

Electricity Act 1989

Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997

DPEA Code of Practice

Tealing to Kintore OHL proposal TRL-120-1

CHS Statement: Public Health and related matters Dr Rachel Mayo-Jack, Echt

I address you today as a resident of Echt, a home owner, a mother, a nature-lover and a member of The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, and a member of the Royal College of General Practitioners. I have grave concerns about these proposals and would urge you to reject them.

HEALTH

I am one of 37 local doctors who signed a letter, submitted to the Scottish Government, outlining our concerns regarding the negative physical and mental health impacts for those living close to these high voltage power lines and massive pylons. I urge you to read it carefully. We do not have sufficient good quality research to know that living long-term, close to these high-voltage power-lines is safe. In our letter we urged application of the Precautionary Principle – preventative decision making in the face of risk of harm from an action. Living on the east side of Echt, close to the proposed pylons, I am concerned about our children's health. Why has there been no Health Impact Assessment? Why has Public Health Scotland not been included in the consultation process? Without these, how can ministers be sure that public health impacts have been addressed? These proposals, and the manner in which residents have been treated to date, are already impacting the emotional, mental and physical health of those who live along the proposed route. Residents of Echt are suffering anxiety, stress, loss of sleep and exacerbation of autoimmune conditions. The National Planning Framework 4 stipulates that development must safeguard human health and wellbeing. Without a Health Impact Assessment we are being denied our right to informed participation as per the Aarhus Convention.

VISUAL

The visual impact of these proposals will be devastating. The Scottish countryside around Echt is beautiful. These pylons will devastate it for generations. Looking out of our kitchen windows viewing the scene to the north and east, we will look out onto 11 pylons as they march over the hill from Dunecht and encircle our village on two sides. Gillian Martin in her role as Minister for Energy, Just Transition and Fair Work said, "Communities rightly don't want pylons right next to settlements; they (SSEN) will have to look at a proportionate amount of undergrounding in places where there is visual impact." But, there is no proposal of any undergrounding along the route. The route also runs close to Barmekin Hill - a unique hill with ancient archaeological remains of Barmekin of Echt Fort, characteristic of the late Bronze Age and Iron Age. The 360 degree views of the Aberdeenshire countryside below are

intrinsic to the hill and fort. It is a designated scheduled monument legally protected through the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The National Planning Framework 4 mandates the safeguarding of natural places and the protection of landscapes from disproportionate industrialisation. Policies 3,4,5,7,11,14,23,29 &30 support infrastructure only where environmental and community harms are avoided. The Aberdeenshire LDP 2023 protects landscape character areas and stipulates the avoidance of unacceptable visual intrusion. This proposal contravenes all these policies.

This project contravenes the Holford Rules which says siting of transmission lines should minimise visual impact, protect landscapes, and avoid residential areas. Yet these proposals have devastating visual impacts, ruin the landscapes and are situated far too close to villages such as Dunecht, Echt and Drumoak.

Echt is surrounded by fields and woodland rich in wildlife. Species protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 face huge threats from this proposal. The otters in the stream beside Myriewell House face losing their holt if the adjacent track is turned into an access road as proposed. The pine martens in Myriewell Woods face devastation. Our bats, red kites and tawny owls are also under threat. Huge flocks of geese, including pink-footed geese, fly over our skies and feed and nest in our fields. Our skylarks, yellowhammers and mistle thrushes (All RSPB red list species) face loss of nesting sites by these proposals. SSEN admitted at their community event that no Environmental Impact Assessment had been done prior to choosing the route. It should have been done prior to choosing the route to have any credibility. The National Planning Framework 4 stipulates not only the avoidance of biodiversity loss but also the need of actively contributing to biodiversity enhancement.

Our rural roads and tracks are totally unsuitable for the equipment required to install these enormous structures. I, personally, have had two very scary near misses with enormous lorries which do not fit on our country lanes. Far too frequently we see local headlines of those who have suffered injury or death through collisions with such vehicles. Access to pylon sites will require new tracks to be made and lanes to be widened causing irreversible damage. The National Planning Framework 4 requires infrastructure proposals to minimise adverse effects on communities and transport systems. This proposal does neither.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation process has been totally inadequate and has not adhered to the standards required by the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 or the fairness standards outlined by the Gunning Principles. To give a few personal examples – our initial letter which was meant to inform us of the project was sent to a former address in Surrey, England, despite the proposals only being relevant to us because we live in Echt, Aberdeenshire. When we arrived at our first event on 13th March 2024 at Echt Hall we were informed that it was not a “consultation event” at all, but simply an “information event” as the route had already been chosen. SSEN’s community liaison manager at that time said directly to a group of five of us, whilst pointing to a map of the

route via Echt, “this is the route SSEN has chosen and there is nothing you can do to stop it.” She went on to say that SSEN had “no obligation” to hold an Echt Hall event and that we should be grateful they had laid on this information event for us. The maps chosen to illustrate the route were not accurate – houses were missing such as Myriewell Cottages in Echt (built in 1934) and the entire Kirkwood Homes Estate in Dunecht. The posters on the walls were misleading showing pylons of maximum height 54.6m when the actual proposed towers on the route will average 57 m and some reach 72m. The staff we met could not answer our questions. Emails went unanswered. Having a security guard on the door was unnecessary and intimidating. Every time I asked for an assessment of the ecological impacts of the route I was informed that it had not been undertaken yet. Presenting a proposal as a “fait accompli” is not a meaningful engagement with communities.

As a resident of Echt I object to these proposals in the strongest possible terms. This poorly planned, destructive and unsafe route of overhead powerlines and enormous pylons must not go ahead. The negative consequences for local people are overwhelming in terms of health, visual impact, damage to wildlife habitats, road safety, to mention only a few. There is absolutely no benefit to communities like ours which will bear the negative consequences of these proposed plans for generations. When alternative technologies exist to transmit power to consumers in England and beyond, without damaging the very environment that renewable energy is meant to protect, I respectfully ask that you reject these proposals.

Rachel Mayo-Jack

11 May 2026