

16 Forestry

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16 Forestry

16.1 Executive Summary

16.1.1 This chapter presents the findings from the assessment of those likely significant effects of the Proposed Development upon forestry. This includes plantation forestry, Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland (ASNW) sites and the sites identified within the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS) database. The assessment of effect significance is based on the Proposed Development description as outlined in Chapter 3. Impacts on forestry are likely to occur as a result of the felling of trees within the Proposed Development footprint (including additional areas of forest clearance required for construction works such as construction compounds and access tracks) during construction. In addition, impacts will occur due to the requirement to minimise the risk of subsequent windthrow to the newly created forest edges by the additional felling of trees to create more windfirm edges.

16.2 Introduction

16.2.1 This chapter considers the requirement for tree clearance for both the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. It further addresses the net loss of woodland resulting from these works and the associated requirements for compensatory planting.

16.2.2 The chapter does not consider the effects of decommissioning due to the nature of the Proposed Development and the associated clearance of trees within those areas surrounding the infrastructure. It can be reasonably assumed, due to the tree clearance at construction, that there will be no further tree clearance required for decommissioning and as such no adverse effects on forestry at decommissioning.

16.2.3 The chapter will identify all associated legislation, policy and guidance relating to tree clearance for windfarms. It will review the current “do nothing” scenario for the woodlands ongoing forest management and then detail the proposed works to deliver the Proposed Development as outlined in Chapter 3. Within the “do nothing” scenario, as a commercial forest, it would be anticipated the area would be clear-felled and replanted. The chapter will review the impact and effect of the proposed works in terms of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and explain which of these effects will be scoped into the assessment. Where impacts or receptors have been scoped out a detailed justification for this decision will be provided. The opportunities for both on-site and off-site mitigation will be detailed, and the significance of residual effects post mitigation will be provided. The opportunities to mitigate for loss of forest resource by peat restoration is addressed within Chapter 8

16.2.4 This chapter is produced by Norman P. O’Neill MIC For, CEnv, BSc For. He has over 20 years’ in the production of EIA Report chapters relating to forestry predominately for utility projects including windfarms and overhead power lines.

16.3 Legislation, Policy and Guidelines

16.3.1 As there are no published criteria, guidance or methodologies in relation to the assessment of effects on forestry, the assessment is necessarily based on professional judgement informed by available forestry plans (and supporting information), field work, local management experience, and consultation.

The assessment has however taken account of statute, national policy, guidance and advice including:

- Technical paper 16 Designing Forest Edges to improve wind stability (Forestry Commission (FC), 1996);

- Guidance Note 804 Electricity at Work: Forestry (Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA), 2013);
- FC guidelines in the assessment of Yield class has been utilised to assesses forest areas and establish the growth rates and productivity of the individual sites;
- Policy on the Control of Woodland Removal (Scottish Government, 2009);
- Control of Woodland Removal: Implementation Guidance (Scottish Government, 2019a);
- Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018 (Scottish Government, 2018);
- The Felling (Scotland) Regulations 2019 (Scottish Government, 2019b);
- Scotland’s Forestry Strategy 2019-2029 (Scottish Government, 2019c);
- Data from the Nature Scot (previously Scottish Natural Heritage) records on Ancient and Semi Natural Woodlands(ASNW);
- Scottish Forestry- Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS)
- United Kingdom (UK) Forestry Standard 2017 (UK Government, 2017); and
- UK Woodland Assurance Standard.

16.4 Consultation

16.4.1 Table 16.1 below details those consulted and what information has been provided.

Table 16.1 – Consultation Responses

Consultee	Consultee Response	Applicant Response
THC – Scoping Response (March 2018)	<p>The scoping response included the following requirements and comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Calculations of compensatory planting must be provided within the EIAR. 2. EIAR must give consideration to the presence of nationally and internationally designated woodland 3. Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Tree Protection Plan in accordance with British Standard (BS):5837(2012) to be provided. 4. Map and table detailing forest removal to be provided. 5. THC welcomed the proposal to provide a Forestry Management Plan which will include 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The calculations for compensatory planting are detailed in Table 16.3. 2. This assessment has taken into consideration the Proposed Development impacts and likely significant effects upon forestry including nationally and internationally designated woodland. 3. Refer to further consultation with THC below. 4. Tree felling areas are illustrated in Figure 16.2 and calculations presented in Table 16.3. 5. The Applicant proposes that this will be a condition of the consent.

Consultee	Consultee Response	Applicant Response
	<p>consideration of use of felled material.</p> <p>With regard to forest removal and waste; THC has made the following comments:</p> <p>6. Key holing must be used wherever possible as large-scale felling can result in large amounts of waste material and in a peak release of nutrients which can affect local water quality. The supporting information should refer to the current Forest Plan if one exists and measures should comply with the Plan where possible.</p> <p>7. Clear felling may be acceptable only in cases where planting took place on deep peat and it is proposed through a Habitat Management Plan to reinstate peat-forming habitats.</p>	<p>6. The proposed felling only includes key holing rather than large scale felling.</p> <p>7. No clear felling is proposed.</p>
<p>SEPA - Scoping Opinion (March 2018)</p>	<p>The following information must be provided -map and table detailing forest removal.</p> <p>Key holing must be used wherever possible as large scale felling can result in large amounts of waste material and in a peak release of nutrients which can affect local water quality.</p>	<p>Tree felling areas are illustrated in Figure 16.2 and calculations presented in Table 16.3</p> <p>The Applicant proposes to use key hole felling.</p>
<p>NatureScot - Scoping Opinion (March 2018)</p>	<p>We note that forestry removal will be required in order to facilitate the windfarm.</p> <p>Where forestry is not be restocked, we advise that the peatland should be fully restored as part of this habitat management plan.</p>	<p>It is proposed that the peatland is restored in the areas of forestry felling (refer to Appendix 8.7 for further details).</p>
<p>Nature Scot – Pre-application (September 2020)</p>	<p>We note that forestry removal will be required in order to facilitate the windfarm. Where forestry is not be restocked, we advise that the peatland should be fully restored as part of this habitat management plan.</p>	<p>The mitigation for loss of forest resource will be considered by a combination of restoration of suitable peatland (as detailed within the ecology chapter 8 and off site forestry compensatory planting.</p>

Consultee	Consultee Response	Applicant Response
THC – Pre-application (September 2020)	<p>THC confirmed that “for any commercial forestry to be felled to accommodate the scheme this can be considered via a forest management plan rather than through submission of an AIA.”</p> <p>They however requested “a clear statement on the area of trees to be felled and the proposed compensatory planting. This should also include any off-site tree removals which are required to facilitate infrastructure improvements / deliveries to site.”</p>	<p>The Applicant proposes that the Forestry Management Plan is a condition of the consent.</p> <p>The calculations for compensatory planting are detailed in Table 16.3.</p>
Scottish Forestry (November 2020)	<p>Scottish Forestry requested that the assessment includes:</p> <p>“- <i>forestry baseline;</i></p> <p>- <i>clear distinction of felling required to accommodate proposed development’s infrastructure (ha)- permanent woodland loss; and felling required to allow for construction and operating of the proposed development (ha) - temporary woodland loss;</i></p> <p>- <i>area of permanent woodland loss (ha) associated with proposed development’s infrastructure, for which compensatory planting will be required, as per Scottish Government’s Policy on Control of Woodland Removal (CoWRP), and a clear commitment on timing of producing compensatory planting plan for area corresponding with area of permanent woodland loss. If an area of native woodland listed on NWSS is to be lost, then the compensatory planting proposals should try to address the issue, e.g. by providing bigger area of compensatory planting, or making sure that the new planting will deliver multiple benefits, including for biodiversity. The Applicant needs to be aware that compensatory planting plan might be subject to the Forestry</i></p>	<p>The forestry baseline is discussed in section 16.6.</p> <p>Details regarding required felling are provided in section 16.9.</p> <p>Details regarding replanting are provided in section 16.10.</p> <p>The applicant is volunteering the production of a Forestry Management Plan (FMP) as a condition to consent.</p> <p>The FMP will control the felling of trees, the disposal of felling waste, and the establishment of the new planting which will be carried out as part of the Development. Maintenance of the new planting will be detailed within the Operational Environmental Management Plan.</p>

Consultee	Consultee Response	Applicant Response
	<p><i>(Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>information on area and timing of felling required for the construction and operating (e.g. required for wind energy resource) of the proposed development (temporary woodland loss) - the applicant needs to be aware that the felling proposal must meet the minimum requirements for sustainable forest management, as set out in the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) (2017). If the forest in question is covered by an approved Long Term Forest Plan by LTFP, the additional felling proposals will require separate approval from SF under the Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018 (the Act);</i> - <i>information on area and timing of restocking (replanting of areas cleared to allow for construction and operating of the proposed development), with a clear commitment that the restocking is to be carried out before the proposed development is commissioned - again, the restocking proposals need to meet the UKFS requirements and be approved separately by SF under the Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018. That information should be provided in form of revised restocking proposals for areas covered by LTFP."</i> 	

16.5 Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

Consultation

- 16.5.1 Approaches have been made to discuss the loss of forestry with Scottish Forestry as the relevant statutory body. At the point of writing no formal response has been received. From responses received on similar projects it is expected that Scottish Forestry (SF) will request off site compensatory planting or peatland restoration or a combination of both. Further consultation with bodies interested in the effects on ornithology and biodiversity associated with the removal of woodland have also been consulted and this is reported in Chapters 7 and 8 respectively.

Study Area

- 16.5.2 The study area is the Proposed Development site boundary as shown on Figure 16.1. This area of 78.53 ha comprises a combination of plantation forestry, areas of native broadleaf woodland and areas of open land within the forest boundary fences. Due to the nature of the forestry plantation boundaries within the site boundary there has been no need to extend the study area outwith the site boundary or consider any impacts on areas outwith the site boundary.

Desk Study

- 16.5.3 The desk study incorporated a review of the areas of woodland cover from the aerial photographs and assessment of where these coincided with areas of native broadleaf woodland both designated and non-designated and also areas of PAWS. The following data sources were used:

- Ordnance Survey maps at 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 scale;
- Aerial photography (dated 2017 and 2018);
- Ancient Woodland Inventory (SNH, 2000);
- The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (SF, 2014);
- Land Management Plans, Compartment schedules and maps (FLS, multiple); and
- Forest GALES 2.5 model for predicting risk of windthrow (“Forest GALES 2.5”) (Forest Research, 2015).

Site Visit

- 16.5.4 Field surveys were undertaken between May 2020 and September 2020 to supplement and verify the desk-based work, information on the site provided by the landowner and consultations and to further inform the assessment. The surveys comprised walking (where forest density allowed) across the site. Forest characteristics including forest type and detailed descriptions of the area, age, species mix and stocking density. A general assessment of site conditions was undertaken to inform the prediction of the likely risk of windthrow to the trees outwith the proposed tree clearance area. This was based on the professional judgement of the forestry surveyor and took into account the current forest, including an assessment of age, species and height of the trees. In addition, a range of site conditions was considered, including aspect, altitude and soil type. Reference was also made to the forest research wind risk calculating system Forest GALES 2.5.

Assessment of Potential Effect Significance

- 16.5.5 The approach to assessing the significance of effects comprised the following stages:
- establish the existing conditions;
 - identify likely forestry effects;
 - assess whether each likely effect is adverse or beneficial in nature;
 - assess the significance of the likely effect based on the sensitivity of the forestry and the magnitude of impact (the extent/degree of change to the forestry);
 - where an effect is likely to be significant, identify measures to avoid, reduce or mitigate such significant effects; and
 - assess the significance of the residual effect following application of the mitigation measures.

Sensitivity

16.5.6 As there are no published criteria, guidance or methodologies in relation to the appraisal of sensitivity of effects on forestry, the assessment of sensitivity is necessarily based on professional judgement informed by available forestry plans (and supporting information), field work, local management experience and consultation.

16.5.7 Sensitivity has been identified based on the following categories:

- Highly sensitive areas of woodland are considered to be those that are:
 - highly valued due to crop species and age, e.g. ASNW or NWSS;
 - particularly rare or distinctive; and
 - considered susceptible to small changes.
- Moderately sensitive areas of woodland are considered to be those that are:
 - valued more locally; and
 - are tolerant of moderate levels of change.
- Low sensitive areas of woodland are considered to be those that are:
 - generally, more commonplace;
 - considered potentially tolerant of noticeable change; and
 - undergoing substantial development such that their character is one of change.
- Not sensitive: areas of woodland that are:
 - subject to retention within the Proposed Development operational area normally due to them having a low growing status;
 - tolerant of major changes, e.g. plantation forest where major structural changes are regular or planned as part of a normal felling cycle; and
 - with no designations and considered of no ecological or landscape value.

16.5.8 In addition to the above, the sensitivity of forestry management to the effects of the Proposed Development felling has been determined taking additional account of:

- forest productivity (in terms of, species and crop mixture);
- accessibility in terms of ground conditions;
- current management regime, including objectives of management, and size of management unit; and
- imposition of additional safety constraints in forest areas adjacent to the turbines

16.5.9 It should be noted that not all aspects noted above are required concurrently to define the sensitivity level, which is assigned based on professional judgement.

Magnitude

16.5.10 The following criteria have been used to inform the assessment of magnitude of impacts as a result of the Proposed Development.

- Major: a noticeable change to the woodland over a wide area or an intensive change over a limited area;

- Moderate: small changes to the woodland over a wide area or noticeable change over a limited area;
- Minor: very minor changes to the woodland over a wide area or minor changes over a limited area; and
- None: effectively no change.

Significance

16.5.11 Due to the inherent differences between the types of forestry effect, sensitivity and magnitude impact have been identified using professional judgement and these have been combined to identify the significance of the effect, based on the matrix presented in Table 16.2 below.

Table 16.2 - Significance of Effect Matrix

Magnitude	Sensitivity			
	High	Moderate	Low	None
Major	Major	Major	Moderate	None
Moderate	Major	Moderate	Minor	None
Minor	Moderate	Minor	None	None
None	Minor	None	None	None

16.5.12 All effects are considered and presented as either significant (major or moderate) or not-significant (minor or none) in the context of the EIA Regulations. All effects are considered to be adverse unless stated otherwise.

Requirements for Mitigation

16.5.13 Where an effect is to be considered significant mitigation has been identified that can be delivered within the Applicant’s control. In terms of embedded mitigation, the design of the Proposed Development has aimed to minimise the tree clearance required for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.

Assessment of Residual Effect Significance

16.5.14 The assessment of residual effects will follow the methodology of potential effects but will take into consideration the mitigation measures identified.

Limitations to Assessment

16.5.15 Due to the relatively simple nature of the forest present, both the conifer and broadleaf areas are assumed in the absence of detailed forest compartment schedules to have been planted in a single year, it was considered that the site assessment provided sufficient detail to undertake the assessment. In addition, the national database records for ASNW and NWSS was reviewed. For the assessment of the local forest resource, data from SF data records was used.

16.5.16 In general, it is considered that there is sufficient information to enable an informed decision to be taken in relation to the identification and assessment of likely significant environmental effects on forestry and there are no perceived limitations to the assessment.

16.6 Baseline Conditions

Current Baseline

- 16.6.1 The assessment has been undertaken on the site baseline condition as of July 2020 when field surveys were completed and is still considered to be valid for the purposes of the assessment.
- 16.6.2 The study area covers 79 ha in total and comprises 51.11 ha of forest and 27.89 ha of open land. The forest area is subdivided into 43.7 ha of conifer planting and 7.41 ha of broadleaf. From the onsite assessment both the conifer and broadleaf forest is considered to be 15 years old and was all planted in one year. In addition, there are scattered areas of naturally regenerated broadleaf trees which are likely to have seeded into the site since grazing of livestock and deer was removed at the time of planting when the site was fenced.
- 16.6.3 The species composition for the conifer plantation is assessed as being 88% Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) and 12% lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) with minor areas of larch (*Larix sp.*) and Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). The broadleaf planting areas comprise downy birch (*Betula pubescens*), common alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and rowan (*Sorbus subg. Sorbus*).
- 16.6.4 It is understood that there is currently no forest plan for the Proposed Development site. At this stage in the forest development it is normal that the forest plan is not in place. The forest plan is usually developed at the point where the forest owner is considering the first felling or thinning works.
- 16.6.5 The local forest resource against which the impact of the Proposed Development tree clearance is assessed is taken to be the forest area within The Highland Council (THC) area.
- 16.6.6 The area of broadleaf felling within the Proposed Development site boundary is 0.89 ha of which 0.44 ha is designated as NWSS.
- 16.6.7 Photographs of the areas of forestry present within the site are provided in Appendix 16.1 and the location at which the photographs were taken as well as the existing forestry mix within the site are shown on Figure 16.1.

Future Baseline (in the absence of the Proposed Development)

- 16.6.8 In the absence of the Proposed Development the forest area would continue to be managed by the forest owner/manager through a programme of tree felling and replanting to achieve the objectives within their Forest Plan. As there is no current plan for the Proposed Development site it is anticipated that the forest would continue to develop to commercial maturity and then be involved in a series of clear-felling and replanting phases as is typical for such commercial forest areas. This would create a series of felling and restocking coups to develop a more diverse age and species structure in the next forest crop rotation.
- 16.6.9 For those small areas of broadleaf woodland, both planted and native, it is assumed, from information gathered from the landowner, and from current best practice, that these areas will continue to be retained as broadleaf woodland. In most cases it is also reasonable to assume there will be little forest management intervention. It is common practice in such afforested areas to retain any areas of existing broadleaf woodland to satisfy the design criteria for the Long term forest plan.

16.7 Standard Mitigation

- 16.7.1 The design of the Proposed Development has aimed to minimise the felling required on site, while avoiding areas of higher value such as blanket bog, waterbodies and watercourses. The design of the Proposed Development has used existing forest “ride lines”(passageways between planted areas of trees) to use as the access routes for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development to reduce the area of tree clearance required (refer to Chapter 2 for further information on design iterations).

16.7.2 The following standard mitigation will be implemented during construction of the Proposed Development:

- Where areas of trees exist outwith the proposed tree clearance areas the felling boundaries will be clearly marked prior to works commencing.
- Good forest practice measures will be put in place to minimise the effect of on forestry.
- Adherence to Forest Industry Safety Accord (FISA) guidance during felling and extraction of forestry.
- Adherence to SF Guidelines e.g. to ensure protection and enhancement of the water environment during felling and construction.
- Implementation of tree harvesting and extraction methods to ensure minimisation of soil disturbance and compaction during felling and construction.

16.8 Receptors Brought Forward for Assessment

16.8.1 The assessment considers the effects of the Proposed Development on both coniferous and broadleaf woodland.

16.9 Potential Effects

Construction

Long term loss of forest resource as a result of the felling for the Proposed Development

16.9.1 The clearance of forest resource to facilitate the Proposed Development will result in the removal of a total forested area of 14.42 ha; of this area 13.53 ha is conifer forest. The remaining balance of forested area to be felled is broadleaf woodland; of this 0.44 ha is registered within the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS) and 0.45 ha planted broadleaf woodland as shown in Table 16.3.

16.9.2 Felling areas are illustrated on Figure 16.2.

Table 16.3 - Forest Clearance Works Required

Forest Type	Woodland to be felled in the study area (ha)	Highland Council Area (ha)
Conifer	13.53	232,500
NWSS and ASNW registered broadleaf	0.44	130,000
Plantation broadleaf	0.45	77,500
Total	14.42	440,000

16.9.3 The sensitivity of the forest resource is moderate in that the area is tolerant to moderate levels of change. The magnitude of the impact is considered to be moderate in that it is a change over a limited area. As such the effect is described as moderate and **significant**.

16.9.4 In addition, any loss of woodland is considered contrary to the Scottish Government policy on the Control of Woodland Removal (2009), and Scottish Government woodland expansion objectives, and should therefore be considered to be significant.

Long term loss of broadleaf woodland including areas of NWSS or ASNW

- 16.9.5 The NWSS woodland areas affected are included within the total forest clearance figures detailed in paragraph 16.9.1 and are therefore included in the assessment of overall loss of forest resource. However, potential effects associated with the loss of these sites are also assessed separately on the basis that the loss of broadleaf woodland (including areas of ASNW and NWSS registered woodlands) is deemed important by THC.
- 16.9.6 Sensitivity of these areas is determined using the professional judgement of the author, taking account of the national conservation status of these woodlands as determined by either NatureScot or Scottish Forestry (SF). The existing databases for these designations have been used alongside the onsite assessment as to the current condition of the woodland.
- 16.9.7 The sensitivity of the loss of broadleaf woodland is deemed high due to the fact that part of it is nationally designated as NWSS. The magnitude of the impact is defined as moderate based on the area of trees to be felled (0.44 Ha), giving rise to a **significant** effect of major significance.

Loss of forest resource due to felling for temporary infrastructure such as construction compounds).

- 16.9.8 The temporary loss of forest resource due to the construction compound is 0.53ha of conifer forest. This area is included within the total area detailed within Table 16.3.
- 16.9.9 The sensitivity of this woodland is deemed moderate due to it being tolerant to moderate change. The magnitude of the impact is defined as minor based on the area of trees to be felled, therefore the effect is of minor significance and **non-significant**.

16.9.10 *Operation*

- 16.9.11 Having reviewed both the current management of this forest and considered any impacts on its continued management and protection during the operational period of the Proposed Development, it is the professional opinion of the author that there are no impacts to be considered.

Decommissioning

- 16.9.12 It can reasonably be assumed that the decommissioning works could utilise the same compounds and access routes as those used for construction and operation and as such there would be no requirements for further felling to facilitate decommissioning and no impacts are anticipated.

16.10 Additional Mitigation and Enhancement

- 16.10.1 The assessment of the effect of the Proposed Development on long-term loss of the forest resources is undertaken in the context of Scottish Government policy. This policy is detailed within Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029 and includes a policy to increase new woodland planting across the country from the existing 10,000 ha of new planting per annum to up to 15,000 ha per annum. Therefore, the long-term removal of forestry proposed development area resulting from the wind farm development conflicts with the woodland expansion objectives.
- 16.10.2 The Scottish Government Policy on the control of woodland removal published in 2009 includes a presumption in favour of protecting Scotland's woodland resources. Woodland removal should only be permitted where it would achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits.
- 16.10.3 Where woodland removal is associated with development, compensatory planting may form part of the balancing exercise.

Construction

Long term loss of Forest resource as a result of the felling for the Proposed Development

- 16.10.4 The Proposed Development has identified that there is no opportunity to undertake mitigative compensatory planting of trees within the site boundary to address the proposed tree clearance

works. While there are areas of open ground within the site boundary these have primarily been identified as areas of existing peatland where tree planting would be contrary to The Scottish Soil Framework (Scottish Government, 2009).

- 16.10.5 The Applicant has therefore committed to identifying a suitable off-site location to deliver an area of compensatory planting of similar forest type and area (14.42 ha). This site will be identified, and agreement put in place to plant and maintain this area of forest planting prior to commissioning of the Proposed Development and the Applicant is happy for this to be a condition of the consent. Further details associated with the proposed habitat management plan can be seen in Appendix 8.7.

Long term loss of broadleaf woodland including areas of NWSS or ASNW

- 16.10.6 The loss of broadleaf woodland incorporates 0.44 ha of NWSS and 0.45 ha of further non-certified broadleaf woodland. The compensatory off-site planting works detailed in paragraph 16.10.5 will include the 0.89 ha of broadleaf woodland.

Operation and Decommissioning

- 16.10.7 No mitigation is proposed associated with the operational or decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development.

16.11 Residual Effects

Construction

Long term loss of Forest resource as a result of the felling for the Proposed Development

- 16.11.1 The measures within the committed mitigation to undertake full off-site compensatory planting of 14.42 ha of new forest planting is considered to reduce the magnitude of impact to none. The sensitivity remains as moderate. As such the residual effect is none and **not significant**.

Long term loss of broadleaf woodland including areas of NWSS or ASNW

- 16.11.2 While the felling of broadleaf woodland is mitigated through the compensatory off-site planting, the loss of 0.44 ha of NWSS woodland cannot be fully mitigated due to its status. Therefore, the sensitivity of the woodland remains high, the magnitude of impact is considered to be minor and the significance of the residual effect is moderate and **significant**.

Loss of forest resource due to felling for temporary infrastructure such as construction compounds).

- 16.11.3 The measures to undertake full off-site compensatory planting of 14.42 ha of new forest planting (which includes areas felled for temporary infrastructure) is considered to reduce the magnitude of impact to none. The sensitivity remains as moderate. As such the residual effect is none and **not significant**.

Operation and Decommissioning

- 16.11.4 The Proposed Development will have no residual operational or decommissioning effects on the forestry.

16.12 Cumulative Assessment

- 16.12.1 Due to the current Scottish Government policy on Control of Woodland removal (as listed in Section 16.3) there is deemed to be no cumulative effect from the long term loss of forest resource.

16.13 Summary

- 16.13.1 The effects on forestry are all within the construction period when a total area of 14.42 ha of forestry will be felled of which 13.53 ha is conifer and the balance of 0.89 ha is broadleaf woodland. The Proposed Development is committed to delivery of off-site compensatory planting of an equivalent area of new woodland planting at a site to be identified, within Scotland. This site will be formally identified and started prior to the Proposed Development being commissioned.
- 16.13.2 Within the 0.89 ha of broadleaf woodland being felled during the construction phase; is 0.44 ha of trees identified within the NWSS. While compensatory planting is proposed it is recognised that the loss of the NWSS registered woodland cannot be fully replaced. as this is site specific. As such a residual significant effect remains

Table 16.4 – Summary of Effects

Description of Effect	Significance of Potential Effect		Mitigation Measure	Significance of Residual Effect	
	Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse		Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse
Construction					
Long term loss of Forest resource as a result of the felling for the Proposed Development	Moderate	Adverse	Off- site compensatory planting of equivalent area	None	
Long term loss of broadleaf woodland including areas of NWSS or ASNW	Major	Adverse	Off-site compensatory planting of an equivalent area but not able to compensate for the loss of NWSS status	Moderate	Adverse
Loss of forest resource due to felling for temporary infrastructure such as construction compounds.	Minor	Adverse	Off- site compensatory planting of equivalent area	None	
Operation					
No impacts anticipated and therefore no effects					
Decommissioning					
No impacts anticipated and therefore no effects					

Table 16.5 – Summary of Cumulative Effects

Receptor	Effect	Cumulative Developments	Significance of Cumulative Effect	
			Significance	Beneficial/ Adverse
Forestry	Loss of forestry	N/A	N/A	N/A

16.14 References

Forest Industry Safety Accord ((2013). Guidance Note 804 Electricity at Work. Available at: <https://ukfisa.com/Safety/Safety-Library/fisa-804>

Forestry Commission (1996). Technical paper 16 Designing Forest Edges to improve wind stability. Available at: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/documents/6918/FCTP016.pdf>

Nature Scot (2020). Data from the records on Ancient and Semi Natural Woodlands. Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/planning-and-development/planning-and-development-advice/habitats/planning-and-development-trees-and-woodland>

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