Round 1
Feedback Report**

Final report

Prepared by LUC

October 2025

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 This consultation feedback report has been prepared by LUC on behalf of SP Energy Networks (SPEN), to present the findings of the pre-application consultation on the 132kV Overhead Line (OHL) Grid Connection for Harestanes West Wind Farm (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Development).

1.2 Initial pre-application consultation was undertaken with statutory bodies in March 2022 on an emerging preferred route and the pre-application public consultation process was undertaken during 1st August to 1st September 2023, following the publication of the Routeing and Consultation Report (RCD) (July 2023)¹ which identified a preferred route for the Proposed Development as seen in **Figure 1.1**. The purpose of this report is to summarise the feedback received to date on the content of the Routeing and Consultation Report, including the identified preferred route and to address feedback received and demonstrate how this feedback has influenced the Proposed Development. This document should be read in conjunction with the Routeing and Consultation Report (July 2023) for completeness.

1.3 This consultation feedback report sets out the approach that has been undertaken by SPEN to inform, advise and consult with the local community and stakeholders.

1.4 This consultation feedback report (part 1) provides details relating to the first rounds of consultation with statutory bodies and the public that have been undertaken between March 2022 (with statutory bodies based on the emerging preferred route) and September 2023 (local communities and stakeholders based on the preferred route identified through the Routeing and Consultation Report).

Need for the Project

1.5 Due to the ongoing substantial interest for renewable energy generation development (primarily wind and hydro), to meet national net zero targets, SPEN continues to receive associated grid connection requests via National Grid (Now NESO) from developers wishing to develop such renewable energy schemes. An application has been received from the developer of Harestanes West Wind Farm, requiring a 78-megawatt (MW) connection to the transmission network. SP Transmission plc is the transmission license holder on behalf

¹

https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/userfiles/file/Harestanes_West_

WF_132kV_OHL_Grid_Connection_Routeing_and_Consultation_Report1.6.pdf#page=41&zoom=100,413,124

of SPEN and has identified a suitable tie point on the existing 132kV 'BR Route', via a 132kV OHL.

SP Energy Networks

1.6 SPEN owns and operates the electricity transmission and distribution networks in central and southern Scotland through its wholly owned subsidiaries SP Transmission plc (SPT) and SP Distribution plc (SPD). SPEN's transmission network is the backbone of the electricity system within its area, carrying large amounts of electricity at high voltages from generating sources such as wind farms, power stations and various other utilities across long distances to connected homes and businesses. The transmission network consists of approximately 4,000km of overhead lines and over 600km of underground cables. The electricity is then delivered via the distribution network which has over 150 substations and in excess of 100 grid supply points which serves approximately two million customers in Southern and Central Scotland.

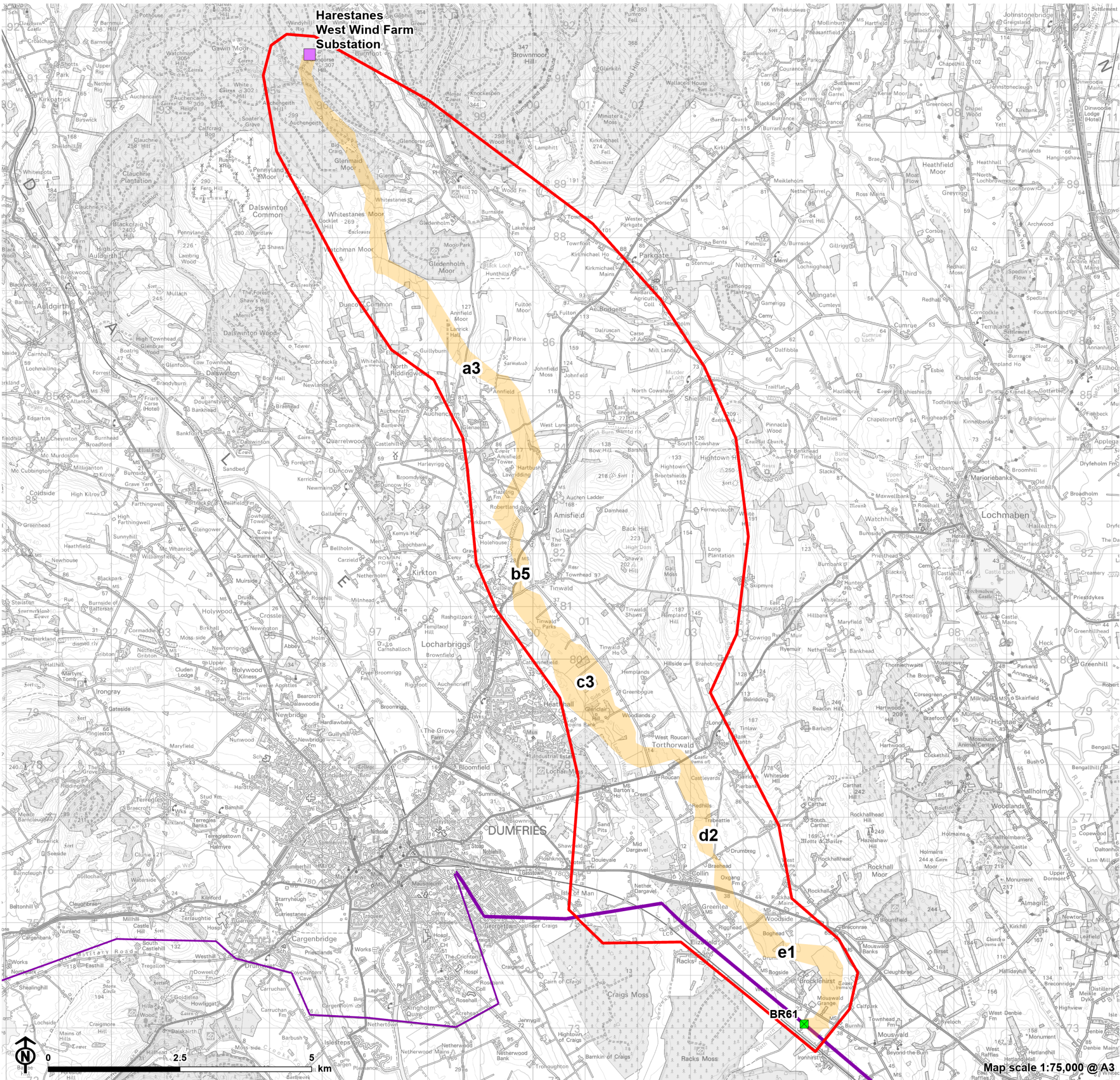
1.7 As a transmission license holder for central and southern Scotland, SPT, on behalf of SPEN is required under Section 9(2) of the Electricity Act 1989 to:

- Develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission and
- Facilitate competition in the supply and generation of electricity.

1.8 Section 38 and Schedule 9 of the Act impose a further statutory duty on SPEN to take account of the following factors in formulating proposals for the installation of overhead transmission lines:

- *"(a) to have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and*
- *(b) to do what it reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects."*

1.9 As a result of the above, SPEN is required to identify electrical connections that meet the technical requirements of the electricity system, which are economically viable, and cause on balance, the least disturbance to both the environment and the people who live, work and enjoy recreation within it.



Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV
Overhead Line Grid Connection
for SP Energy Networks



Figure 1.1: Preferred Route

- Study Area
- Point of Connection
- Tension Towers for Connection
- Preferred Route
- Existing 132kV overhead line (OHL)



Chapter 2

Approach to Pre-Application Consultation

Legislation and Guidance

2.1 SPEN is applying to the Scottish Ministers for Section 37 Consent under the Electricity Act 1989 to install and keep installed the 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection for Harestanes West Wind Farm. SPEN will also apply for deemed planning permission for the line and associated works under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

2.2 Whilst there are no formal pre-application requirements for consultation in seeking section 37 consent/deemed planning permission, SPEN is embracing best practice as outlined in the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit's ECU Best Practice Guidance (July 2022). This guidance encourages applicants to engage with stakeholders and the public in order to develop their proposal in advance of such applications being made. For the purpose of this report, consenting/statutory bodies are referred to as statutory consultees for ease of reference/common use of terminology even though there is no statutory requirement for them to be consulted through this process.

SPEN's Commitment to Engagement

2.3 Stakeholder engagement, including public involvement, is an important component of the Scottish planning and consenting system. SPEN attaches great importance to the effect that its works may have on the environment and on local communities. SPEN recognises the importance of consulting effectively on proposals and of being transparent about the decisions reached. SPEN is keen to engage with key stakeholders including local communities and others who may have an interest in the Proposed Development. This engagement process begins at the early stages of development of a project and continues into construction once consent has been granted.

2.1 SPEN's approach to stakeholder engagement for major electrical infrastructure projects is outlined in Chapter 2 of the SPEN document 'Approach to Routeing and Environmental Impact Assessment'². SPEN aims to ensure effective, inclusive and meaningful engagement with the public, local

communities, statutory bodies and other consultees and interested parties through four key engagement steps:

- Pre-project notification and engagement with consenting/statutory bodies and planning authorities;
- Information gathering to inform the routeing stage;
- Obtaining feedback on the emerging route options and preferred route; and
- The Environmental Appraisal/Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) stage.

Consultation Strategy

2.2 The overall objective of the consultation process is to ensure that all parties interested in the Proposed Development have continued access to updated information and were given clear and easy ways in which to shape and inform SPEN's proposal at the pre-application stage.

2.3 Key issues identified during this process have been recorded and will be presented to decision makers to assist with the consents process.

2.4 Two rounds of public consultation events will be undertaken for the public, stakeholders and consultees to provide comments on the proposals. Further details of the consultation process are presented in **Chapter 3: Public Consultation Process** of this consultation feedback report .

2.5 This consultation feedback report provides details relating to consultation activities undertaken between March 2022 (with statutory bodies) and September 2023 (local communities and stakeholders).

Chapter 3

Consultation with Statutory Bodies (2022)

Overview

3.1 During the earlier stages of the routeing appraisal process, SPEN sought initial feedback from the following statutory bodies on the preferred route that was emerging through the environmental constraint mapping and technical appraisal process:

- Dumfries & Galloway Council (Planning);
- Historic Environment Scotland (HES);
- NatureScot; and
- SEPA.

3.2 Emails were sent to the consultees noted above on 3rd March 2022 providing a draft comparative appraisal table alongside figures which illustrated the location of the proposed OHL grid connection, routeing considerations, route options and the preferred route. Comments were sought on the emerging preferred route as a whole, in addition to seeking specific advice from the consultees in relation to particular parts of the route and feedback in relation to any potential mitigation that may be required if the preferred route was to be progressed.

3.3 Email responses/feedback were received from HES, NatureScot and SEPA. A summary of the feedback received is provided in **Table 3.1** below.

Table 3.1: Consultation Feedback March 2022

Consultee	Summary of Feedback	Action Taken in OHL routing consideration
NatureScot	- The route identified as the preferred option avoids Black Loch SSSI at sufficient distance, NatureScot are unlikely to have any concerns with respect to this. - Attention drawn to NatureScot Guidance on SPA Connectivity and Guidance on Assessing and Mitigating the Impacts of Power Lines. - As the development falls within potential foraging distance for barnacle goose and pink footed goose, which are notified features of the Upper Solway Flats and Marshes SPA, a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) may need to be undertaken once an assessment of bird usage of the area has been undertaken. - It appears that the route selection will also aim to minimise effects through micro siting on deep peat and ancient woodland, which NatureScot would of course also support, though are unlikely to offer formal comment on at EIA stage.	Commentary re. guidance recommendations noted and will be considered as appropriate as the project progresses. The requirement for an HRA will be considered following the conclusion of the bird surveys for the project. Comments noted; no actions required to amend the preferred route.
HES	- Advice provided on HES' interests only, which cover world heritage sites, scheduled monuments and their setting, category A-listed buildings and their setting, and gardens and designed landscapes (GDLs) and battlefields in their respective inventories. - HES is content that potential impacts on heritage assets and their settings have been correctly identified and appraised as part of the consideration of alternative route options for the overhead line. - HES note that it has not always been possible to select the route options which would minimise impacts on the historic environment as part of decisions on the preferred route. - HES consider that there is a potential for the preferred route, to give rise to impacts on the settings of nearby heritage assets. These include Amisfield Tower (Category A listed building, LB17233), Barrs Hill, fort (Scheduled Monument, SM643), Tinwald House (Category A listed building, LB17238), Tinwald House Cottages (Category A listed building, LB17239), Torthorwald Castle (Scheduled Monument, SM713) and Torthorwald Village Cruck Cottage (Category A listed building, LB17157). - HES are nevertheless content to agree with the assessment that these impacts are unlikely to be significant and have no further comments to offer at this stage.	Comments noted; no actions required to amend the preferred route.
SEPA	SEPA is interested in ensuring that impacts on watercourses and other water features, flood risk, peat and wetland habitats are minimised for projects such as this. SEPA appreciates there often has to be a trade-off between these and other factors when designing an overall route and the approach taken seems reasonable and is explained well in the Comparative Appraisal Table.	Confirmation that approach taken in the appraisal is reasonable. The route options should continue to avoid watercourses, floodplains and areas of peat where possible with the detailed design.

Chapter 3

Consultation with Statutory Bodies (2022)

132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection for Harestanes West Wind Farm
October 2025

Consultee	Summary of Feedback	Action Taken in OHL routeing consideration
	■ Using a 50 m buffer is a good starting point when considering impacts on water features and flooding and trying to design a layout. ■ For projects such as this, which SEPA consider as essential infrastructure, its acknowledged that it's not always possible to adhere to it for all parts of the scheme. The extent to which SEPA would be concerned regarding development within that buffer very much depends on whether it's clear that there are no options to avoid it, how the works are designed and what the works/infrastructure within the buffer will be. ■ The construction of wooden pole lines, if carried out well, tends to have limited impacts on all the aspects of the environment in which SEPA have an interest. They do not need very large foundations, can be positioned to avoid local sensitivities such as watercourses, peat and wetlands and can be accessed by running-boards or low impact vehicles and therefore usually don't need a new temporary access track. If that is the case for this project then SEPA wouldn't be concerned if some of the poles and the construction area are within 50 m of a watercourse or within the functional flood plain as shown on SEPA maps (as indicated in the information provided by SPEN, running directly adjacent and parallel to a watercourse should be avoided). ■ At the detailed design stage it should be clearly shown that (1) development has avoided the functional flood plain and 50 m buffer as much as possible, (2) where that's not possible the extent of works within these areas is minimised and there will be no landraising, (3) there is no engineering works within the banks of any of the watercourses or directly adjacent to them, and (4) any construction compounds or laydown areas are not in the functional flood plain or within 50 m of a watercourse (or on other sensitivities). Information should also be provided on any proposals for temporary watercourse crossings, if they are required. ■ In relation to any specific studies required to support the preferred option then if the works are of the type described above SEPA would not need any specific hydrology or flood risk studies – just a clear plan showing the location of the poles, line and construction works in relation to the functional flood plain and buffers. ■ In relation to SEPA's other issues peat probing work will be required in all areas where it is thought peat may be present (and the finalised layout shown to avoid peat or avoid the deepest areas of peat) and habitat survey in any natural or semi-natural areas (and the finalised layout shown to avoid any good quality or rare groundwater dependant wetlands).	No requirement to amend the preferred route; further design work will be undertaken to address SEPA's comments.
Dumfries & Galloway Council	No response received	N/A

Chapter 4

Consultation Process (2023)

Overview

4.1 The consultation ran from 1st August to 1st September 2023. Newspaper adverts were placed in the Dumfries Courier for two weeks before the consultation event, detailing the project proposals, relevant dates and location for the consultation. Leaflets were also distributed, and the project website went live on the 1st of August with publicly available consultation documents for viewing and download. Feedback was accepted via the public consultation events, in writing and by email. Overall, opportunity was provided for informal comments to be received during the period between 1st August and 1st September 2023. Full details of the consultation are provided in this chapter.

Consultees

4.2 This section describes the various groups of stakeholders and consultees relevant to the Proposed Development that SPEN consulted during this first phase of pre-application consultation.

4.3 SPEN consulted with relevant stakeholders including; statutory and non-statutory consultees, community councils, Elected members of the Council and Member of Parliament and Scottish Parliament, and local residents, businesses and the general public.

4.4 Consultees were asked for their views on:

- The preferred route (**A3-B5-C3-D2-E1**);
- The alternative route options considered during the routeing process; and
- Any other issues, suggestions or feedback; particularly knowledge of the local area, for example areas used for recreation, local environmental features, and any plans to build along the preferred route.

4.5 A full list of stakeholders consulted is presented within **Appendix A**.

4.6 Prior to the consultation events, landowners within the preferred route corridor were contacted directly by SPEN's land project officer separately for their feedback on the proposals.

Public Consultation Event Details

In-person Event

4.7 The public consultation events were held on Thursday **24th August** and Friday **25th August 2023 (12pm – 6pm)**:

- **24th August 2023** at the Hetland Hall Hotel, Near Carrutherstown, A75, Carrutherstown, Dumfries, DG1 4JX; and
- **25th August 2023** at the Heathall Community Centre, Barnett Rd, Heathhall, Dumfries, DG1 3RU.

Advertisement

Newspaper Adverts

4.8 Prior to the public consultation events, the details of the events were advertised in the Dumfries Courier (a local newspaper) for two consecutive weeks on **Friday 11th August 2023** and **Friday 18th August 2023 (Appendix B)**. The details provided in the newspaper advertisement complied with the statutory requirements.

Leaflet

4.9 Leaflets were distributed via a third party company to local properties within the study area and the properties at Locharbriggs and Heathhall (**w/c 24th July 2023**). The project leaflet invited members of the public to attend the in-person event and provided details about how to access more information via the project website and make comments. The leaflet distributed is contained in **Appendix C**.

Consultation Event Material

4.10 The consultation event material consisted of 13 presentation banners which contained information relating to:

- SPEN;
- the climate emergency;
- the proposals including what an overhead line would look like;
- the routing methodology undertaken including the study area, environmental considerations, the route options and connection points;
- the preferred route and circuit breaker compound; and
- details of the consultation process including ways to provide comments and deadlines for doing so.

4.11 On the days of the events, printed copies of the routing and consultation document were available to view, alongside printed versions of the preferred route which could be placed

on a table to allow ease of review. Printed hand out versions of the presentation banners, comments forms and leaflet were also available for attendees to take home.

4.12 Copies of the presentation banners are contained in **Appendix D**.

Event Attendance

4.13 With consideration to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), SPEN did not request that attendees of the events signed in or provided names/addresses. On the days of the events, attendance was counted by one of the team members and recorded based on hourly intervals.

4.14 On 24th August, 12 people attended the event. The most popular times for attendance were between 1pm-2pm and 3pm-4pm where four people and three people attended respectively, with the other attendees being split over the remaining consultation hours.

4.15 On 25th August, 47 people attended the event. Attendance was well distributed throughout the day with 10 or more people attending between 2pm-3pm and between 4pm-5pm. The quietest time when only three people attended was between 1pm-2pm.

4.16 The event was attended by design team members from SPEN and LUC.

Consultation Comments Forms

4.17 Comments forms were available on the day of exhibition for attendees to fill out their responses / feedback. Comments were also accepted in writing and by email until **Friday 1st September 2023** via:

- Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection Project
Land and Planning Team
SP Energy Networks
55 Fullarton Drive
Glasgow
G32 8FA
- harestaneswestohl@spenergynetworks.co.uk

4.18 No attendees left written feedback on the day of the events. Verbal comments and questions raised were informally noted by one of the design team on the day and attendees were encouraged to provide written feedback/ comments to SPEN via the communication methods detailed.

4.19 A total of 23 responses were received during the consultation process.

Stakeholder Responses

4.20 Comments were received from the following statutory/non-statutory consultees during the 2023 pre-application consultation:

- BT;
- The Coal Authority;
- NatureScot;
- Scottish Badgers;
- SEPA; and
- Scottish Forestry.

4.21 Summaries of these consultation responses and any actions to be taken through the detailed design are noted in **Appendix E: Summary of Pre-Application Consultation Feedback from the Routeing Stage**.

Post Consultation Site Visit

4.22 Following a request from a local resident at one of the public events, SPEN and LUC met with the landowner at their property to view the extent of recent planting and a caravan business which is currently located within the preferred route option section B5. Information obtained from this site visit is being considered alongside all other feedback.

Consideration of Feedback

4.23 SPEN will continue to liaise with landowners to ensure that their views are taken into account in the design process as the project progresses.

4.24 Consultation responses received and the responses made by SPEN (including any actions required through the design process) are outlined in **Appendix E**.

4.25 Consultees and attendees were informed that comments received at the consultation phase were informal and to allow any informed changes to the preferred route where necessary. Opportunities to provide formal comments to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit, who will be the decision makers on the Section 37 application will follow at a later stage.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Next Steps

5.1 SPEN continues to review and consider in detail all feedback received to date from the public, consultees and landowners in relation to the pre-application consultation for the Proposed Development.

5.2 The feedback will inform SPEN's review of the Proposed Development with a view to confirming the proposed route to be taken forward to the detailed pole design stage.

5.3 The proposed route option (when confirmed) will be progressed to identify alignment for the 132kV OHL, including pole positioning, which will be informed by environmental baseline surveys, detailed engineering ground surveys and further discussions with landowners.

5.4 A further round of consultation will be undertaken to present the findings to the detailed alignment and similar consultation steps as described in the previous chapters will be undertaken to notify consultees of the next round of events.

5.5 The Proposed Development will require consent under Section 37 of the Act as well as deemed planning permission. A Screening Request will be submitted to the Scottish Government ECU to request a formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion from the Scottish Ministers in accordance with Regulation 8(1) of The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. If it is determined that an EIA is not required to accompany the application for Section 37 consent, the application will be accompanied by an Environmental Appraisal Report.

5.6 Following the second round of consultation events, the alignment, including all ancillary development, will be included in the application for Section 37 consent and deemed planning permission to the Scottish Government ECU. Information collated from feedback received as part of the pre-application consultation relating to locally important areas and features will be reflected in the design of the alignment alongside the field surveys where relevant.

5.7 Following the submission of the application for Section 37 and deemed planning permission, further public consultation will be carried out by the Scottish Government ECU.

Appendix A

Stakeholder Consultee List

Consultee List

Statutory Consultees

- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- SEPA (south west)
- Nature Scot (southern Scotland)
- Historic Environment Scotland

Community Councils

- Kirkmahoe
- Auldsgirth and District
- Closeburn
- Kirkmichael
- Tinwald Parish
- Mouswald

Internal Scottish Government Advisors

- Transport Scotland
- Marine Scotland
- Scottish Forestry

Non-Statutory Consultees

- British Horse Society
- BT
- Crown Estate Scotland
- Fisheries Management Scotland
- Fisheries - Local District Salmon Fisheries (River Nith District Salmon Fishery Board)
- John Muir Trust
- Mountaineering Scotland
- Mountaineering Scotland
- RSPB Scotland
- Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society (ScotWays)
- Scottish Water

- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- Visit Scotland
- Scottish Badgers
- South Scotland Red Squirrel Group
- Dumfries and Galloway Raptor Study Group
- National Farmers Union of Scotland
- Ramblers Association
- Scottish Outdoor Access Network
- Sustrans Scotland
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- National Trust for Scotland
- Coal Authority

Appendix B

2023 Newspaper Advertisement

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Public Notices

SP Energy Networks

Public Consultation for a new wood pole overhead line connecting Harestanes West wind farm to the existing steel tower line east of Dumfries, near Mouswald

Development: A 23km overhead line supported by wood poles and operating at 132kv between Harestanes West wind farm substation and existing steel tower BR61, including a new circuit breaker compound adjacent to tower BR61, southeast of Dumfries.

The consultation started on 1st August 2023 and closes on 1st September 2023 at midnight.

SP Transmission, the transmission license holder, is a subsidiary of SP Networks responsible for the transmission of electricity in central and southern Scotland. SP Transmission has received a grid connection application from the wind farm developer for Harestanes West wind farm via National Grid and is required under the Electricity Act 1989 to seek a connection to the grid network.

Members of the public, landowners and other interested parties are invited to take part in the consultation for the proposed wood pole overhead line.

The project team are now consulting on the preferred route corridor, which will be refined post consultation to include pole locations, after which a second round of consultation will take place with this additional detail.

The consultation material will be based online at the SP Energy Networks website, which can be accessed at this web address: http://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/overhead_line_for_harestanes_west_wf.aspx

This can also be viewed in person at our live public consultation events to be held at the following locations/times:

24th August between 12pm – 6pm at the Hetland Hall Hotel, Near Carrutherstown, A75, Carrutherstown, Dumfries, DG1 4JX and

25th August between 12pm -6pm at Heathhall Community Centre, Barnett, Road, Heathhall, Dumfries, DG1 3RU

Comments can be emailed to HarestanesWestOHL@spenergynetworks.co.uk

Or posted to: Harestanes West Overhead Line Project
SP Energy Networks
55 Fullarton Drive
Glasgow
G32 8FA

Hard copies of the Routeing and Consultation document will be available between 1st August 2023 and 1st September 2023 at the addresses listed here and can be provided on request.

Georgetown Library
Gillbrae Road
Georgetown Drive
Dumfries
DG1 4EJ

Lochthorn Library
Edinburgh Road
Lochthorn
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LONG REACH hedge trimmer, used twice, £35. Tel. 01387 256845.

BABY ITEMS

BABY Startchids pushchair, suitable for baby to 3 years, with raincover and cosy toes, £40 o.n.o. Tel. 07813394651.

BABY BATH, white, top 'n' tail, hooded towel + extras, £5. Tel. 07379 769712.

BABY BATH, blue, hooded towel, 2 x bath toys + extras, £10. Tel. 07379 769712.

CLOTHING

GENT'S black suit, 3 piece, trouser L31", W32", jacket 40" (worn once) £20. Tel. 07961221553.

MISC

2 MAN TENT, used once, perfect condition, £5. Tel. 07519373907 can deliver if from Annan.

4 MAN TENT, used once, perfect condition, £10. Tel. 07519373907 can deliver if from Annan.

PRO-RIDER folding mobility scooter, £150. Tel. 07851221094.

MISC

DOUBLE BLOW UP MATTRESS, used once, perfect condition, £5. Tel. 07519373907 can deliver if from Annan.

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Public Notices

MOORHEADS HOSPITAL TRUST

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APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS

Moorheads Hospital Trust is empowered to make grants for the benefit of elderly disadvantaged residents in the area of the former Royal Burgh of Dumfries.

Applications are now invited from individuals and organisations for grants who meet the residence criteria.
Forms of Application are obtainable from the undernoted address:
Mrs Gillian Doak
JHS I LAW
Solicitors, 8 Bank Street, Dumfries, DG1 2NS
By email to info@jhslaw.co.uk OR
Telephone Number 01387 739000
Application Forms should be returned to the above address by 29th September 2023

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SP Energy Networks

Public Consultation for a new wood pole overhead line connecting Harestanes West wind farm to the existing steel tower line east of Dumfries, near Mouswald

Development: A 23km overhead line supported by wood poles and operating at 132kv between Harestanes West wind farm substation and existing steel tower BR61, including a new circuit breaker compound adjacent to tower BR61, southeast of Dumfries.

The consultation started on 1st August 2023 and closes on 1st September 2023 at midnight.

SP Transmission, the transmission license holder, is a subsidiary of SP Networks responsible for the transmission of electricity in central and southern Scotland. SP Transmission has received a grid connection application from the wind farm developer for Harestanes West wind farm via National Grid and is required under the Electricity Act 1989 to seek a connection to the grid network.

Members of the public, landowners and other interested parties are invited to take part in the consultation for the proposed wood pole overhead line.

The project team are now consulting on the preferred route corridor, which will be refined post consultation to include pole locations, after which a second round of consultation will take place with this additional detail.

The consultation material will be based online at the SP Energy Networks website, which can be accessed at this web address:

http://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/overhead_line_for_harestanes_west_wf.aspx

This can also be viewed in person at our live public consultation events to be held at the following locations/times:

24th August between 12pm – 6pm at the Hetland Hall Hotel, Near Carrutherstown, A75, Carrutherstown, Dumfries, DG1 4JX and

25th August between 12pm -6pm at Heathhall Community Centre, Barnett, Road, Heathhall, Dumfries, DG1 3RU

Comments can be emailed to HarestanesWestOHL@spenergynetworks.co.uk

Or posted to:
Harestanes West Overhead Line Project
SP Energy Networks
55 Fullarton Drive
Glasgow
G32 8FA

Hard copies of the Routeing and Consultation document will be available between 1st August 2023 and 1st September 2023 at the addresses listed here and can be provided on request.

Georgetown Library Gillbrae Road Georgetown Drive Dumfries DG1 4EJ	Lochthorn Library Edinburgh Road Lochthorn Dumfries DG1 1UF
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Appendix C

2023 Project Consultation Leaflet

Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection Public Consultation Leaflet

Background

ScottishPower Renewables (SPR) is proposing to develop Harestanes West Wind Farm comprising up to 13 wind turbines with an expected generating capacity of up to 78 megawatts (MW). The wind farm will be east of Thornhill, Dumfries and Galloway and adjacent to the operational Harestanes Wind Farm and proposed Harestanes South Wind Farm. SP Energy Networks (SPEN), as the electricity transmission and distribution licence holder for central and southern Scotland, has a legal duty to keep its network up-to-date to safeguard electricity supplies, as well as to enable new connections for the generation of electricity.

To meet its licence obligations and provide an electricity grid connection for Harestanes West Wind Farm, SPEN will seek consent from Scottish Ministers under Section 37 of the Electricity Act

to construct and operate a new 132 kilovolt (kV) overhead line ('the new OHL') supported on wood poles between the proposed Harestanes West Wind Farm substation to a suitable tie-in point on the existing 132kV 'BR' Route. The new OHL will be wholly within Dumfries and Galloway.

SP Energy Networks is now seeking views on the proposals and the work undertaken to date to identify a preferred route for the new OHL. Further Information about the project, our plans for consultation, and how to make comments, is provided overleaf.



What are the Proposals?

The new OHL will be approximately 23 km in length and supported on double 'H' wood poles. One 33kV circuit breaker and one transformer will be required at the Harestanes West Wind Farm substation as well as a circuit breaker compound at the tie-in point on the 'BR' Route. As part of the wider approach, a land right will be sought with each landowner for a corridor, typically 60m wide (30m either side of the centre of the OHL), to protect the resilience of the new OHL from future development and from falling trees.

The section of OHL between the wood poles is known as the 'span'. Span lengths between the wood poles will average between 80 metres and 100 metres. The wood poles will be dark brown in colour when newly constructed and weather over the years to a light grey. The exact location of new wood poles along the final proposed route of the new OHL will be confirmed through a detailed design/technical review process as the project progresses, and will be informed by the findings of this public consultation.

OHL cables generally require refurbishment after approximately 40 years. Should the new OHL still be needed to support the operation of Harestanes West Wind Farm at the end of its operational life, then it is likely that it will be re-equipped with new conductors and insulators and refurbished. At this time, it is expected that the new OHL will be decommissioned fully when Harestanes West Wind Farm has reached the end of its operational life.

Routeing

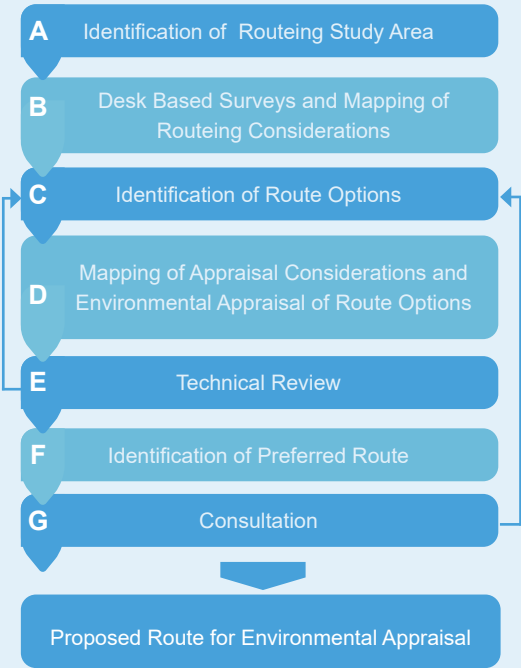
SPEN has been working with independent consultants to identify potential route options for the new overhead line (OHL). Our objective is to identify a route for the OHL which meets the technical requirements of the electricity system, which is economically viable and causes, on balance, the least disturbance to the environment and the people who live, work and enjoy recreation within it.

Following the identification of an appropriate study area and informed by mapped key environmental and technical routeing considerations, different route options split into sections A to E were identified for the new OHL. Each of the route options were given an alpha numeric reference:

A1 to A3, B1 to B5, C1 to C3, D1 to D4, E1 to E4. There are four towers on the existing 'BR' route within the study area which, from a technical perspective, were considered at the outset to be capable of accommodating the connection of the new OHL. These were towers BR61, BR70, BR72 and BR77. Following further technical review, including consideration of the proximity of these tie-in points to residential properties, towers BR70 and BR77 were discounted and not considered further.

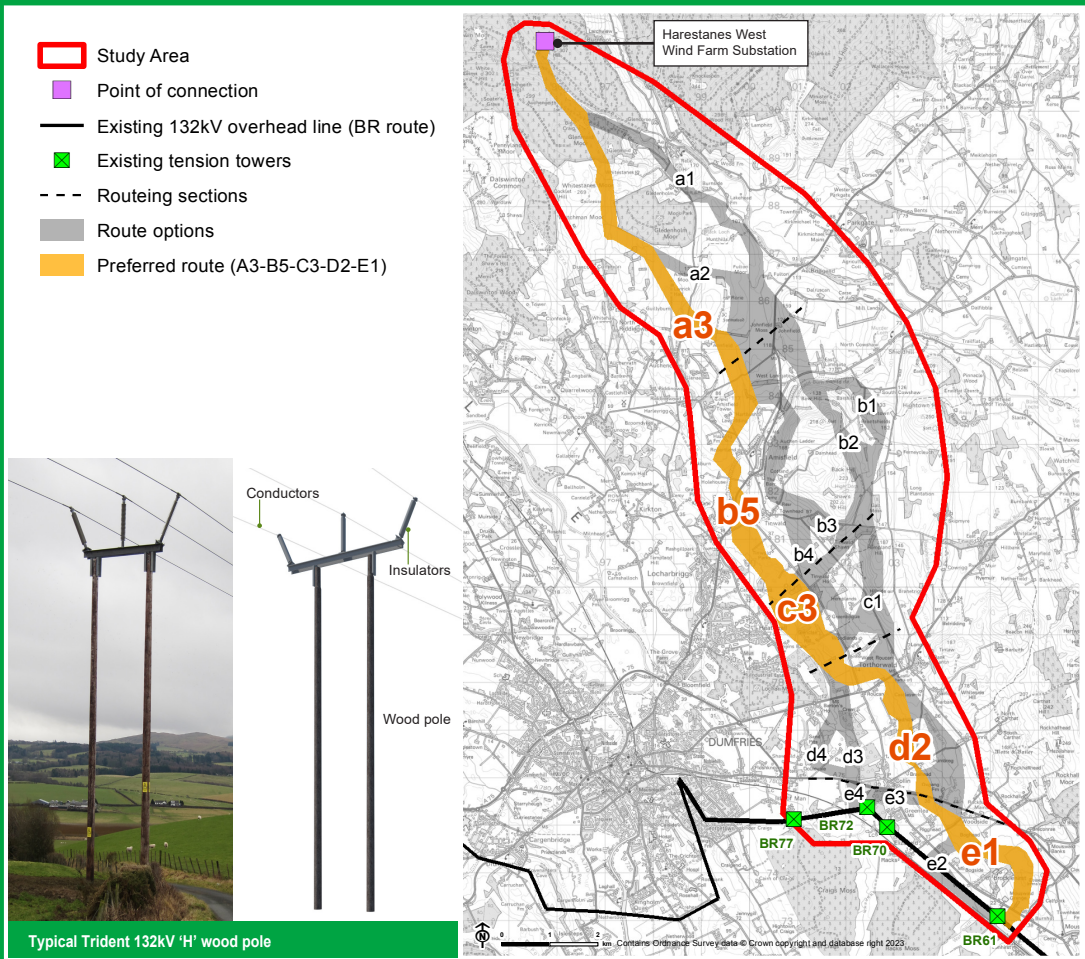
The route options were appraised against environmental and technical criteria, including local landscape character and views, cultural heritage, biodiversity, topography, proximity to existing OHLs and route length to identify the preferred route. The preferred route is the one which achieves the best overall balance between limiting impacts on the environment and people, whilst also meeting SPEN's technical requirements.

Routeing Methodology



More information about the process we have followed to identify and appraise route options to select the preferred route can be found in our Routeing and Consultation Documents (April 2023). This is available on the project website: www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/overhead_line_for_harestanes_west_wf.aspx

The Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection Project



What we would like your views on?

As part of the consultation we would particularly like your views on:

- 1 The preferred route for the new OHL
- 2 The alternative route options we considered during the routeing process.
- 3 Any other issues, suggestions or feedback you would like us to consider. We would particularly like to hear your views on your local area, for example areas you use for recreation, local environmental features you would like us to consider, and any plans you may have to build in proximity to the preferred route.

Please note comments at this stage are informal comments to SPEN and are made to allow SPEN to determine whether changes to the preferred route are necessary. An opportunity to comment formally to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit, who will be the decision makers on the Section 37 application, will follow at a later stage in the process.

How do I make comments or find out more information?

Our consultation will run from **Tuesday 1st August 2023 until Friday 1st September 2023**. The closing date for you to send your responses to us is **midnight on Friday 1st September**. Following this date, the information will remain accessible online and available to download.

Please find below the best ways to find out more or talk to us.



Visit the website:
(from 1st August 2023)

www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/overhead_line_for_harestanes_west_wf.aspx

You can view or download all the project documents (including the Routing and Consultation Document (2023)) and this leaflet on our website



Email us:

harestaneswestohl@spenergynetworks.co.uk



Send us a letter

Harestanes West wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection Project
Land and Planning Team,
SP Energy Networks, 55 Fullarton Drive, Glasgow, G32 8FA



Attend a public
exhibition

The exhibitions will be held at the following locations from **12pm to 6pm** on the days stated:

- **24th August 2023 at the Hetland Hall Hotel**,
Near Carrutherstown, A75, Carrutherstown, Dumfries, DG1 4JX
- **25th August 2023 at Heathall Community Centre**,
Barnett Rd, Heathhall, Dumfries, DG1 3RU

What happens next

A

Gathering of Feedback from Public Consultation to identify 'Proposed Route'

B

Request Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
Screening Opinion from the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit (ECU)

C

Undertake consultation Round 2 to present the 'Proposed Route'
(details to be confirmed)

D

Undertake baseline environmental surveys

E

Identification of final alignment (pole locations) and associated infrastructure
for the new OHL following feedback from specialist team and landowners

F

Undertake EIA (if required)/Environmental Appraisal to assess
the effects of the construction and operation of new OHL

G

Submit Section 37 application for consent to Scottish Government

H

Discharge of planning conditions (if consent is granted)

I

Construction of new OHL

Thank you for taking the time to read this leaflet.

Appendix D

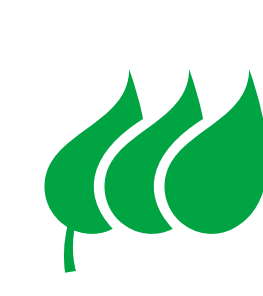
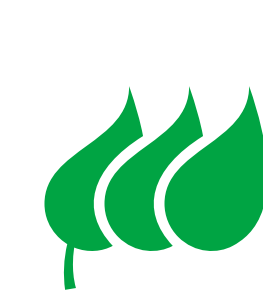
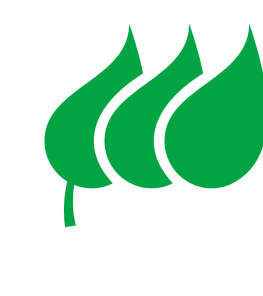
2023 Project Presentation Banners

1 Welcome

Welcome and thank you for attending this public exhibition for the **Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection Project** (hereafter referred to as ‘the new OHL’).

We hope you enjoy your visit and we would appreciate your feedback to the project team via comments today, email or written correspondence – see Board 12 for further details.

Through this consultation, you will have the opportunity to:

-  Learn about SP Energy Networks (SPEN);
-  Learn about the proposals;
-  Learn about the method and process used to identify and appraise route options;
-  View the preferred route; and
-  Learn about the next steps and how you can provide feedback.

These exhibition boards and a copy of the Routeing and Consultation Report (2023) are also available for download from

www.spenenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/overhead_line_for_harestanes_west_wf.aspx

This consultation will run between **Tuesday 1st August and Friday 1st September 2023**.

However, the information will remain accessible online at the website above and available to download in a pdf format after the consultation closes.



Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection

www.spenenergynetworks.co.uk

2 About Us

SPEN is part of the ScottishPower Group of companies and owns three regulated businesses in the UK. These businesses are ‘asset-owner’ companies holding the regulated assets and Electricity Transmission and Distribution licenses of ScottishPower.

As part of this, SPEN operates, maintains and develops the network of cables, overhead lines and substations which transport electricity to connected homes and businesses in Southern and Central Scotland.

SPEN has a legal duty under Section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 to keep its network up-to-date to safeguard electricity supplies, as well as to enable new connections for the generation of electricity.



Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection

www.spenenergynetworks.co.uk

3 Climate Emergency

The effects of climate change are widely acknowledged as one of the biggest global, economic, environmental, and social concerns the world is currently experiencing. The use of fossil fuels to produce electricity, supply heat, and fuel transportation is a major contributor to the increase in the concentration and volume of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

One of the primary aims of the Scottish Government is to move towards a low carbon economy, with climate change targets to reduce carbon dioxide emission levels by 100% (net zero) by 2045. This relates to all sectors of business and industry and all policy frameworks that affect the public in general and there is a recognition from the Scottish Government that renewable energy technologies will play a key role in the delivery of the emission reduction targets to achieve 'Net Zero'.

The Climate Change Plan (CCP) Update 2020, states that ***“renewable energy generation in Scotland will account for the equivalent of 50% of our energy demand across electricity, heat and transport”*** by 2032, and also by 2032, that ***“our electricity system will have deepened its transformation for the better, with over 100% of Scotland’s electricity demand being met by renewable sources”***.

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (2023) identifies 'strategic renewable energy generation and transmission infrastructure' as a national development which will

support the delivery of sustainable places. It is acknowledged that grid infrastructure can help to reduce emissions and improve security of supply. Policy 11 of NPF4 states that ***“development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies will be supported. These include (ii) enabling works, such as grid transmission and distribution infrastructure”***.

In 2019, Dumfries and Galloway Council declared a Climate Emergency and adopted a strategic Action Plan that outlined 12 commitments facilitated by the Council’s Climate Emergency Cross Party Working Group. The strategy is aimed to further reduce the Council’s Carbon emissions and to become a net zero carbon region by 2025. The Council have also prepared a Carbon Neutral Strategic Plan which provides a route map to give direction and identify key points of action for the Council. This is in line to support the national targets for the Scottish and UK governments.

SPEN recognises that our electricity networks are the backbone of the energy system which sits at the heart of this Net Zero transition. SPEN is currently at the forefront of decarbonising our energy system, having already connected approximately one quarter of all onshore wind in Great Britain to the distribution network. SPEN recognises our key role in helping the government meet its climate change targets.

Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection

www.spenenergynetworks.co.uk

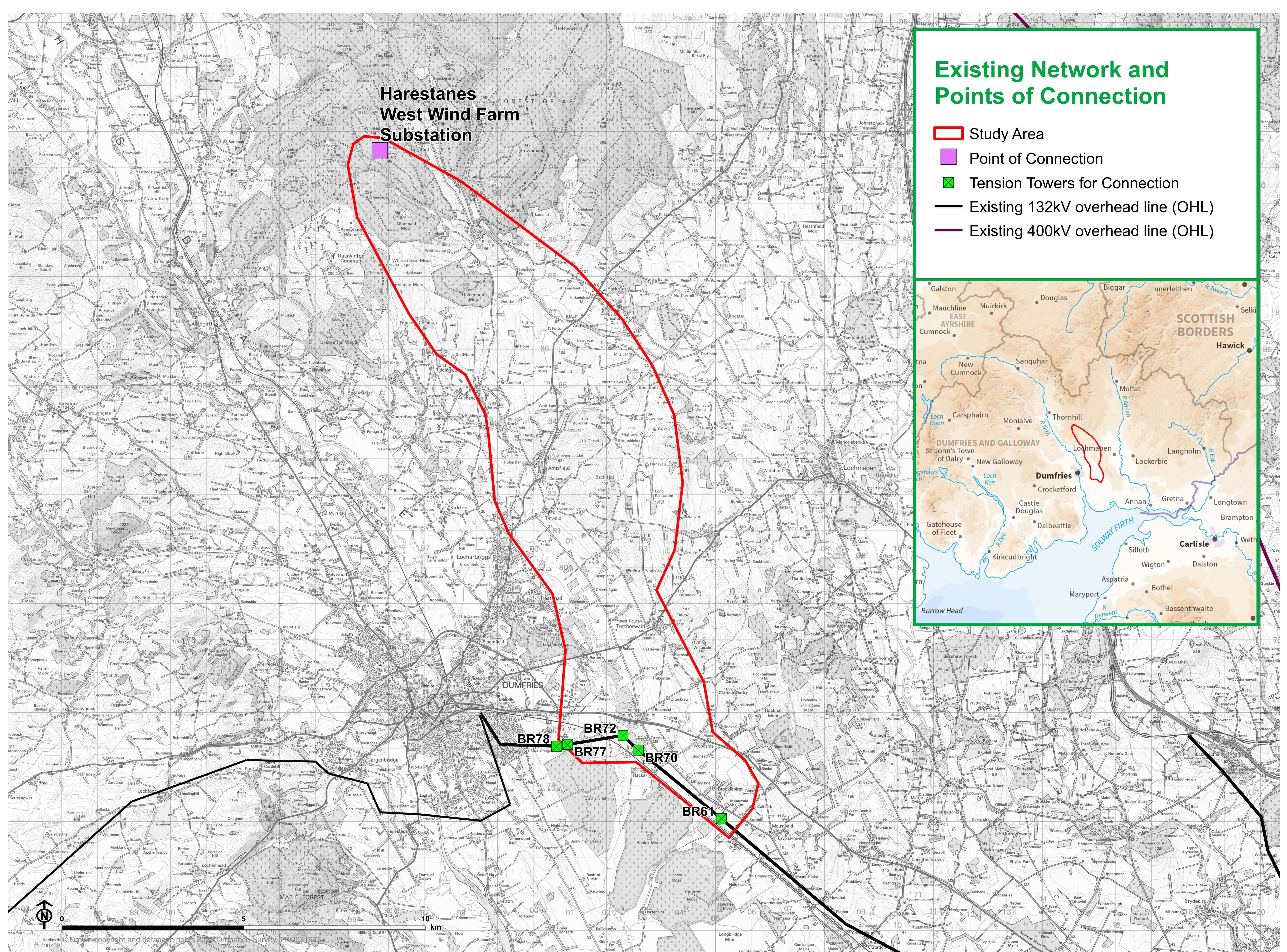
4 What are the Proposals?

ScottishPower Renewables (SPR) is proposing to develop Harestanes West Wind Farm comprising up to 13 wind turbines with an expected generating capacity of up to 78 megawatts (MW).

The wind farm will be east of Thornhill, Dumfries and Galloway and adjacent to the operational Harestanes Wind Farm and proposed Harestanes South Wind Farm.

To meet its licence obligations and provide an electricity grid connection for Harestanes West Wind Farm, SPEN will seek consent from Scottish Ministers under Section 37 of the Electricity Act to construct and operate a new 132 kilovolt (kV) overhead line ('the new OHL') supported on wood poles between the proposed Harestanes West Wind Farm substation to a suitable tie-in point on the existing 132kV BR Route. The new OHL will be wholly within Dumfries and Galloway.

Existing Network and Points of Connection



Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection

www.spenenergynetworks.co.uk

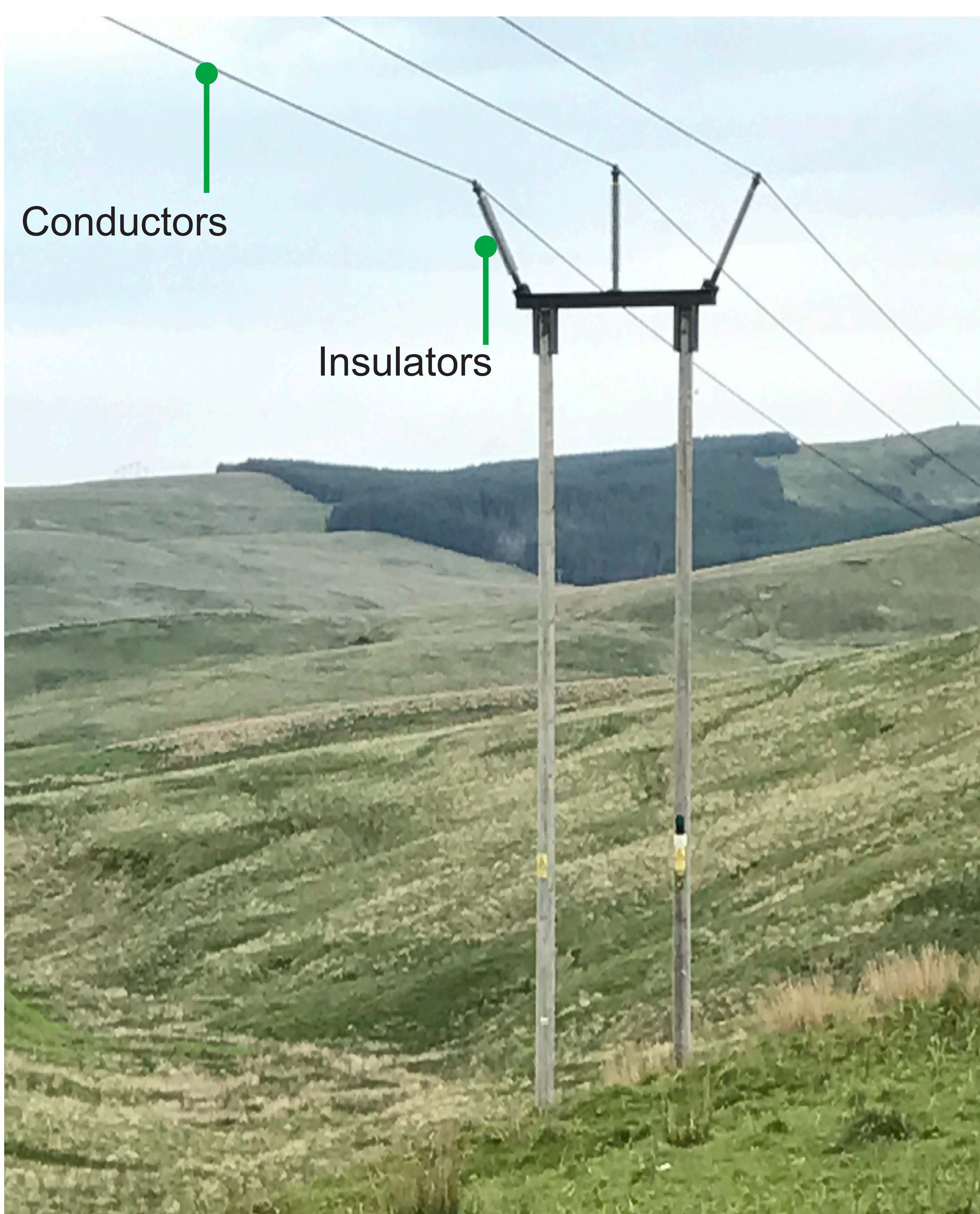
5 What will the Overhead Line look like?

The new OHL will be approximately 23 km in length and supported on wood poles of the double 'H' pole design. One 33kV circuit breaker and one transformer will also be required at the Harestanes West Wind Farm substation as well as a circuit breaker compound at the tie-in point on the 'BR Route'.

Land agreements will be sought with each landowner. A wayleave corridor typically 60m wide (30m either side of the centre of the OHL) will be sought.



Typical circuit breaker compound



Typical Trident 132kV 'H' wood pole
(height between 11m - 16m)

The section of OHL between the wood poles is known as the 'span'. Span lengths between the wood poles will average between 80 metres and 100 metres.

The wood poles will be dark brown in colour when newly constructed and weather over the years to a light grey.

The exact location of new wood poles along the final proposed route will be confirmed through a detailed design/technical review process which will be informed by the findings of this public consultation.

Other temporary infrastructure will be required during construction of the new OHL, including access tracks and storage areas.

In terms of operation and maintenance, whilst most OHL components are maintenance free, exposed elements which suffer from corrosion, wear, deterioration and fatigue may require inspection and periodic maintenance.

OHL cables generally require refurbishment after approximately 40 years. Should the new OHL still be needed to support the operation of Harestanes West Wind Farm at the end of its operational life, then it is likely that it will be re-equipped with new conductors and insulators and refurbished. At this time, it is expected that the new OHL will be decommissioned fully when Harestanes West Wind Farm has reached the end of its operational life.

Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection

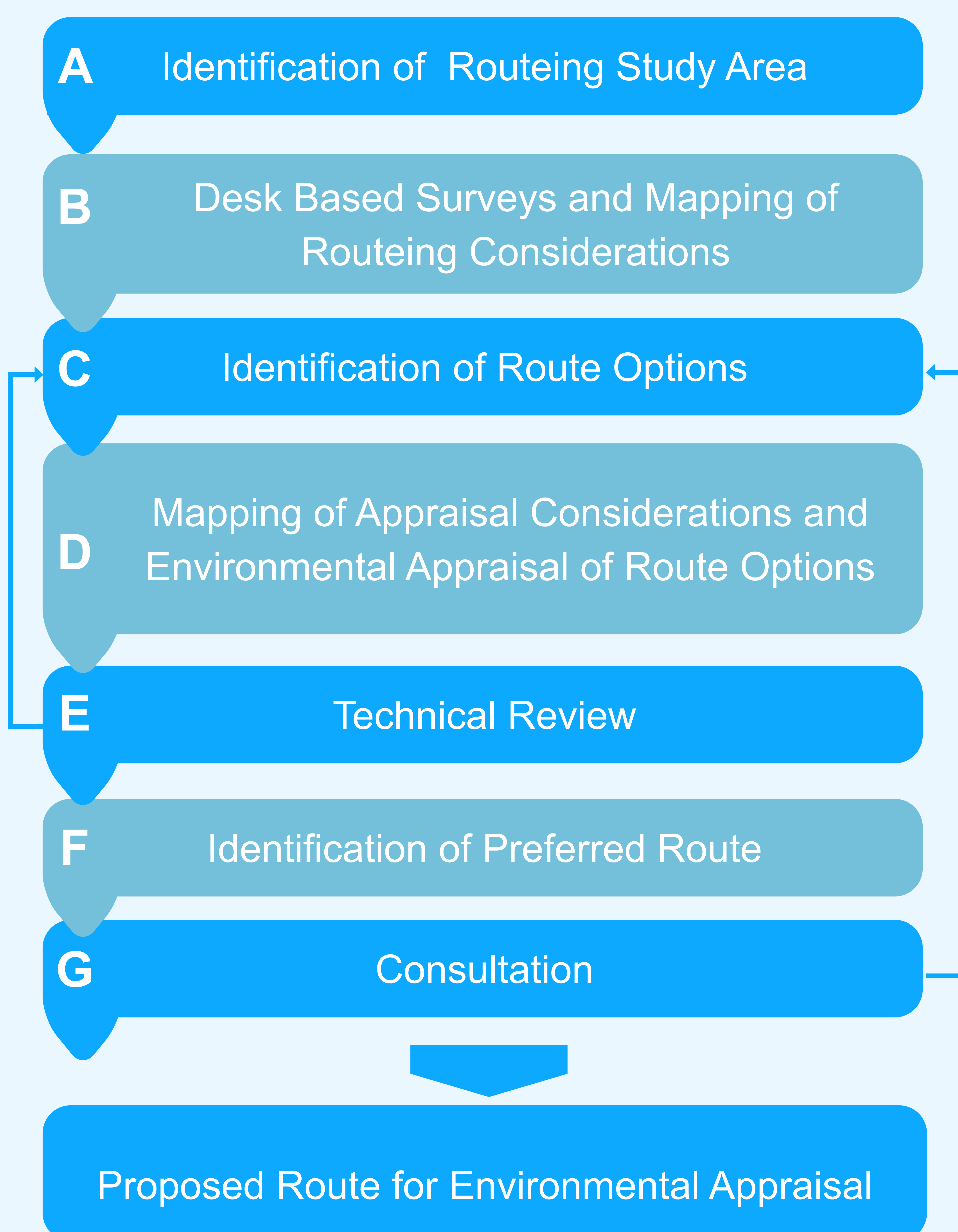
www.spenenergynetworks.co.uk

6 Routeing Methodology

SPEN has been working with independent consultants to identify potential route options for the new OHL. Our objective is to identify a route for the new OHL which meets the technical requirements of the electricity system, which is economically viable and causes, on balance, the least disturbance to the environment and the people who live, work and enjoy recreation within it.

An overview of the routeing methodology for the new OHL is illustrated below, with full details included in the Routeing and Consultation Document (2023).

Routeing Methodology



Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection

www.spenenergynetworks.co.uk

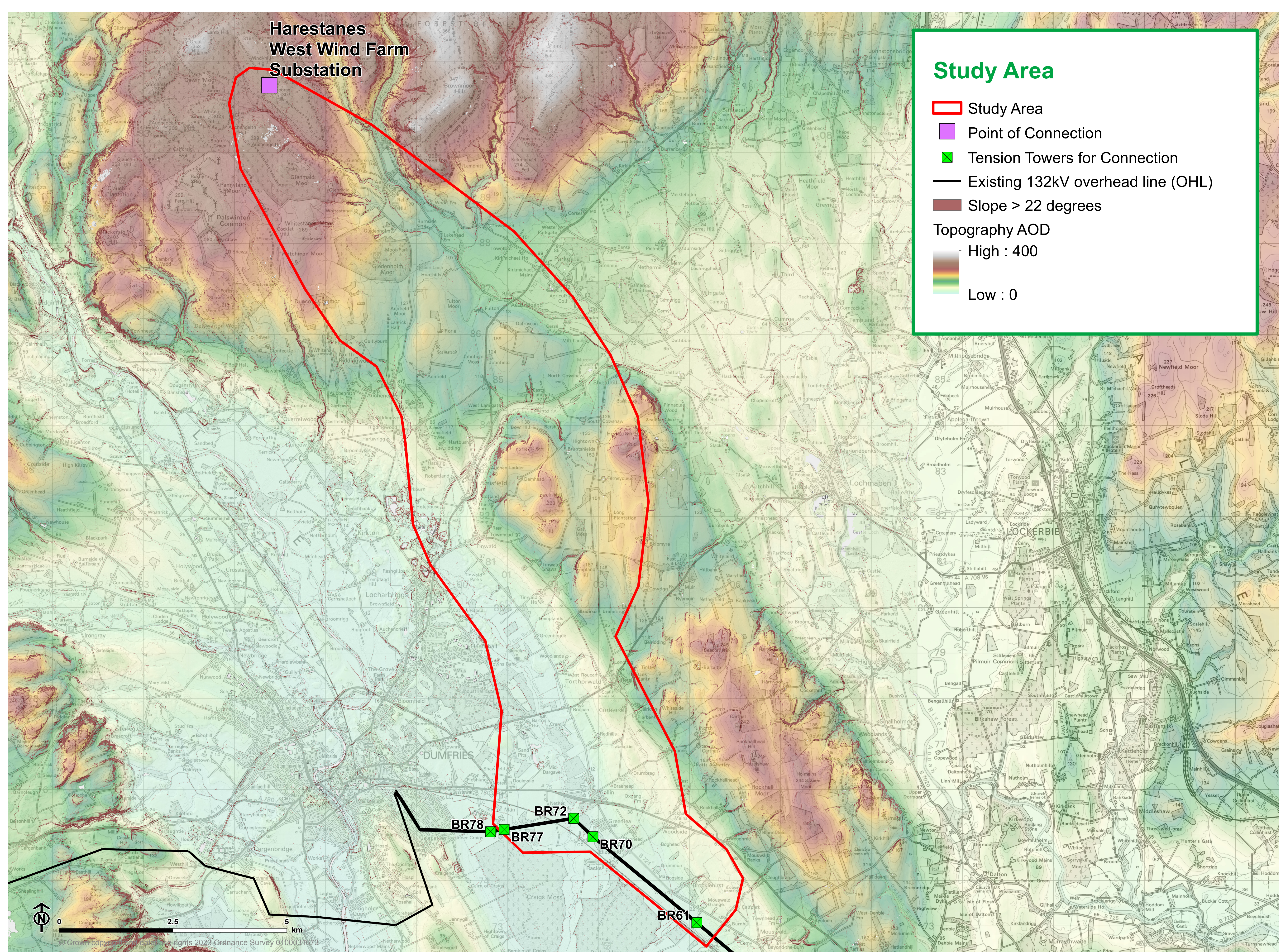
7 The Study Area

The routing methodology follows a linear iterative process of steps. The first step (Step A) involves the identification of a study area, which is large enough to accommodate all likely route options, taking account of the technical requirements (i.e. connection points) and factors such as topography.

The study area covers the area between the Forest of Ae to the north; Shieldhill to the east; the eastern extents and land to the south-east of Dumfries to the south; and Kirkton to the west. The study area covers an area of approximately 7,853 ha and is entirely contained within the Dumfries and Galloway Council area. Much

of the study area is relatively rural in nature, comprising agricultural land, with hedgerows, and interspersed with areas of woodland and blocks of coniferous forest. There are a number of small settlements across the study area including the Village of Ae to the north; Amisfield, Tinwald and Torthorwald, on the western flank of the Torthorwald Ridge to the east of the study area; and Locharbriggs and Kirkton on the eastern side of Nithsdale to the west of the study area. The southern extents of the study area display a denser settlement pattern, being located on the eastern fringes of the town of Dumfries.

Study Area

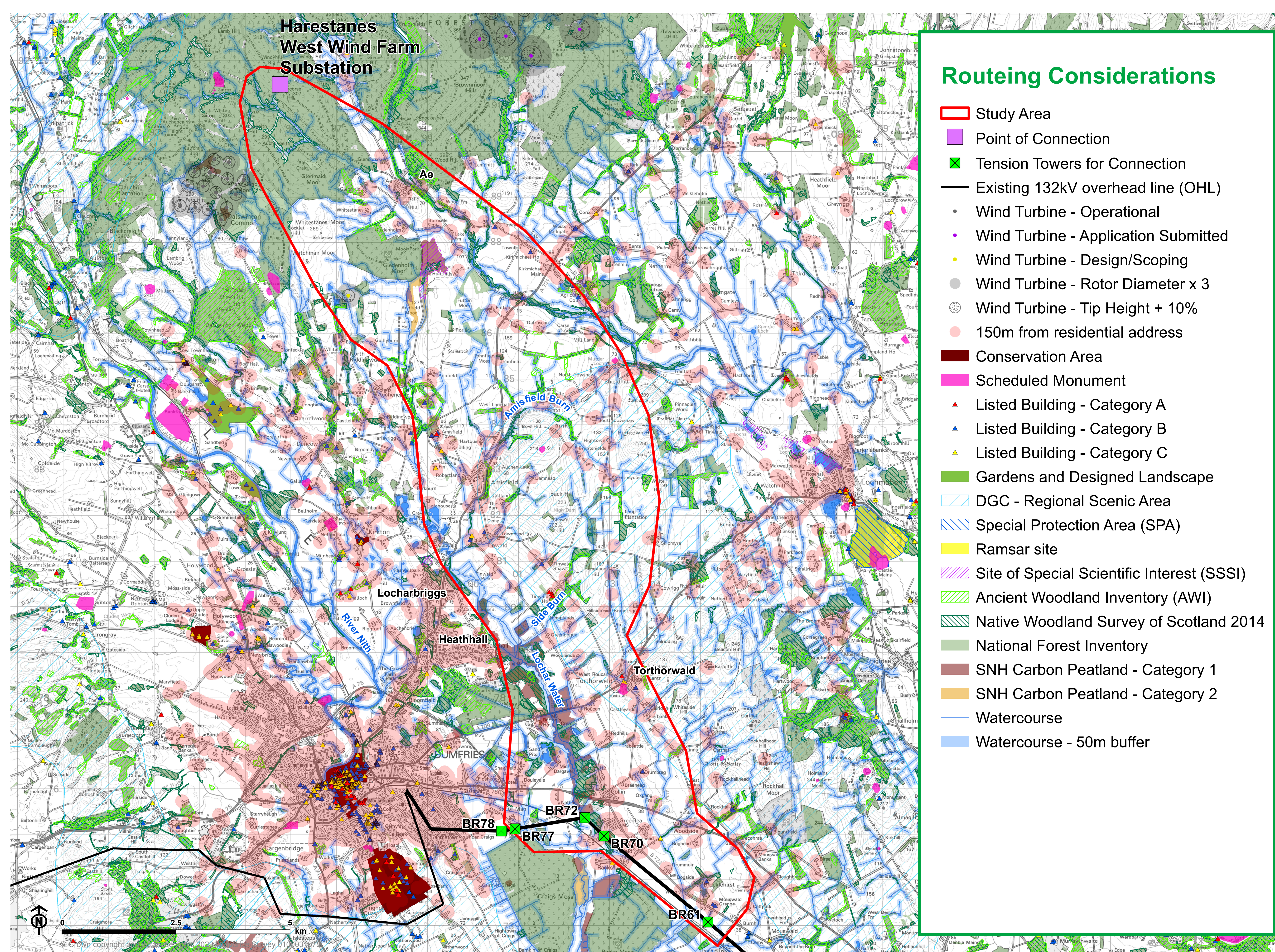


Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection

www.spenenergynetworks.co.uk

8 Routing Considerations

Routing Considerations



Following the identification of the study area, areas/sites of natural and cultural heritage value designated at a national, European or international level (areas of ‘highest amenity value’) were mapped and avoided where possible in the identification of route options.

These routing considerations included Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Areas of Ancient Woodland, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments (SMs) and were avoided where possible in the identification of route options.

The mapping of routing considerations also included areas that are of regional or local importance and/or are smaller in scale to aid in the appraisal and selection of a preferred route. These routing considerations included Native Woodland, Class 1 and 2 Priority Peatland Habitat, non-

designated heritage assets, residential properties, wind turbines, existing OHLs, committed developments (planning applications or consented but unbuilt developments) and waterbodies.

The study area also includes consideration of routing matters such as altitude and slope gradients over which technical limitations would mean a route was unachievable.

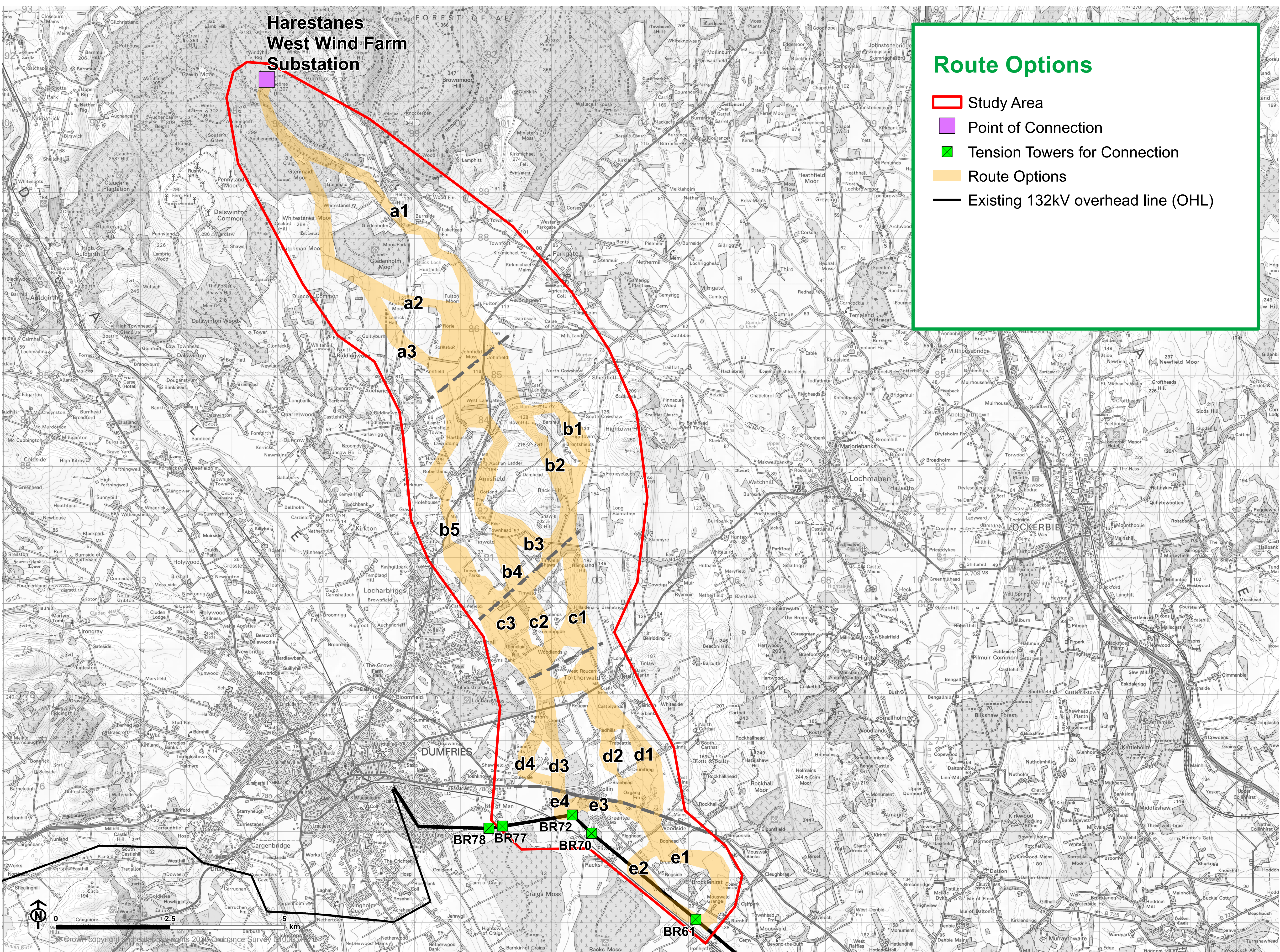
Landscape character and landscape designations have also been considered in this process. The Torthorwald Ridge Regional Scenic Area (RSA) covers a large area to the east and south-east of the study area. This local level landscape designation has been considered during the route options appraisal stage.

Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection

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9 The Route Options and Tie-in Points

Route Options



Given the nature of overhead transmission lines, the primary environmental effects are likely to be landscape and visual effects. The best way to limit adverse effects on landscape and visual amenity is to have a landscape led approach to routeing, reflecting the Holford Rules (guidelines for routeing OHLs) and taking account of the other routeing considerations.

The study area was analysed to establish a number of possible 'route options'. This process involved the avoidance where possible of the identified designated areas of highest amenity value, as well as technical constraints.

Informed by the mapped routeing considerations and site visit, different route options split into sections A to

E were identified for the new OHL following a landscape led approach.

Each of the route options were given an alpha numeric reference: A1 to A3, B1 to B5, C1 to C3, D1 to D4, E1 to E4. There are four towers on the existing 'BR' route within the study area which, from a technical perspective, were considered at the outset to be capable of accommodating the connection of the new OHL. These were towers BR61, BR70, BR72 and BR77.

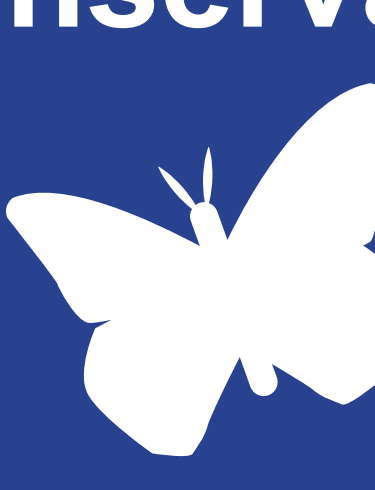
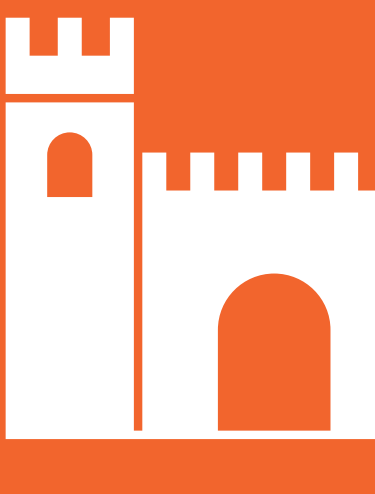
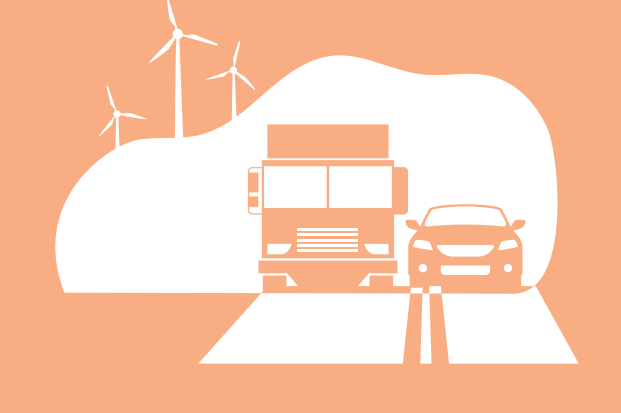
Following further technical review by SPEN, including consideration of the proximity of these tie-in points to residential properties, towers BR70 and BR77 were discounted and not considered further. The route options therefore seek to terminate at either tower BR61 or BR72.

Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection

www.spenenergynetworks.co.uk

10 The Preferred Route

To identify the preferred route, each identified route option was appraised using the following criteria, which continue to reflect the key considerations of the routing methodology:

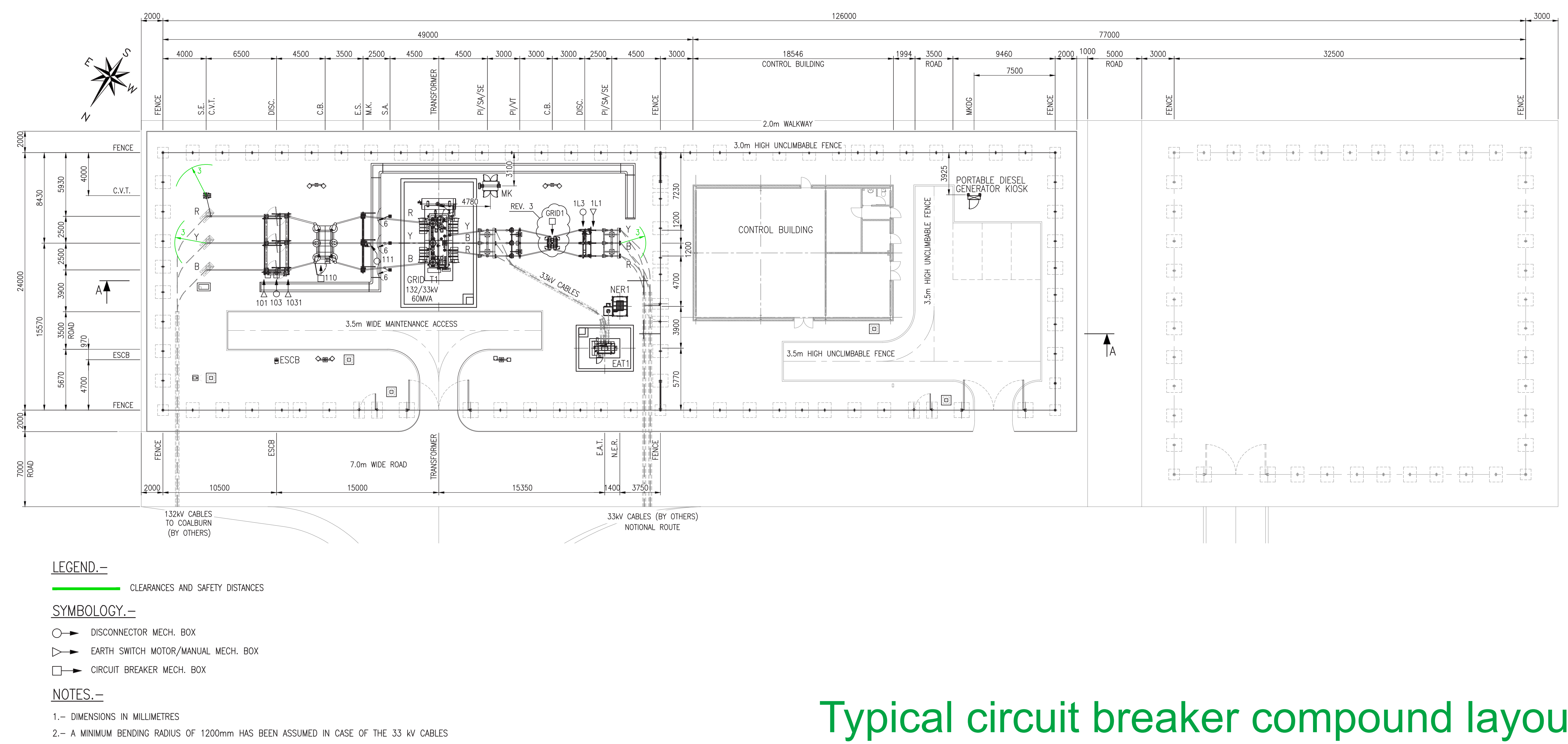
Length of Route 	Landscape and Visual Amenity 
Hydrology 	Biodiversity and Geological Conservation 
Forestry 	Cultural Heritage 
Land use 	SPEN Technical Requirements 

The reasoning for the use of these criteria and an outline of the methodology for appraising each route option against these is detailed in the Routing and Consultation Document (2023).

The preferred route is the one which achieves the best overall balance in terms of commercial viability whilst limiting impacts on the environment and people and meeting SPEN’s technical requirements.

Taking account of the findings of the appraisal of each route option against the derived environmental and technical criteria, the preferred route for the proposed new OHL is **Route Option A3-B5-C3-D2-E1** which ties-in to tower BR61.

The final design of the circuit breaker compound at BR61 has still to be defined, however an example from another SPEN project has been provided in the image below for reference. The expected dimensions will be approximately 50m x 37m.



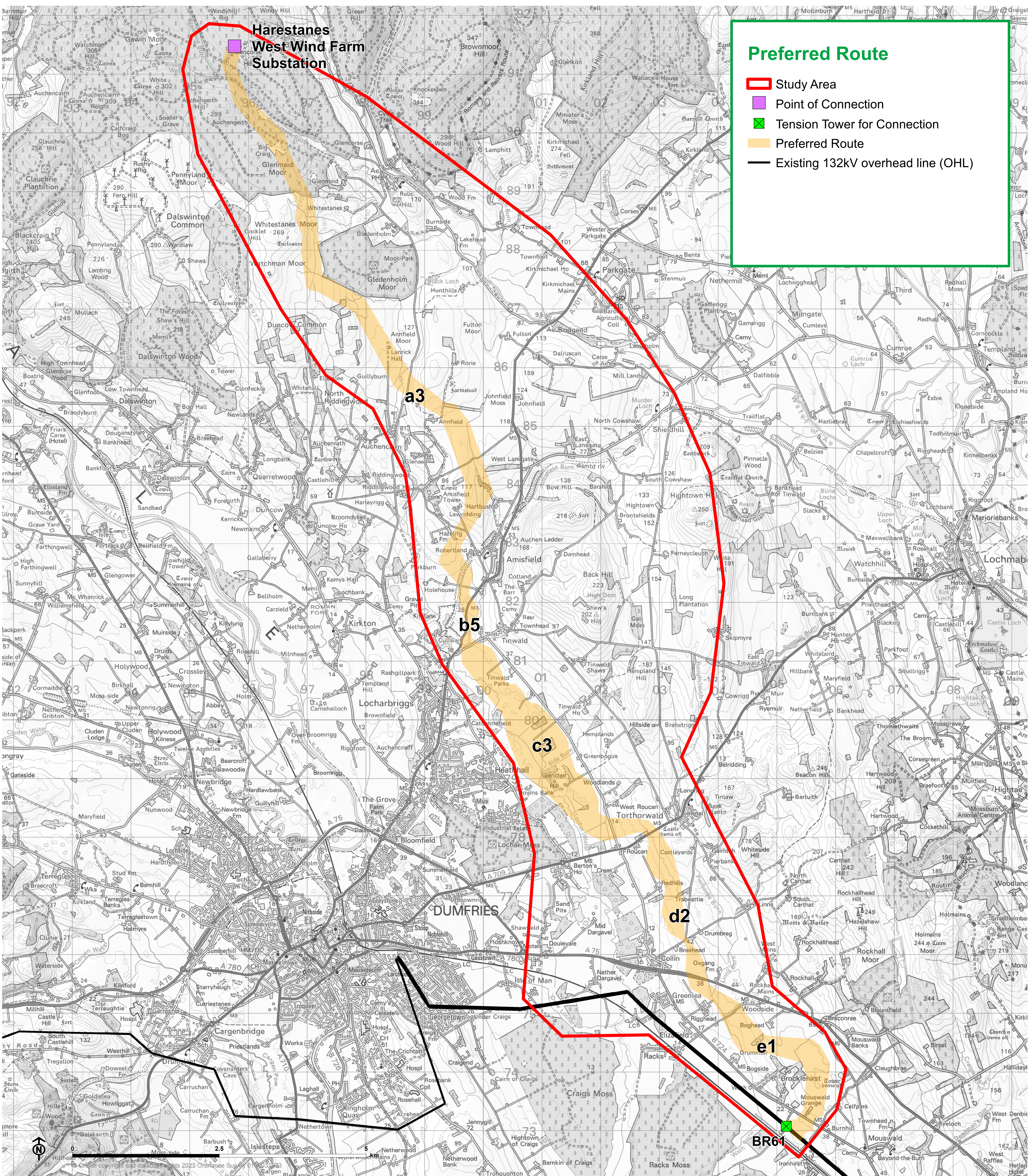
Typical circuit breaker compound layout

Harestanes West Wind Farm

132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection

11 The Preferred Route

Preferred Route



The detailed location of the new wood poles within the route corridor has still to be developed through a detailed design/technical review process which will be informed by the findings of this public consultation.

Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection

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12 The Consultation Process

Your feedback is an important part in helping SPEN to identify the proposed route which considers technical, economic and environmental issues along with landowner and public opinion.

The consultation period will run from **Tuesday 1st August until Friday 1st September 2023**. The closing date for you to provide your response to us is **midnight on Friday 1st September 2023**.

Below are the best ways to find out more or to talk to us.



Visit the website:

www.spenenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/overhead_line_for_harestanes_west_wf.aspx

You can view or download all the project documents (including the Routeing and Consultation Document (2023)) and this leaflet on our website



Email us:

harestaneswestohl@spenergynetworks.co.uk



Send us a letter

Harestanes West wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line
Grid Connection Project
Land and Planning Team,
SP Energy Networks, 55 Fullarton Drive,
Glasgow, G32 8FA

What we would like your views on?

As part of the consultation we would particularly like your views on:

1

The preferred route for the new OHL

2

Any of the alternative route options we considered during the routeing process; and

3

Any other issues, suggestions or feedback you would like us to consider. We would particularly like to hear your views on your local area, for example areas you use for recreation, local environmental features you would like us to consider, and any plans you may have to build in proximity to the preferred route.

Please note comments at this stage are informal comments to SPEN and are made to allow SPEN to determine whether changes to the preferred route are necessary. An opportunity to comment formally to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit, who will be the decision makers on the Section 37 application, will follow at a later stage in the process.

Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection

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13 What Happens Next?

SPEN places great importance on the effect its work may have on the environment and local communities and is keen to hear the views of local people to help develop the project in the best way.

Informed by the consultation responses, SPEN will confirm the proposed route for the new OHL.

Reflecting the proposed route, SPEN intend to submit a Screening Opinion request to the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit to confirm whether or not the proposed development requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The proposed route will then be subject to a detailed design process taking into account findings of baseline environmental surveys, landowner consultation and further technical review by SPEN culminating in an overhead line alignment, including individual wood pole locations and other supporting infrastructure.

This alignment, including all ancillary temporary development e.g. temporary access tracks, working areas etc will be included in the application for Section 37 consent and deemed planning permission which we anticipate being submitted in early 2025. The Section 37 application will be submitted to the Scottish Ministers via the Energy Consents Unit. Dumfries and Galloway Council will be notified as a statutory consultee and asked to comment on the application prior to submission.

SPEN will consult fully with affected landowners and occupiers on all aspects of the new OHL and will give them an opportunity to comment on proposals as they progress. A further round of public consultation will be undertaken by SPEN following the EIA Screening process and before the submission of the application for Section 37 consent.

Thank you for taking the time to visit this public exhibition.



Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection

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Appendix E

Summary of Consultation Feedback from Routeing Stage

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
Statutory Consultees		
BT There is one existing BT radio link that the proposed OHL could cause interference with. After initial checks of the terrain from Dumfries to Hazelshaw Hill, it seems unlikely that it would. Once the proposed route is known and co-ordinates of the structures are available, SPEN should inform BT to re-assess.	Comments noted and confirmed co-ordinates will be provided when available for re-assessment.	No action required.
The Coal Authority The proposed OHL is located outside of the defined coalfield. The Coal Authority has no comments to make.	Comments noted.	No action required.
NatureScot NatureScot does not anticipate any impacts of national interest. This does not mean that there will be no impacts on natural heritage and the developer is advised to refer to NatureScot's comprehensive development management guidance for information on species surveys and assessments that may be required. In particular. It is noted that route A1 passes in close proximity to Black Loch Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), notified for its basin fen feature. NatureScot do not anticipate any significant effects to this SSSI that could not be mitigated for should this route be adopted. However, it is noted that this is not currently considered the preferred route option.	Comments noted.	No action required.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
Scottish Badgers Scottish Badgers have badger sett records that fall within the preferred route. Owing to the amount of suitable habitat around the route and for alternative routes for badgers it would therefore be prudent for qualified persons to undertake a protected species survey to identify sett locations and where appropriate make plans for licensing and mitigation. Depending on findings, a Badger Protection Plan should be developed and implemented, and the status of the ground be checked again no more than 2 weeks before the start of works to make sure that the findings are not changed. Access routes should also be considered.	Comments noted. Ecological surveys are currently ongoing within the preferred route corridor and survey results will be fed into the detailed design process.	Survey results will be fed into the detailed design of the proposed route and badger setts (if identified) will be avoided where possible.
SEPA In line with the advice in the Transitional Arrangements for National Planning Framework 4 letter, issued by the Chief Planner, Fiona Simpson, on 8 February 2023, SEPA's position and advice given below is based on the NPF4 policy. SEPA welcomes pre-application engagement from developers of large scale projects and local applications where they have a specific interest, such as flood risk. Please note that SEPA advice at this stage is based on emerging proposals and they cannot rule out potential further information requests as the project develops. At this stage SEPA do not have any site-specific advice but would refer the applicant to our windfarm EIA scoping letter, which outlines our general scoping requirements. In general, whether EIA is required or not, SEPA consider that the following key issues must be addressed in project design (a) Minimising impacts on peat and peatland – this includes all peat, and should not be limited to NatureScot Priority Peatland Habitats (Class 1	Where possible the route options have sought to avoid Class 1 and Class 2 peatlands. Through further survey work, (ground conditions, hydrology and ecology surveys) the detailed OHL route will avoid areas of known constraint.	Ground conditions, hydrology and ecology survey results will be fed into the detailed design of the proposed route will be avoided where possible.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
and 2 peatlands) (b) Avoiding good quality or rare GWDTE habitats and minimising impacts on other GWDTE habitats, and (c) Avoiding impacts on watercourses and other water features by ensuring suitable buffers, and using best practice design crossings.		
Scottish Forestry While the routeing corridors are quite wide in places, it looks as though the preferred route, A3-B5-C3-D2-E1 does not impact upon any designated woodland as far as identifiable from the maps; no further comments at this stage.	Comments noted.	No action required.
Summary of Public Comments		
The connection should be buried underground.	Section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 places a duty on the license holder to 'develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission/distribution'. In practice this means an overhead line will almost always be promoted ahead of an underground cable connection due to the higher costs of underground cabling for the relative voltages. Underground cables would only be promoted by SPT where there was a specific technical or environmental constraint that could not be overcome and only after exhausting all viable overhead line options, or if specifically requested by a connecting party. If a connecting party requests an underground cable instead of an overhead line they would fund the cost difference. SPEN cannot compel them to do so. As the transmission license holder for our network area, SPT is obliged by the Electricity Act 1989 to provide transmission connections for new customers looking to connect to our networks. When making a connection offer to these customers, SPEN will offer a connection based on the most efficient and economically viable	No action required.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
	option, which is usually an overhead line solution, as per our statutory transmission and distribution license requirements.	
Route Option D2 should be diverted so that it is not visible from the village of Collin. Current positioning would run it over a hill/ridge and would be seen for miles. Option D3 and D4 would be less visible and less intrusive in the view, so long as they are not above the tree line when they run parallel to the A75 in E3. The eastern option is in the valley for the most part and would less visible from both Collin and Torthorwald. Route Option D2 is the worst way to go and will ruin the landscape.	Comments re section D are noted and will be considered in the detailed routeing.	Through detailed design, the alignment will be reviewed to identify whether the landscape can be used to better backcloth the connection.
The mapping information on the leaflet provided was shocking and near impossible to read. The online facilities were not able to be accessed.	In direct response to this comment, at the time, SPEN provided clarity that the project web page would be active from the 1st of August 2023 and provided a PDF of the current preferred route for the proposed overhead line prior to the online material becoming available. SPEN also confirmed that the route as shown is a corridor at present and had been arrived at following assessment of various environmental constraints by qualified environmental consultants. The route corridor is not confirmed at this stage but is likely to be similar to the eventual overhead line route that would be taken forward for consent from the Scottish Government. The public consultation events will allow us to understand if there are additional constraints we should be aware of prior to plotting pole positions. A follow up consultation event will take place at a later date and will include this more detailed information but for now we are seeking feedback on the higher level corridor to inform the development of the connection.	No action required.
Within the planned 60 metre wide corridor, what limitations on land use does SP intend to require?	The land within the wayleave corridor is restricted in terms of tree planting that might grow to a height that could pose a falling risk on the overhead line and that buildings are restricted if they would encroach on the electrical safety distances.	No action required.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
How will SP compensate the landowner for any such restrictions on land use within the 60 metre corridor?	Tree crop compensation would be paid for trees which need to be felled and we would also look to re-plant an equivalent number of trees on the landowner's property if they were to agree to this. The tree crop compensation in relation to loss of trees/planting would be the subject of an independent assessment. Alternatively compensatory planting would be located on third party land if no local landowner agreement is possible.	No action required.
Will SP be providing a 40 year compensation contract, between SP and the landowner, to reflect the anticipated life of the proposed OHL?	SPEN would normally agree a Deed of Servitude with the landowner for the apparatus. A payment for tree crop compensation is made and then a separate sterilisation payment is agreed between the parties for the landowner having restricted use of the land within the 60m wayleave corridor.	No action required.
There is an unusually high density of badger setts along the valley of the Lochar Water, with a marked concentration along the old, sinuous course of the Lochar. These setts have extended considerably within the past 18 months. What steps are being planned by SP to ensure that the badger population is not disturbed by the construction process?	SPEN will undertake surveys to map badger setts to consider routeing the line to avoid these. SPEN will also do pre-construction surveys at a later date to understand if any have moved. If work is necessary close to a badger sett, SPEN would work with NatureScot to do the work sensitively and under the appropriate license.	No action required.
Why was it decided by SP in 2021 to abandon plans to install the previously-proposed OHL along the Lochar Valley, which had earlier been judged to be needed to serve nearby renewable generating capacity?	The only comment SPEN could provide on this point is perhaps regarding an earlier iteration of the connection, which was never formally consulted upon due to feedback from SEPA re the potential for flooding near tower BR72. The location of the circuit breaker compound was reconsidered on this basis and the preferred route amended to take account of this.	No action required.
What has changed since 2021, for this key management decision to be reversed by SP in such a short time, when OHL systems are usually planned 7-10 years in advance?	Similar to the above point, many constraints are balanced to route an overhead line and it is an iterative process in nature as new information comes forward.	No action required.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
Your consultation map delineates "Routeing Sections". But provides no further explanatory detail. Please explain, describe, or provide drawings, to illustrate the details of these "Routeing Sections".	Routeing sections are used by our environmental consultants to allow comparison of route options within the Routeing and Consultation Document. This process allows a preferred route to emerge. Section boundaries were shown at the consultation event and within the consultation material available on the project website.	No action required.
Can assurance be provided that the woodland at Carse of Lochar would be avoided by the route?	At this point in time it is not possible to give a guarantee that the preferred route including the 60m wide corridor will avoid Carse of Lochar. It does seem likely though, as the watercourses in this area are likely to push the alignment east. There are a number of additional constraints to consider following the consultation and until that process is complete it won't be possible to provide certainty on this.	Hydrological survey results will be fed in to the detailed route alignment and will be considered alongside other environmental constraints to determine the proposed route.
Tinwald Community Council Hard copy of the proposed development material not received.	SPEN try to minimise production of hard copies for environmental reasons, with the information being provided online, which is the reason a hard copy was not sent out as standard practice. A hard copy was arranged and sent to Tinwald Parish Community Council following the request.	No action required.
'Having now read your 'SP Energy Networks Harestanes West Wind Farm 132kV Overhead Line Grid Connection Routeing and Consultation Report ' dated July 202 I note the following: <i>7.10 Leaflets have also been distributed to local properties within the study area and the properties at Locharbriggs and Heathall (w/c 24th July 2023). The leaflet dsitributed is contained in Appendix E.</i> Can you please explain why the residents along the high road at Torthorwald did not receive the leaflet? Can you also please confirm that the rest of the residents of Torthorwald did receive a leaflet?'	This point was raised with SPEN's consultant who organised the leaflet distribution. It was established that, whilst properties on High Road were within the defined consultation area, the GIS mapping system used to identify the residential properties for inclusion in the leaflet distribution, did not automatically generate a mail out for them. This has now been rectified and leaflets are being sent to these properties. 1841 leaflets were posted out in total, with 60 of these being for addresses in Torthorwald. Copies of the leaflet were posted to those properties that were missed.	No action required.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
Query regarding the availability of hard copies of the Routeing and Consultation documents at Georgetown Library and Lochthorn Library in Dumfries. Residents have visited the libraries requesting sight of hard copies but Dumfries and Galloway Council staff at these sites have not received any materials.	Lochthorn Library confirmed that the hard copies of the documents had been misplaced but were then put out on public display. Georgetown Library confirmed that the documents had been out on public display since the start of the consultation period and had received interest from members of the public. The respondent who provided this query was provided with an update regarding the availability of the hard copies at the libraries.	No action required.
Area is of local outstanding beauty and the OHLs will be a blot on the landscape.	Comments noted. A landscape appraisal will be prepared to support the final design that is progressed for consent. The appraisal will consider all relevant national, regional and local landscape designations when appraising the impacts of the wood pole OHL.	The detailed design will take account of relevant landscape designations and avoid these where possible.
What considerations have been given to the wildlife, particularly birds and migrating geese which use the route?	Ecological and ornithological surveys are currently ongoing within the preferred route corridor and survey results will be fed into the detailed design process.	Survey results will be fed into the detailed design of the proposed route and badger setts (if identified) will be avoided where possible.
Why this route? Totally unjustified	The Routeing and Consultation Document available on the project website, and during the consultation period provides details of the methodologies used to determine the preferred route from an environmental and technical perspective. Feedback received during the consultation process will be considered during the detailed design of the route alignment.	No action required.
A3, B5 and C3 are cleverly designed and of reduced impact. However, C3 into D2 and E1 to tower BR61 are needlessly of visual impact. A shorter and less visual route would be by preferably D4, or D3 to C4 and tower BR72. I would recommend the shorter above alteration to the Preferred Route.	It is acknowledged that there are shorter route options available between the end of route option C3 and the tie in towers, however, on balance, the environmental preference is to follow route option D2. Route option D2 avoids peatland habitat and avoids running parallel with the Lochar Water for its entire length. From a technical and hydrological perspective, the termination point to tower BR72 poses a high risk due to flooding therefore the route options terminating at tower BR72 (E3 and E4) must be discounted for consideration.	Through detailed design, visual effects of the OHL at section D2 on the locally designated Torthorwald RSA and the Upland Fringe LLCA will need to be considered as well as the requirement to technical cross from the preferred route option C3 to D2 as spanning may be problematic.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
Query regarding the extent of the leaflet distribution to the properties in Amisfield as some residents did not receive the consultation leaflet.	The GIS database for the leaflet drop lists 29 entries with 'Amisfield' included in their address. In total 1,841 leaflets were arranged to be posted out to residential addresses within the study area as well as press adverts in the local newspaper. A third party company was used to print and post the information leaflets. The wider consultation also included emails to the local community councils along with statutory consultees, local elected members and relevant MPs and MSPs.	No action required.
Request that the grid connection does not pass through land at Catherinefield Farm and preference for the OHL to be routed to the east of the Lochar Water.	SPEN are currently reviewing all of the feedback from the consultation period and will be looking to identify proposed pole locations prior to a second round of public consultation, likely in 2025. SPEN's approach to routeing of overhead line connections is environmentally led and balances these constraints with technical and economic considerations to determine a proposed route. At present it is likely that the route will be east of the Lochar Water but until the review process is complete and initial pole locations are identified, it is not possible to guarantee this will be the case.	Detailed designs will consider the Lochar Water in relation to the technical and environmental considerations.
We visited your information presentation at Heathhall Community Centre recently, which was useful and informative. Your staff were uniformly pleasant and helpful. The proposed route closely borders our house and land, where it has to cross the old disused railway embankment, between Locharbriggs quarry and Amisfield station. Given the current state of your plans, your staff could not be specific on how the line would cross the embankment and exactly what sort of supports would be used to achieve the height required. We would like to register our objection to the planned route because of the height of the structures that will be required to cross the embankment.	The next stage in the routeing process involves identifying proposed pole locations for the connection. Once this is complete it will be possible to confirm the pole heights in the location referred to. Consolidation of overhead lines is something SPEN look to take the opportunity to do when the opportunity presents itself but in the context described it is not possible due to the different voltages concerned. The existing overhead lines in the vicinity are distribution connections, which operate at 11kV and connect properties and businesses. The proposed Harestanes West OHL connection is a transmission connection for a wind farm, which operates at 132kV. It is not technically possible to consolidate such connections unfortunately. A further consultation process will be undertaken in early 2024 once the initial pole positions have been drafted and respondents will be notified about this nearer the time.	Unable to consolidate the existing and proposed infrastructure. Detailed design will consider the route in relation to the respondent's land holdings.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
We already have a power line following your approximate current proposed route along the edge of the burn, another semi parallel to that running along the local road, and a further line which squiggles across our land to join these two separate lines. We would prefer to see some consolidation and reduction of power lines, rather than a further additional line.		
The proposed line will affect farmland through route options B5, B4, B3 and B2. Where B5 is the preference, is a map available showing the refined route for this section? Concerns raised that the poles will be through the middle of the arable fields which will cause major issues and could lead to large areas of the field being sterilised. Preferred option would be to have this power line on the ridge of the hill where it could straddle the stone dyke at the top of the fields. If this was not possible landowner would like to see the poles at the edges of the fields to make sure they have maximum use of the fields for future cropping. Happy to discuss the pole positions further with SPEN. Note that the wind farm is currently at Scoping stage and not yet submitted for planning. Can SPEN provide a detailed programme showing the timetable for the powerline and wind farm. The route will have a greater affect than just commercial terms. The proposed route requires the landowners to plan the farming business for the future and this all takes time and thought. Would like to discuss the proposal in more detail and we would like to speak to someone who can discuss both the effect on the farming business as well as compensation.	SPEN are currently reviewing all of the feedback from the initial consultation process, and the next stage will be for the overhead line engineers to plot draft pole locations. These pole locations will form the basis of the next consultation event, which is likely to be in early 2024. Affected landowners will be contacted by the project land officer, prior to any future public consultation event to discuss pole locations. If it is necessary to place a pole on your land, SPT would seek to minimise impacts by looking to keep poles as close to field boundaries as possible and looking to place any stays in locations that minimise restrictions on the use of the land. This is not always possible given other technical and environmental constraints, but it is something SPEN actively look to do. SPEN are currently working towards an October 2027 connection date for this project. Environmental surveys are planned through 2024, with submission of the Section 37 application for the connection likely in early 2026 At present SPEN anticipate one year to get the determination back from the Scottish Government, so around early-2027 and with planning conditions to discharge, it is likely to be the end of 2027 before SPEN are at site, subject to getting consent.	Detailed routeing through the preferred B5 section of the route will be considered in relation to environmental and technical constraints. Landowners will be consulted to discuss pole locations once these have been identified following the review of all consultation feedback and environmental and technical data.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
Request that the new power line be routed to the north of Lanrickhall and not to the south. The landowner is hoping to renovate Lanrickhall and would request that the power line is not run in front of the house.	Comments noted and to be actioned through detailed design. The next stage of the process involves plotting proposed pole locations, prior to another round of public consultation, likely in 2025. If the amended route involves crossing the land at Netherhall and Lanrickhall farms land at this stage, the project land officer will be in touch prior to any consultation event to discuss the detailed siting of poles.	SPEN have reviewed the interaction between the preferred route corridor and Lanrickhall and can confirm that the route will be amended to route north of this property.
This is not the shortest route and as such no carbon accountancy has been demonstrated	SP Energy Network's process for routeing a new overhead line is set out in the published Approach to Routeing and Environmental Impact Assessment 2nd version link: https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/userfiles/file/SPEN_Approach_to_Routeing_Document_2nd_version.pdf The Holford Rules, which inform routeing of overhead lines support consideration of a longer route, if this allows avoidance of specific routeing issues, as in this case (Class 1 peat and hydrology constraints). The Holford Rules are set out in the Approach to Routeing and Environmental Impact Assessment 2nd version.	No action required.
The additional financial cost comparison has not been shown with regards to this longer route	Customer connection project costings are commercially sensitive and as such would not be published. In compliance with the duties imposed on SPT in terms of Section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989, the proposed route must be 'economically viable'. This is interpreted by SPT as meaning that as far as is reasonably practicable, and all other concerns being equal, the line should be as direct as possible and the route should avoid areas where technical difficulty or compensatory requirements would render the scheme unviable on economic grounds.	No action required.
No engineering solutions have been provided to offset the highlighted environmental issues, dealing with flooding, peat, etc..	It is unclear what engineering solutions are referred to but as the environmental constraints of Class 1 peat and hydrology are avoidable, engineering solutions to engage with these areas suggests inclusion of additional expense which could otherwise be avoided.	No action required.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
	The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 Regulation 5(2) and Schedule 4 of the 2017 Regulations sets out the legal requirement to apply the mitigation hierarchy when subjecting a proposal to EIA. The EIA must include: "A description of the features of the development and any measures envisaged in order to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment." The preferred route has been arrived at following application of SPEN's established approach to routeing for new overhead lines. This approach is also consistent with recent planning policy in the form of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) as it relates to avoidance of carbon rich soils. NPF4 Link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/documents/	
The output tables are very subjective and in so being do not provide a tangible comparison between dealing with environmental issues such as peat against a longer route.	The route comparison tables are compiled following constraint analysis by qualified ecologists, landscape architects, hydrologists, cultural heritage professionals and others. SPT's overhead line engineers also input to the process to inform the overall preferred route to ensure it is technically viable. NPF4, which was adopted earlier this year sets out the weighting to be given to carbon rich soils in policy 5 (Soils). The route comparison tables are informed by this policy context. The approach to routeing is informed by the Holford Rules mentioned in response to point 1, which allow for a longer route, taking into account other constraints.	No action required.
There is no explanation as to why peat should be avoided. Is it carbon release during construction or is simply illegal to install a cable or pipe within it? A statement from D&G Planning stating it should be avoided where ever possible does not mean it is a no go area but one that may be viable if compared accurately against all of the other potential constraints.	Avoidance of peat is now higher on the policy agenda than in the past given its importance as a way of carbon retention. NPF4 is the policy framework against which projects of this nature are assessed. Policy 5, (Soils) sets out the context in which carbon rich soils should be considered. Part c of policy 5 states: <i>'Development proposals on peatland, carbon rich soils and priority peatland habitat will only be supported for:</i>	No action required.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
	<i>i) Essential infrastructure and there is a specific locational need and no other suitable site;'</i> Having undertaken the environmental and technical assessment of the route corridor to this point, SPT consider there to be an alternative site for the overhead and as such it is not deemed appropriate to place the route through areas of Class 1 peat. This approach is consistent with the EIA mitigation hierarchy.	
Although some photos are provided within the report there is no picture showing the view of Torthorwald castle as you drive up the hill from Dumfries. Regardless of the location within the preferred route the bottleneck at Torthorwald will result in cables and poles in front of the castle as you approach from this angle.	The route comparison tables make clear that the overhead line's relationship with Torthorwald Castle is something that merits detailed consideration, as the balance of environmental constraints places the preferred route in a location where both would be visible in views. Site visits from the project's landscape architect and planning consultants have informed this approach and this will be assessed in greater detail as the project and initial pole locations are developed. Photomontages will form part of the environmental appraisal of the pole locations and there will also be further public consultation once this information is available. Historic Environment Scotland have commented that impacts on Torthorwald Castle are unlikely to be significant and have no further comments to offer at this stage.	No action required.
The proposed route is on the line of the geese flight path from the Solway to the day roosts in neighbouring fields and beyond. There is no indication in the report that this has been considered and therefore no solutions provided to reduce or prevent bird strikes with the overhead line. With the recent and indeed current problems associated with avian flu the geese need to be considered to ensure their long term survival.	Nature Scot commented as part of the recent public consultation and offered no objection to the proposal. Statutory consultees, including Nature Scot, are consulted throughout the routeing process. The established approach is to undertake a full year of bird surveys once the proposed route is confirmed, with Nature Scot commenting on the appropriateness of the surveys and whether any specific mitigation measures are required. Dialogue will continue with Nature Scot as the project develops.	Ornithology survey results will be fed into the detailed design of the proposed route and mitigation proposed as/if required.
To conclude I must state that no notes appear to have been taken by the SP Networks collective at the public meeting. I therefore feel my discussions on the day were a waste of my time and would not have been considered. Hopefully the contents of this email will. In fact it smacks	It is not normal practice for notes or minutes to be taken at a public consultation event for this type of development. Rather, it is a forum for people to attend to gain a better understanding of the proposal and then to correspond should they wish to, as you have. A log was taken of the number of attendees but a decision was taken to actively not	

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
of being simply a tick in the box whereby a Major Planning Application requires a public meeting to be had. It should be noted that the documented output of such a meeting in terms of issues and concerns raised should be provided. Indeed no register was taken of those attending which again should be provided with the output from such Public Meetings.	take note of people's personal details as a way of minimising the handling of personal data. If people did want to provide personal details this can be done by corresponding to the project using the details provided and in compliance with GDPR requirements	
Could not see at the consultation meeting that other routes were really being considered.	The Routeing and Consultation Document which was published as part of the first round of public consultation sets out the alternative overhead line routes that have been considered in line with SPEN's published '<i>Approach to Routeing and Environmental Impact Assessment 2nd version</i>' document. The Routeing and Consultation document includes an appraisal table at appendix C which details the route section comparisons. The assessment is environmentally led, with technical input from SPEN engineers. Following this established approach, a preferred route has been developed and consulted on publicly for feedback. Please find more information on this at the links provided. Routeing and Consultation Document Link: https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/userfiles/file/Harestones_West_WF_132kV_OHL_Grid_Connection_Routeing_and_Consultation_Report1.6.pdf Approach to Routeing and Environmental Impact Assessment 2nd version link: https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/userfiles/file/SPEN_Approach_to_Routeing_Document_2nd_version.pdf	No action required.
No thought given to impact on the area, the environment, as far as chopping down trees and using aluminium as conduct.	The Routeing and Consultation Document for the project assesses, amongst other things, biodiversity constraints, as well as potential landscape and visual amenity impacts, cultural heritage, land use and forestry. Minimising tree loss is something that is considered with reference to planning policy adopted earlier this year in the form of	No action required.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
	National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). Policy 6 of NPF4 seeks to protect and expand forests, woodland and trees. The current preferred route has been influenced by this policy. The detailed alignment of the overhead line, through this route option (should it remain the preference), will seek to minimise effects on trees and woodland, as far as possible. NPF4 Link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/documents/	
Only the cheapest option is being considered.	In compliance with the duties imposed on SPT in terms of Section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989, the proposed route must be 'economically viable'. This is interpreted by SPT as meaning that as far as is reasonably practicable, and all other concerns being equal, the line should be as direct as possible and the route should avoid areas where technical difficulty or compensatory requirements would render the scheme unviable on economic grounds. SPT are regulated by the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM) to offer the least cost option to developers when making connection offers. This will mean an overhead line is promoted rather than an underground cable due to the higher costs for underground cable. The subsequent length of the connection is then determined by the environmental and technical constraint present in the environment between the two points of connection.	No action required.
Other services are underground, why not electricity.	At present there is no environmental or technical reason to justify undergrounding of the connection for Harestanes West wind farm.	No action required.
Not enough detailed costings shown. Why are you not able to supply full costings including engineering and environmental costs of the project?	Detailed costings for private developer connections are commercially sensitive and would not be published as part of the public consultation process. The proposed connection is being progressed in line with SPEN's established Approach to Routeing and Environmental Impact Assessment document.	No action required.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
You have not fully considered or justified by details that you have considered alternatives.	Please see the published routeing and consultation document and appraisal tables at appendix C	No action required.
Never involved people whose lives will be affected visually and financially.	The public consultation is the process which allows for feedback to be provided on the proposal from local residents and businesses. Additional public consultation will take place once pole positions are provisionally sited and further, formal consultation will take place at the application stage.	No action required.
No costs involved as far as carbon footprint.	Policy 5 (Soils) of National Planning Framework 4 requires a detailed site specific assessment of the likely net effects of the development on climate emissions and loss of carbon where a development interacts with peatland, carbon-rich soils or priority peatland habitat. The connection has been routed to avoid priority peatland habitats (Class 1 and Class 2 peatland). A Peat Survey and a Peat Management Plan (if required) will be submitted to support the application for consent. Should the Scottish Government confirm that an environmental impact assessment is a requirement, an assessment of the impact of the development on climate and the vulnerability of the development to climate change may be necessary. This would be determined following a formal 'screening' exercise for the project, which is likely to take place in 2024. Connections for renewable energy sources to the grid, such as this, are an important contributor to the net zero transition, supporting the decarbonisation of energy, heat and transport. This position is supported by policy in the form of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). The avoidance of Class 1 peat in route sections D3 and D4 by routeing via section D2 further accord with NPF4 policy 5 (Soils).	No action required.
The developer should meet 95% of the cost to carry out underground installation.	SPEN cannot compel a developer to opt for an underground connection.	No action required.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
Can the circuit breaker be placed closer to the B724 main road? Landowner plans to extend an existing small plantation of trees on the north side of B724.	The circuit breaker compound is located adjacent to the existing steel tower overhead line, into which the proposed electric line will connect. Its location is partly determined on technical grounds due to the need to connect to a tension tower and in compliance with SPEN's Approach to Routeing Document, which seeks to ensure the most direct route is achieved. Placing the circuit breaker compound nearer to the B724 would increase its visibility, which is considered likely to reduce the chances of gaining approval for this development. On balance, the location closer to the existing steel towers is considered more appropriate.	No action required.
Areas of woodland planting proposed at Armisfield, burnside of Ae and Barshill.	SPEN seek to minimise the loss of existing trees when routeing a new overhead line. Where, on balance, this is not possible, SPEN is committed to providing compensatory planting, either on site, or on third party land.	No action required.
Do the wood poles generate noise?	The proposed voltage of 132kv is considered unlikely to generate adverse impacts from operational noise.	No action required.
Landowner noted that there are future quarry plans within the B5 corridor that will need to be considered in relation to the detailed routeing.	SPEN have been engaging with Tarmac to obtain further detail on the extent of the future quarrying operations in this area.	Future quarrying operations will need to be considered in the detailed design to establish if there is a technical route through this area of route option B5.
New woodland planting, caravan business and recreational use of land at Partridge Cottage highlighted by landowner.	SPEN and LUC visited the landowner on site to view the extensive tree and shrub planting, pond and caravan area/recreational use of the land.	SPEN are currently reviewing alternative options at the B5 section and are undertaking an appraisal of an alternative route in this section to consider the environmental benefits (if available) of amending the route option.
Some local residents provided contact details to be kept up to date on the project developments	Contact details retained by SPEN to inform next round of public consultation and provide updates as required.	No action required.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
Within the planned 60 metre wide corridor, what limitations on land use does SP intend to require?	The land within the wayleave corridor is restricted in terms of tree planting that might grow to a height that could pose a falling risk on the overhead line and that buildings are restricted if they would encroach on the electrical safety distances. A copy of the SPEN draft Deed of Servitude was provided to the respondent for information.	No action required.
How will SP compensate the landowner for any such restrictions on land use within the 60 metre corridor?	Tree crop compensation would be paid for trees which need to be felled and SPEN would also look to re-plant an equivalent number of trees on the landowner's property if they were agreeable to this. The tree crop compensation in relation to loss of trees/planting would be the subject of an independent assessment.	No action required.
Will SP be providing a 40 year compensation contract, between SP and the landowner, to reflect the anticipated life of the proposed OHL?	SPEN would normally agree a Deed of Servitude with the landowner for the apparatus. A payment for tree crop compensation is made and then a separate sterilisation payment is agreed between the parties for the landowner not being able to use the land within the 60m wayleave corridor.	No action required.
There is an unusually high density of badger setts along the valley of the Lochar Water, with a marked concentration along the old, sinuous course of the Lochar. These setts have extended considerably within the past 18 months. What steps are being planned by SPEN to ensure that the badger population is not disturbed by the construction process?	SPEN would have surveys undertaken to map badger setts to consider routeing the line to avoid these. SPEN would also do pre-construction surveys at a later date to understand if any have moved. If work is necessary close to a badger sett, SPEN would work with NatureScot to do the work sensitively and under the appropriate license.	No action required.
Why was it decided 2021 to abandon plans to install the previously-proposed OHL along the Lochar Valley, which had earlier been judged to be needed to serve nearby renewable generating capacity?	Commentary in response to this point notes that this perhaps relates to an earlier iteration of the connection, which was never formally consulted upon due to feedback from SEPA re the potential for flooding near tower BR72. The location of the circuit breaker compound was reconsidered on this basis and the preferred route amended to take account of this. SPEN also sought to clarify if the respondent had any previous correspondence on this matter?	No action required.

Summary of Comments Received from Consultees	Design team response	Change to proposed development design/route
Your consultation map delineates "Routeing Sections", however provides no further explanatory detail. Please explain, describe, or provide drawings, to illustrate the details of these "Routeing Sections".	Routeing sections are used by SPEN's environmental consultants to allow comparison of route options within the Routeing and Consultation Document. This process allows a preferred route to emerge. SPEN understand that the section boundaries were shown to the respondent at the consultation event to further clarify the query.	No action required.
Adjacent to the concerned property, Carse of Lochar, your consultation map defines a band width of the 'Preferred Route that is around 450 metres wide, aligned NNW-SSE. Only 200 metres of this 450 metre band width (Corridor Width) overlaps with our woodland property, Carse of Lochar. Thus 250 metres of the 450 metre band width lie outwith the woodland holding. There appears to be no geometric, or geographical reason for SP's proposed 60 metre wide corridor to overlap AT ALL with the Carse of Lochar property. Can SP provide an assurance that the "Preferred Route", with its 60 metre wide corridor, will be aligned fully clear of our woodland property, Carse of Lochar, with no overlap?	At this point in time, it is not possible to give a guarantee that the preferred route including the 60m wide corridor will avoid Carse of Lochar. It does seem likely though, as the watercourses in this area are likely to push the alignment east. There are a number of additional constraints to consider following the consultation and until that process is complete it won't be possible to provide certainty on this. SPEN will keep the respondent updated of progress and would anticipate having a clearer understanding of matters before the end of this year (2023).	No action required.