

Agenda Item	5.2
Report No	PLS/15/25

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: South Planning Applications Committee

Date: 02 April 2025

Report Title: 25/00618/PAN: Coire Glas Hydro Pumped Storage Limited
Land Circa North of Kilfinnan Farm, Spean Bridge, PH34 4EB

Report By: Area Planning Manager – South

Purpose/Executive Summary

Description: Coire Glas Hydro Pumped Storage Scheme - Construction of a tunnel, tunnel portal and associated portal apron (tunnel inclusive of passing places, turning niches and refuge areas) to accommodate the installation of 400kv export/import electricity cables to connect the Coire Glas generating station to the national grid, including new access tracks, temporary compounds to be used during construction for welfare, parking, plant, materials storage and materials processing, ancillary buildings and spoil storage areas.

Ward: 11 – Caol And Mallaig

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the submission of the PAN and highlight any material issues they wish to be brought to the attention of the applicant before the submission of an application for planning permission.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report informs the Planning Applications Committee of the submission of the attached Proposal of Application Notice (PAN).
- 1.2 The submission of the PAN accords with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) and was made valid on 14 February 2025. The PAN is a statutory requirement for planning applications for major or national developments and must be lodged at least 12 weeks prior to the submission of a planning application. Members are asked to note this may form the basis of a subsequent planning application.
- 1.3 The submitted information attached includes:
- Proposal of Application Notice (Application Form)
 - Location Plan
 - Cover Letter
- 1.4 There will be two in-person consultation events, the first will take place on Monday 24 March 2025 between the hours of 11-1pm and 5-8pm at Glengarry Community Hall, Invergarry, PH35 4HG, and the second on consultation event will be held on Tuesday 15 April 2025 between the hours of 11-1pm and 5-8pm at Glengarry Community Hall, Invergarry, PH35 4HG. The proposed development was discussed at the Coire Glas Community Laison Group, which took place on 11 December 2025. The first two events were advertised in the local press (The Lochaber Times) on 27 February 2025 within the required statutory period. The advert for the next events will be placed in The Lochaber Times at least 7 days before the event.
- 1.5 Details of all notified parties are contained / appended to the PAN form and include Glengarry, Spean Bridge Roy Bridge and Achancarry Community Councils, as well as local Members. The applicant undertook a letter drop to advise the public of the consultation events to properties within a 2.5km radius. The information displayed at both events will be uploaded to <https://www.coireglas.com/planning-documents> on the day of the events.
- 1.6 Any forthcoming application will be accompanied by a Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) report explaining the consultation undertaken, feedback received, and any resultant amendments made to the planning application.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 The proposal is for the construction of a tunnel, tunnel portal and associated portal apron (tunnel inclusive of passing places, turning niches and refuge areas) to accommodate the installation of 400kV electricity cables to connect the Coire Glas

generating station to the national grid. The proposal development includes the following associated elements:

- New access tracks
- Temporary Compounds
- Parking
- Plant
- Material storage and material processing
- Ancillary building
- Spoil storage areas

2.2 A temporary compound measuring approximately 6,000m² will be constructed to the north of the portal. This will be used for welfare, parking, plant, materials storage and materials processing, and will be temporary for the construction period. Two ancillary buildings will be situated at the portal area to house mechanical and ventilation equipment. These buildings are approximately 500m².

2.3 The Coire Glas Scheme was consented in October 2020, which was a revised version of an earlier scheme consented in December 2013 under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989. The 2020 scheme increased the generating capacity of the original scheme. The proposed development will facilitate an onward grid connection which will require a switching station and further infrastructure. These related elements will be the subject of a separate application by the transmission network operator, Scottish and Southern Energy Networks Transmission.

2.4 The applicant has submitted an EIA Screening Request (24/04748/SCRE) with the Highland Council. The applicant has also submitted a Scoping Opinion Request under the reference (24/04749/SCOP).

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 The PAN boundary covers approximately of 39.46 hectares located in land approximately 3.5km north of the shore of Kilfinnan Farm. Access to the proposed development will be taken via an access track approved under wider Coire Glas scheme to the east of the tunnel portal, which provides access from the area known as Whitebridge (A87) to the dam itself. The portal is located approximately 4km north-east of the power cavern and 480m south from the switching station.

3.2 The tunnel associated with the development will be partially situated within the regionally designated Loch Lochy and Loch Oich Special Landscape Area (SLA). However, all above-ground structures will be located outside the boundaries of the SLA. The site does not contain any other natural heritage designations. Additionally, it is not within the connectivity distance of any Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is in proximity to two Wild Land Areas (WLAs), WLA 18: Kinlochhourn – Knoydart – Morar,

2.5 km southwest and WLA 19: Braeroy – Glenshirra – Creag Meagaidh, 3.5 km southeast. The site falls within the Interlocking Sweeping Peaks Landscape Character Type (LCT) 239 as defined by NatureScot's Landscape Character Assessment. There are no Core Paths within the site boundary, nor are there any listed buildings or scheduled monuments in the vicinity. The broader area is recognised for its archaeological significance. The proposed development will not require any tree felling. The development area is also not within the river flood plain nor at 1:200 year plus climate risk of flooding, according to SEPA's Flood Risk Mapping.

4.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the proposal:

4.1 National Planning Framework 4 (2023) (NPF4)

National Development 3 – Strategic Renewable Electricity generation and Transmission Infrastructure

1 - Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises

2 - Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

3 - Biodiversity

4 - Natural Places

5 - Soils

7 - Historic Assets and Places

11 - Energy

20 - Blue and Green Infrastructure

22 - Flood Risk and Water Management

23 - Health and Safety

25 - Community Wealth Building

29 - Rural Development

33 - Minerals

4.2 Highland Wide Local Development Plan (2012) (HwLDP)

28 - Sustainable Design

29 - Design Quality and Place-making

30 - Physical Constraints

31 - Developer Contributions

36 - Development in the Wider Countryside

42 - Previously Used Land
51 - Trees and Development
52 - Principle of Development in Woodland
55 - Peat and Soils
56 - Travel
57 - Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
58 - Protected Species
59 - Other important Species
60 - Other Importance Habitats
61 - Landscape
63 - Water Environment
64 - Flood Risk
65 - Waste Water Treatment
66 - Surface Water Drainage
69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure
72 - Pollution
73 - Air Quality
74 - Green Networks
77 - Public Access

4.3 **The West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (WestPlan) (2019)**

There are no policies related to the proposed development.

4.4 **Highland Council Supplementary Guidance**

- Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects (Aug 2010)
- Developer Contributions (Nov 2018)
- Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment (Jan 2013)
- Highland Historic Environment Strategy (Jan 2013)
- Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (Mar 2013)
- Managing Waste in New Developments (Mar 2013)
- Physical Constraints (Mar 2013)
- Public Art Strategy (Mar 2013)

- Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments (May 2013)
- Standards for Archaeological Work (Mar 2012)
- Sustainable Design Guide (Jan 2013)
- Trees, Woodlands and Development (Jan 2013)

4.5 **Scottish Government Policy and Other Guidance**

- Scottish Energy Strategy (Dec 2017)
- Scotland's Energy Strategy Position Statement (Mar 2021)
- 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy (Jun 2011)
- Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map (May 2018)
- PAN 1/2013 – Environmental Impact Assessment (Aug 2013)
- PAN 1/2021 – Planning and Noise (Mar 2011)
- PAN 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (Jan 2008)
- PAN 68 – Design Statements (Aug 2003)
- Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (Apr 2019)
- Forest and Woodland Strategy (Nov 2018)

5.0 **POTENTIAL MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- a) Development Plan and other planning policy;
- b) Community amenity including operational noise impacts;
- c) Construction impacts;
- d) Roads and transport;
- e) Flood risk and drainage impacts;
- f) Impact on trees and woodland;
- g) Design, landscape, and visual impact (including cumulative impacts);
- h) Natural heritage including protected species and habitats;
- i) Built and cultural heritage;
- j) Economic impact and tourism;
- k) Pollution;
- l) Decommissioning and restoration;
- m) Outdoor access; and
- n) Any other material considerations raised within representations.

6.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The report presents the information submitted to date as part of the PAN. The policy considerations against which any future planning application will be considered have been summarised as well as the potential material planning considerations and key

issues based on the information available to date. The list is not exhaustive, and further matters may arise as and when a planning application is received and in the light of public representations and consultation responses.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Not applicable.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is recommended the Committee notes the submission of the PAN and advises of any material issues it wishes to be brought to the applicant's attention.

Signature: David Mudie -
Designation: Area Planning Manager – South
Author(s): Ikram Ullah – Graduate Planner
Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.
Relevant Plans: Plan 1 – Proposal of Application Notice (Application Form)
Plan 2 – Location Plan

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and Planning (Scotland) Act 2019

Town and Country Planning (Pre-Application Consultation) (Scotland) Regulations 2021

The Council will respond within 21 days of validation the Notice. It will advise whether the proposed Pre-application Consultation is satisfactory or if additional notification and consultation above the statutory minimum is required.

Please note that a planning application for this proposed development cannot be submitted less than 12 weeks from the date the Proposal of Application Notice is received by the Council and without the statutory consultation requirements having been undertaken. The planning application must be accompanied by a Pre-application consultation report.

The Proposal of Application Notice will be valid for a period of 18 months from the date of validation of the notice by the Council.

Data Protection

Your personal data will be managed in compliance with the Data Protection legislation. You can read our privacy notice for planning related certificates on the Council's website at: https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/1052173/planning_applications_consents_and_notice_of_review

I have read and understood the privacy notice.

Contact Details

Applicant	Coire Glas Hydro Pumped Storage Limited	Agent	
Address	COIRE GLAS HYDRO PUMPED STORAGE LIMITED INVERALMOND HOUSE 200 DUNKELD ROAD PERTH PH1 3AQ	Address	
Phone	07990484827	Phone	
Email	hannah.belford@sse.com	Email	

Address or Location of Proposed Development

Please state the postal address of the prospective development site. If there is no postal address, please describe its location. Please outline the site in red on a base plan to a recognised metric scale and attach it to this completed Notice.

THE SITE IS LOCATED ON LAND CIRCA NORTH OF KILFINNAN FARM, SPEAN BRIDGE, PH34 4EB.

THE CABLE TUNNEL PORTAL/APRON AND ABOVE-GROUND ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ARE LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 3KM TO THE NORTH OF LOCH LOCHY SHORES.

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Description of Development

Please include detail where appropriate – eg the number of residential units; the gross floorspace in m² of any buildings not for residential use; the capacity of any electricity generation or waste management facility; and the length of any infrastructure project. Please attach any additional supporting information.

Construction of a tunnel, tunnel portal and associated portal apron (tunnel inclusive of passing places, turning niches and refuge areas) to accommodate the installation of 400kv export/import electricity cables to connect the Coire Glas generating station to the national grid, including new access tracks, temporary compounds to be used during construction for welfare, parking, plant, materials storage and materials processing, ancillary buildings and spoil storage areas.

Pre-application Screening Notice

Has a Screening Opinion been issued on the need for a Proposal of Application notice by the Highland Council in respect of the proposed development?
If yes, please provide a copy of this Opinion.

Yes No

Community Consultation

State which other parties have received a copy of this Proposal of Application Notice.

Community Council/s**Date Notice Served**

Glengarry Community Council

14th February 2025 via email.

Spean Bridge Roy Bridge and Achancarry Community Council

Local Elected Members**Date Notice Served**

Andrew Baldrey (Scottish Green Party)
John Grafton (Scottish Liberal Democrats)
Liz Siggers (Scottish Conservative and Unionist)

14th February 2025 via email.

Members of Scottish Parliament and Members of Parliament**Date Notice Served**

Kate Forbes, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch - SNP
Angus MacDonald, MP for Inverness, Skye and West Ross-shire
Douglas Ross, MSP Highlands and Islands - Conservative
Edward Mountain, MSP Highlands and Islands - Conservative
Rhoda Grant, MSP Highlands and Islands - Labour

14th February 2025 via email.

Ariane Burgess, MSP Highlands and Islands - Greens Tim Eagle, MSP Highlands and Islands - Conservative Jamie Halcro Johnston, MSP Highlands and Islands - Conservative Emma Roddick, MSP Highlands and Islands - SNP	
Names / details of other parties	Date Notice Served
25 properties and business on Kilfinnan Road Letter to 12 properties within a 2.5km radius of the site	14 th February 2025 via email. Posted on 14 th February to arrive w.c 17 th February 2025

Details of Proposed Consultation		
Proposed Public Event 1	Venue	Date and Time
	Glengarry Community Hall, Invergarry, PH35 4HG	Monday 24 th March Lunchtime event: 11-1pm Evening event: 5-8pm
Proposed Public Event 2 <i>(at least 14 days after Public Event 1)</i>	Venue	Date and Time
	Glengarry Community Hall, Invergarry, PH35 4HG	Tuesday 15 th April Lunchtime event: 11-1pm Evening event: 5-8pm

Publication of Event		
Newspaper Advert	Name of Newspaper	Advert Date
	The Lochaber Times	Thursday 27 th February 2025. Both events will be advertised in this advert. A further two adverts will be placed in the newspaper closer to the events (more than 7 days before event).
Details of any other consultation methods (date, time and with whom)		

Glengarry Community Council were made aware of the Screening and Scoping Request for the proposed development submitted in November 2024 via an email sent on 29th November 2024.

The Proposed Development was discussed at the Coire Glas Community Liaison Group, which took place on 11th December 2025.

Signed	Hannah Belford	Date	14/02/25
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SSE Renewables
Inveralmond House
200 Dunkeld Road
Perth
PH1 3AQ

By Email Only: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

Roddy Dowell
Planning Officer
The Highland Council
Council Headquarters
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness

14th February 2025

PROPOSAL OF APPLICATION NOTICE (POAN)

Construction of a tunnel, tunnel portal and associated portal apron (tunnel inclusive of passing places, turning niches and refuge areas) to accommodate the installation of 400kv export/import electricity cables to connect the Coire Glas generating station to the national grid, including new access tracks, temporary compounds to be used during construction for welfare, parking, plant, materials storage and materials processing, ancillary buildings and spoil storage areas on land circa 3km north of Kilfinnan Farm, Spean Bridge, PH34 4EB.

Dear Roddy

SSE Renewables Ltd, on behalf of Coire Glas Hydro Pumped Storage Limited, is submitting a Proposal of Application Notice (PoAN), under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 and the Town and Country Planning (Pre-Application Consultation) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021.

This submission is in relation to the installation of electricity cables to connect the Coire Glas Hydro Pumped Storage Generating Station ('Coire Glas Scheme') to the electricity transmission network grid connection point.

The Development Management Procedures Planning Circular 3/2022 ask for the following information to be included in a PoAN:

1. A description of the development to be carried out (in general terms);
2. The postal address of the development site, if it has one;
3. A plan showing the outline of the site at which the development is to be carried out and sufficient to identify the site;
4. Detail as to how the prospective applicant may be contacted and corresponded with; and
5. An account of what consultation the prospective applicant proposes to undertake, including information as to when such consultation is to take place, with whom and what form it will take. This should include any steps in addition to the statutory minimum for consultation.

The information requested in points 1-5 are covered in this supporting letter, the enclosed *The Highland Council Proposal of Application Notice* form and Figure 1.1, Search Area for Site Boundary.

The Proposed Development is located on land circa 3km to the north of Kilfinnan Farm, Spean Bridge, PH34 4EB. Please see Figure 1.1 'Search Area for Site Boundary'.

The first consultation event will be held on **Monday 24th March between the hours of 11-1pm and 5-8pm at Glengarry Community Hall, Invergarry, PH35 4HG.**

The second consultation event will be held on **Tuesday 15th April between the hours of 11-1pm and 5-8pm at Glengarry Community Hall, Invergarry, PH35 4HG.**

The information displayed at both events will be uploaded to <https://www.coireglas.com/planning-documents> on the day of the events.

We have sent a copy of the PoAN to Glengarry Community Council and Spean Bridge Roy Bridge and Achancarry Community Council which provides details of the events, and we will follow-up with an email closer to the events as a reminder. Copies of the PoAN and event details have also been sent to Local Ward Councillors for the Caol and Mallaig Ward (Councillor Andrew Baldrey, Councillor John Grafton and Councillor Liz Saggars) by email. Angus Macdonald MP, Kate Forbes MSP, Douglas Ross MSP, Edward Mountain MSP, Rhoda Grant MSP, Ariane Burgess MSP, Tim Eagle MSP, Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP and Emma Roddick MSP have also received the PoAN and details of the events. The Councillors, MP and MSPs will also receive a reminder of the events at a closer date.

In accordance with Part 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013, the public event details will be advertised in the local press (The Lochaber Times) and will include the information outlined in Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Pre-application Consultation) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021.

Details of the public events will also be posted on relevant Facebook group pages close to the events.

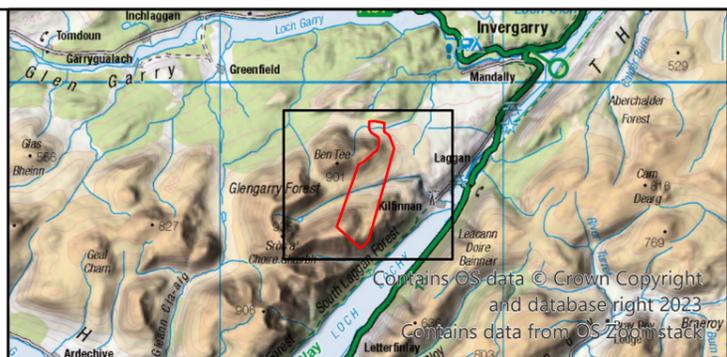
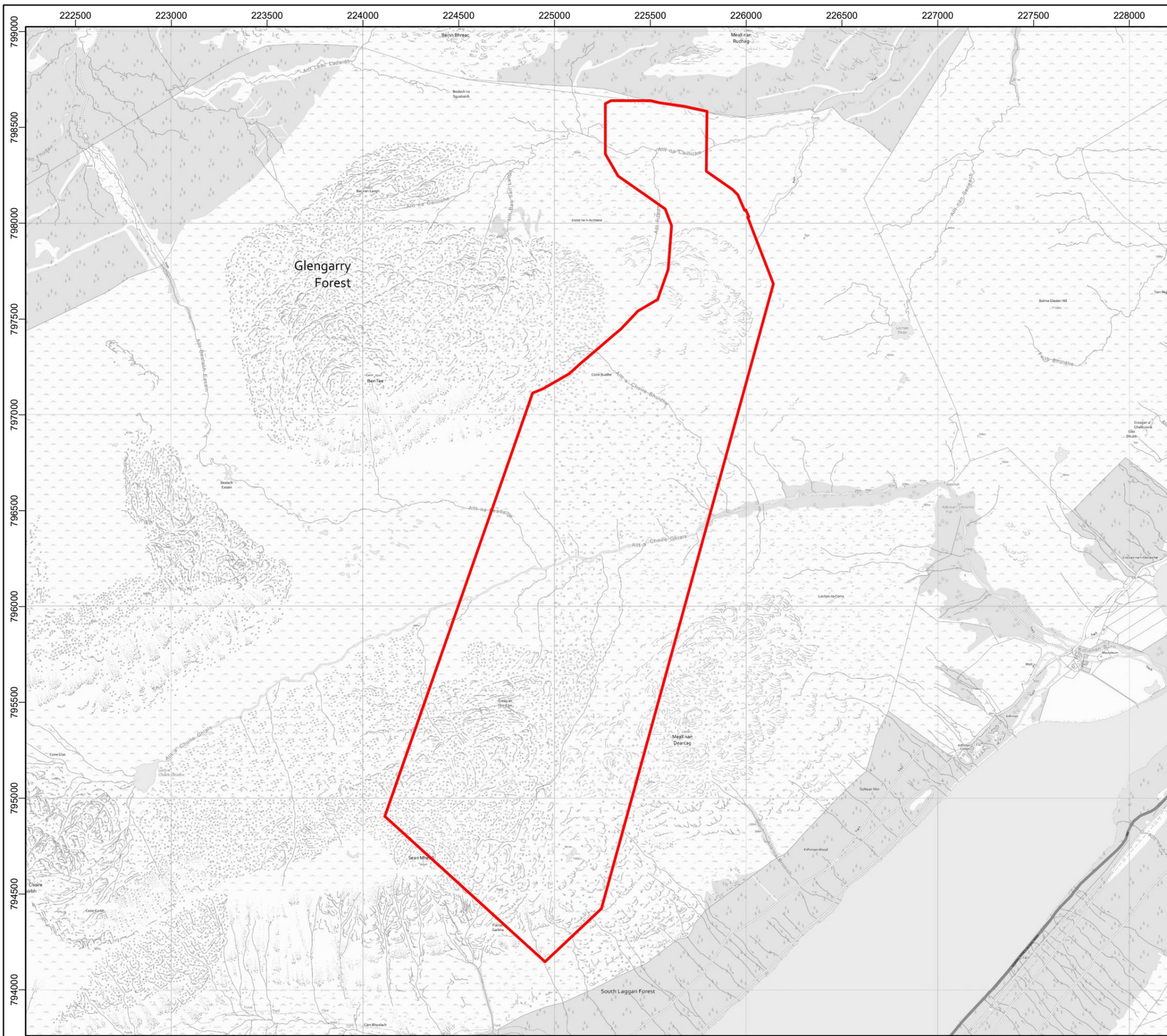
It is worth noting Glengarry Community Council were made aware of the Screening and Scoping Request for the proposed development submitted in November 2024 via an email sent to the Community Council on 29th November 2024. The Proposed Development was also discussed at the Coire Glas Community Liaison Group, which took place on 11th December 2025.

We trust you find this Proposal of Application Notice to be in order, please let us know if there are any further queries relating to the notice.

Yours faithfully

Hannah Belford MRTPI

Consent Strategy Manager
SSE Renewables



Legend
 Search Area for Site Boundary

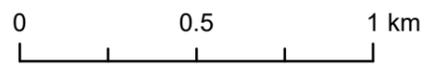
REV	DATE	REMARKS	DRN	CHK	APR
01	06/11/2024	For information	AM	AB	HB
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Project Name
COIRE GLAS PUMPED STORAGE SCHEME

Drawing Title
FIGURE 1.1 - SEARCH AREA FOR SITE BOUNDARY

Drawing Number
LH00012-COIG-SID-SK-0003-05

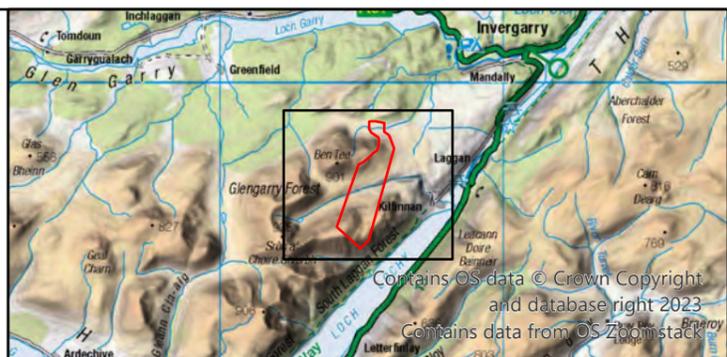
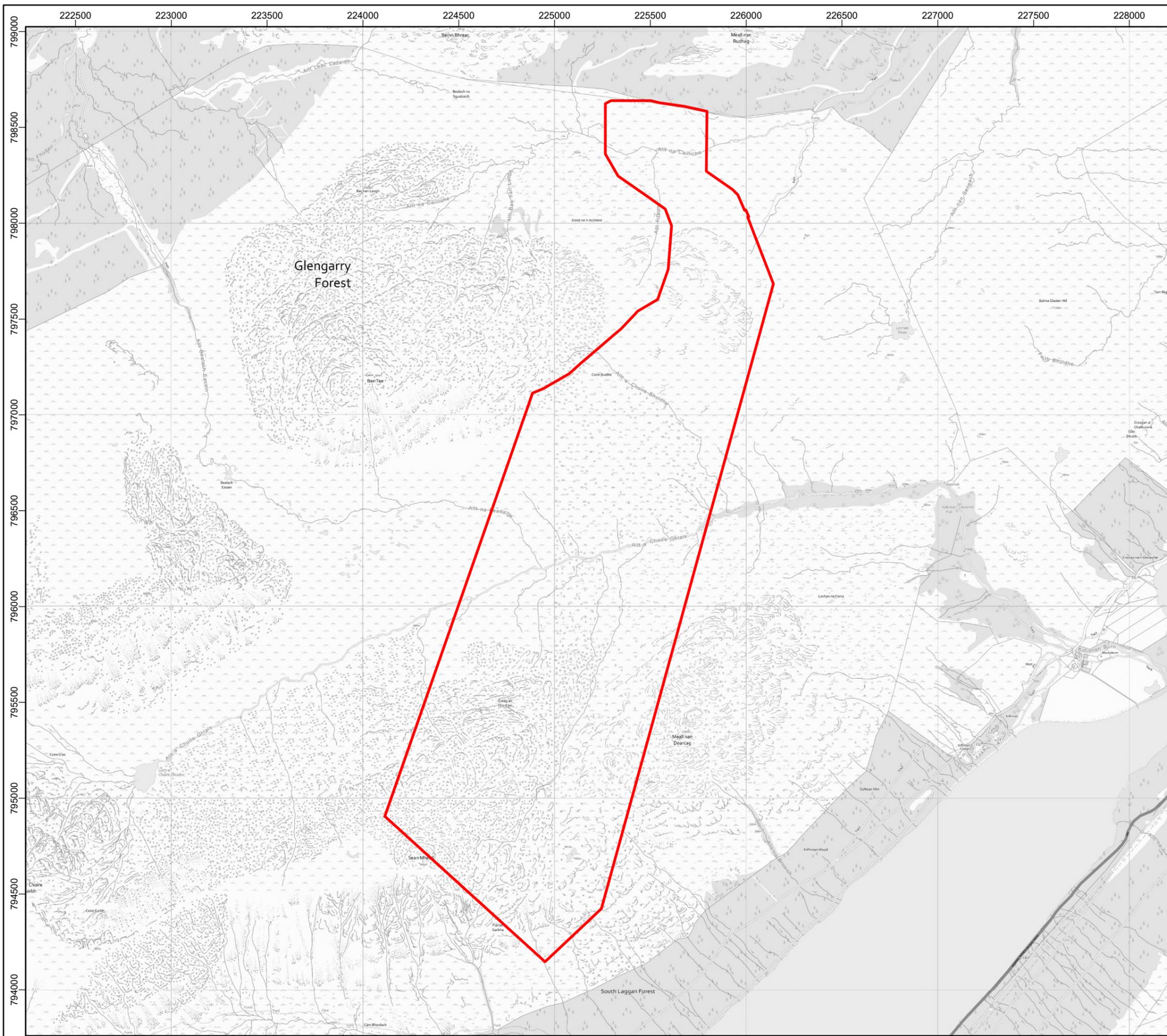
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Legend
 Search Area for Site Boundary

REV	DATE	REMARKS	DRN	CHK	APR
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00	24/10/2024	First issue	AM	HB	--

Project Name
COIRE GLAS PUMPED STORAGE SCHEME

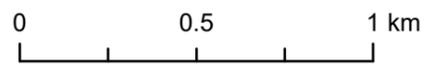
Drawing Title
FIGURE 1.1 - SEARCH AREA FOR SITE BOUNDARY

Drawing Number
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