

Electricity Act 1989
Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997
DPEA Code of Practice

Tealing to Kintore OHL proposal TRL-120-1

CHS Statement: Need and related objections by ANDY JACK, Echt

I live in Echt, a beautiful quiet rural village in Aberdeenshire, with my family. I have many concerns about the proposals for 119 km of overhead powerlines and hundreds of enormous pylons, reaching 72 m high, running from Kintore to Tealing. I only have time to address a few today. I respectfully ask that you reject these plans.

I do not see that SSEN have adequately explained why this energy transmission must take the form of a completely new 400Kv overhead line. Both Ofgem and the National Energy System Operator have stated that decisions regarding design and technology are the responsibility of the transmission operator, yet SSEN have presented this overhead line to the public as if it were a requirement. The Holistic Network Design – Pathway to 2035 (Phase 2) prioritises the enhancement of existing circuits and the establishment of offshore high-voltage DC connections. Why has there been no real consideration of alternatives to this new 400Kv overhead line? The European Commission's guidance 2024 identifies underground HVDC as the default approach for major transmission routes with many countries including Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands adopting it as a national standard. Even the option of partial undergrounding has been dismissed by SSEN without transparent evaluation. Gillian Martin, MSP, 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 visual impact of these proposals will be devastating to our homes and communities. Our house will look out on to 11 of these enormous pylons, changing our rural location to an industrialised one. The impact of the siting of this overhead line on homes and families has not been taken seriously – as evidenced by the use of out-of-date maps to plan these routes; maps which did not even show all the homes present in Echt and Dunecht. The Holford Rules focus on minimizing visual amenity impact, protecting landscapes, and avoiding residential areas – these proposals do none of these.

Why has population health not been considered? Why has there been no Health Impact Assessment when extremely-low frequency magnetic fields are classified as a possible carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer? Why has Public Health Scotland not been included in the consultation process?

The consultation process itself has been extremely poor causing huge anxiety and stress to local communities. Instead of being consulted on the siting, we were presented with a chosen route, with only minimal tweaking allowed. Letters not received, out of date maps, inaccurate posters, ill-informed staff, a security guard on the door, early closing hours,

unanswered emails, and with-holding of information were a few of the difficulties we have encountered.

As a nature-loving family who enjoy walking, cycling and the local wildlife, we are very concerned about the loss habitat and both the short-term and long-term environmental impacts. Our otters, pine-martens, red squirrels, red-kites, tawny owls, bats and migrating geese will all be negatively affected. Sadly the recent reports of the bursting of plastic mats used to create temporary roadways during SSEN's Spittal-to-Beaully powerline project scattering millions of pearl-sized plastic pellets across Flow Country potentially jeopardising the region's UNESCO World Heritage status does nothing to reassure us.

The socio-economic impacts will be significant for families like ours and affect our families for generations. Both Savills and the Gilbraith Group have estimated that house prices along the route may be reduced by 10-30%. These proposals are already having an impact on house prices - A local family in Dunecht who recently sold their house reported that these pylon plans resulted £125,000 loss off the value of their property. For most people, their life-savings are in their houses. We did not choose to live next to a high-voltage powerline – in fact we chose not to. How can it be fair to impose these on us when better alternative technologies exist?

The lack of respect for the public, like ourselves, who are being expected to sacrifice our homes, views, health, agricultural businesses etc is astonishing. One Labour MP wrote *"Households living near new pylons will receive electricity bill discounts... hundreds of pounds in their pockets for hosting vital infrastructure"*. This ignorant response is common. Being labelled as "NIMBY"s is unhelpful and unfair, as is the suggestion that a few pounds in pockets will compensate for thousands of pounds lost on our house prices and businesses.

This is anything but a "Just Transition" with an unfair and disproportionate burden on rural communities and agricultural businesses.

With local people saying "No", over 10,000 letters of opposition submitted to the DPEA, and with local community councils, councils and MSPs all opposed, it will be a failure of democracy if this proposal goes ahead. I respectfully ask you to reject these proposals.

Andy Jack

11 May 2026