

Agenda Item	6.2
Report No	PLS/33/25

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: South Planning Applications Committee

Date: 18 June 2025

Report Title: 24/01234/FUL: Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc
Culligran Power Station, Strathfarrar, Kiltarlity

Report By: Area Planning Manager – South

Purpose/Executive Summary

Description: Culligran Substation - construction and operation of a 132kV replacement substation, platform, plant and machinery, access, laydown/work compound area(s), drainage, landscaping, and other

Ward: 12 – Aird and Loch Ness

Development category: National Development

Reason referred to Committee: National Development

All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal accords with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is acceptable in terms of all other applicable material considerations.

Recommendation

Members are asked to agree the recommendation to **GRANT** the application as set out in section 11 of the report.

1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 1.1 This application is for the construction and operation of a 132kV/11kV single transformer substation to replace the existing substation at the Culligran Power Station, which is coming to the end of its operational life, comprising:
- 60m x 54m concrete platform;
 - Control building measuring 26 m x 11m and maximum height of 5.9m;
 - External air insulated switchgear (AIS) measuring up to 40m x 20m and maximum height of 7.5m;
 - Landscaping and biodiversity enhancement;
 - Site drainage;
 - Removal of existing fence and replaced with 2.4m high security palisade perimeter fencing and deer fencing enclosing the site; and
 - Upgrade and extension of the existing access track and junction with the along with upgrades and improvements along the private Glen Strathfarrar Road.
- 1.2 As part of the development, the new substation will extend into an area of woodland immediately southwest of the existing substation compound. The infrastructure of the extant substation will be removed with the hardstanding reused for a Cable Sealing End (CSE) compound with a transmission tower and switchgear as required for the function and control of supply between the new underground cable, substation, and existing power station. The existing steel lattice tower will remain with further consideration given to the long-term future of other non-redundant equipment. Underground cabling to connect the Culligran Power Station to the new substation will be undertaken using the applicant's permitted development rights.
- 1.3 The application forms part of the West of Beaully Asset Replacement Project, which replaces the existing substations of Culligran, Deanie, Aigas, and Kilmorack Hydroelectric Power Stations as part of the Affric/Beaully Hydro Electric Scheme. The project runs concurrent with the Glen Strathfarrar Visual Impact of Scottish Transmission Assets (VISTA) Project to remove and underground an existing section of overhead transmission line (OHL) within the Glen Strathfarrar National Scenic Area (NSA).
- 1.4 The applicant requested pre-application advice through the Highland Council's Pre-Application Advice Service for Major Developments for this proposal jointly with the proposed substation replacement at Deanie Power Station (22/03238/PREMAJ). The response outlined support in principle for the proposals subject to appropriate siting, design, and landscaping with Council officers emphasising the importance of responding to the unique context of each site to help embed each proposal into its receiving landscape.
- 1.5 The applicant also conducted a series of pre-consultation events, the first in person event was held at both Kilmorack Hall on 31 October 2022 and Cannich Village Hall

on 01 November 2022, with these venues hosting follow up events in October 2023 following further design refinement. The applicant also provided opportunity for the public to give feedback online through a dedicated webpage on its website. These events covered all four of the of Beauly Asset Replacement substations. The Pre-application Consultation Report (PAC) Report submitted with the application outlines how concerns over the visual impact of the proposal as well as road impacts during construction works have informed the mitigation by design proposals.

- 1.6 A formal request for an EIA Screening Opinion was submitted in December 2022 to the Council with it confirmed in February 2023 that the proposal does constitute EIA development, which means the planning application, under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 is required to be accompanied by an EIA Report (EIAR). The Council confirmed the scope of the EIA report in January 2024 following the applicant's request in August 2023.
- 1.7 The application is supported by an EIAR containing chapters relating to the describing the proposed development, consideration of alternatives, EIA methodology and consultation, landscape and visual impacts, ecology and ornithology, hydrology, hydrogeology, geology and soils, forestry, noise and vibration, socio-economics, recreation and tourism, cumulative effects, and mitigation. The application is also accompanied by a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, Construction Traffic Management Plan, Transport Statement, Outdoor Access Management Plan, Habitats Regulations Appraisal Report, Outline Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plan, 3D images and all associated Technical Appendices, as well as the aforementioned PAC Report.
- 1.8 The scheme has not changed materially during the course of the application's consideration however the applicant has clarified landscaping, biodiversity enhancement, compensatory planting, road improvement works, traffic management as well as proposals to maintain and enhance public access along the Glen Strathfarrar (private) Road and Core Path. Updated Road Layout Plans, Outdoor Management Plan along with biodiversity enhancement calculations have been submitted.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The 9ha application site extends from the 3.5ha main development area at its western extent eastward for approximately 2km along the private Glen Strathfarrar Road to where the road is publicly adopted as the U1355 at Inchmore (around 725m west of its junction with the A831). The main development area takes in the existing Culligran Substation extending into areas of woodland to the south and southwest, adjacent to Culligran Power Station. The site boundary also includes 3ha of agricultural field to be used for a temporary construction compound during construction work located approximately 1km east of the replacement substation. There are areas of woodland listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) to the

north of the Site. The site is within the remote Glen Strathfarrar Landscape Character Type (LCT) unit of Wooded Glen – Inverness LCT226 as mapped and described by NatureScot. An overhead line (OHL) connects to the existing substation and links with the wider transmission route to the north of the site.

- 2.2 There is an existing track running through the development area from the private road extending through the adjacent woodland and following the route of the Neaty Burn for some distance to the northwest. This route is part of the Beinn a' Bha'ach Àrd Trail looping from Inchmore to the Corbett and back again. The closest property from the site is Culligran Cottage approximately 800m to the northeast.
- 2.3 The Glen Strathfarrar Road is also a Core Path (IN26.01) and public right of way, while the site area is subject to the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 where members of the public may reasonably exercise their rights to public access. There are no Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments in the vicinity of the site although the wider area has known archaeological potential.
- 2.4 The development area lies wholly within the Glen Affric to Strathconon Special Protection Area (SPA), the Strathglass Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Glen Strathfarrar Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designations.
- 2.5 In terms of landscape and scenic designations, the main development area is marginally within the Glen Strathfarrar National Scenic Area (NSA) and outwith the Central Highlands Wild Land Area (WLA) and regional Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch Special Landscape Area (SLA) which are located approximately 300m to the north and 2.1km to the northwest respectively.
- 2.6 Sections of the Glen Strathfarrar Road are at 1:200 year plus climate change flood risk from the River Farrar and Loch Beannacharan according to SEPA's Flood Risk Mapping.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1	10.01.2024	23/04050/SCOP 132/11kV single transformer substation, two new overhead line towers and associated infrastructure.	Scoping Decision Issued
3.2	27.07.2023	23/03273/SCRE Construction of 2No. towers, removal of existing tower, for connection of Culligran Hydro Power Station.	EIA is Required
3.3	22.02.2023	22/06032/SCRE Erect substation.	EIA is Required
3.4	21.12.2022	22/04838/PAN Replacement of existing Culligran Substation comprising: access track,	Reported to Committee

fenced platform area (not exceeding 50x95m) incorporating control building, transformers, plant and infrastructure, associated ancillary facilities, temporary construction compound and laydown area(s), alongside drainage and landscaping requirements.

3.5	21.12.2022	22/05548/PNO Application under Regulation 62 of The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 for ground investigation works for sub-station	Prior Approval Granted
3.6	04.12.2006	06/01141/FULIN Installation of communication dish	Permission Granted
3.7	02.03.2004	04/00087/FULIN Temporary siting accommodation comprising offices, storage containers, messing facilities and self-contained toilet cubicles on adjacent land	Permission Granted

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Advertised: Edinburgh Gazette for EIA, and Inverness Courier for EIA, Unknown Neighbour, and Schedule 3

Date Advertised: 10 May 2024 for Unknown Neighbour and Schedule 3, 17 May 2024 (EIA).

Representation deadline: 31 May 2024

Timeous representations: 1 general comment

Late representations: None

4.2 Material considerations raised are summarised as follows:

a) Whether the West of Beaully Asset Replacement Project is a single EIA development.

4.3 All letters of representation are available for inspection via the Council's eplanning portal which can be accessed through the internet www.wam.highland.gov.uk/wam.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **Strathglass Community Council (host)** were consulted but did not respond.

5.2 **Glenurquhart Community Council** did not respond to the consultation request.

- 5.3 **Kilmorack Community Council** did not respond to the consultation request.
- 5.4 **Marybank, Scatwell and Strathconon Community Council** did not respond to the consultation request.
- 5.5 **Muir of Ord Community Council** did not respond to the consultation request.
- 5.6 **Access Officer** has withdrawn their objection following the submission of an outline Recreational Access Management Plan subject to a condition for a finalised plan to detail how access to the Beinn a Bha'ach Ard Trail will be accommodated and finalise all measures to ensure public access is maintained favourably during construction works.
- 5.7 **Contaminated Land Officer** does not object subject to an Informative noting there is potential for contamination at the site given the presence of the existing Power Station.
- 5.8 **Ecology Officer objects** to the application due to the lack of detail of off-site biodiversity compensation and enhancement. The Committee is asked to note however that the Economy and Infrastructure Committee has agreed to the principle of allowing the Council's Assistant Chief Executive – Place to conclude and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with developers, including Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission, for off-site biodiversity and tree/woodland compensatory and enhancement measures to be delivered through a Memorandum of Understanding. The Ecology Officer also requests that any planning permission includes conditions to secure a finalised Habitat Management Plan, and that works are undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan under the supervision of an Environmental Clerk of Works (EnvCoW) to ensure that pre-construction surveys, including for any nesting birds, are undertaken prior to the commencement of any works on site.
- 5.9 **Environmental Health** does not object subject to conditions to limit noise impacts on sensitive receptors and to secure an assessment of impacts on private water supplies in the area.
- 5.10 **Flood Risk Management Team** does not object on flood risk or drainage grounds.
- 5.11 **Forestry Team** does not object subject to a condition to secure an Arboricultural Method Statement, Tree Protection Plan, and offsite Compensatory Planting Plan.
- 5.12 **Historic Environment Team – Archaeology** does not object subject to a condition to secure prior approval of an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation before works commence on site.
- 5.13 **Transport Planning** does not object and has been working directly with the applicant to ensure that the Construction Traffic Management Plan will be appropriate and

informed by concurrent projects, and to agree preconstruction upgrades to maintain the integrity and safety of the public road network.

- 5.14 **Historic Environment Scotland** does not object and has no specific comments to make on matters within its remit.
- 5.15 **NatureScot** does not object. It has considered the proposal's likely impacts on the Glen Affric to Strathconon SPA, the Strathglass Complex SAC, the Glen Strathfarrar SSSI, Glen Strathfarrar NSA and the Central Highlands WLA and does not consider that these would be adversely affected by the proposal. These issues are considered in further detail in the body of the report.
- 5.16 **Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)** does not object noting that there should be a buffer of at least 6m from the edge of the substation platform and watercourses. They also provided advice on flood risk and regulatory context of the proposal.
- 5.17 **Scottish Water** does not object and advises on drinking water protected areas and surface water drainage noting that further action may be required on fresh water by the applicant.
- 5.18 **Transport Scotland** does not object subject to conditions to secure prior approval of the Construction Traffic Management Plan, the Abnormal Loads Route and Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL) Management Plan, as well as any roads and road safety mitigation measures required for the safe movements of construction and abnormal load vehicles on the trunk road network.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

- 6.1 Appendix 1 of this report provides details of the documents which comprise the adopted Development Plan, including details of pertinent planning policies as well as adopted supplementary guidance.

7. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Appendix 1 of this report also sets out all other material considerations which are relevant to the assessment of the application.

8. PLANNING APPRAISAL

- 8.1 Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning Considerations

- 8.2 The key considerations in this case are:
- a) Compliance with the Development Plan and Other Planning Policy
 - b) Energy and Carbon Saving
 - c) Construction Impacts
 - d) Siting, Layout and Design, Landscape and Visual Impacts
 - e) Built and Cultural Heritage
 - f) Water Environment
 - g) Natural Heritage
 - h) Habitats and Forestry
 - i) Biodiversity Enhancement
 - j) Roads, Transport and Wider Access
 - k) Economic Impacts
 - l) Any Other Material Considerations.

Development Plan / Other Planning Policy

- 8.3 The Development Plan comprises National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), Highland-wide Local Development Plan, the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 (IMFLDP2), and their associated Supplementary Guidance documents.
- 8.4 Appendix 2 of this report provides an assessment of compliance with the Development Plan / Other Planning Policy.
- 8.5 In summary, the principle of development is established in national policy, with the proposed development being of national importance for the delivery of the national Spatial Strategy. NPF4 considers that Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure will assist in the delivery of the Spatial Strategy and Spatial Priorities for the north of Scotland, and that Highland can continue to make a strong contribution toward meeting Scotland's ambition for net zero. Alongside these ambitions, the strategy for Highland aims to protect environmental assets as well as to stimulate investment in natural and engineered solutions to address climate change. This aim is not new and will clearly require a balancing exercise to be undertaken, which is reflected throughout NPF4.

Energy and Carbon Saving

- 8.6 The applicant notes that the four Affric/Beaully Hydroelectric Scheme substations at Culligran, Deanie, Aigas, and Kilmorack are coming to the end of their

operational lives and as such there is an operational need for their replacement. In that way, the proposal will allow the electricity generated at their respective hydroelectric power stations to continue to supply renewable energy to the National Grid's transmission and distribution network. By avoiding the costly need to dismantle the generating stations or leaving them unused, replacing the substations with modern energy saving equipment is intrinsically carbon saving as it is a less carbon intensive than demolition, which would release the embodied carbon. Moreover, energy losses and energy use at the substations are substantially reduced thus reducing generating stations' greenhouse gas emissions overall. The proposal is, therefore, considered to comply with NPF4 Policies 1 and 2 for Climate and Nature Crises as well Climate Mitigation and Adaptation.

Construction Impacts

- 8.7 As set out above, some unavoidable intermittent impacts are to be expected during construction works from construction traffic and AIL delivery, noise, dust, and waste etc. To manage and mitigate against such impacts, the applicant has committed to ensure that all works will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to be finalised in consultation with, and implemented by, the contractor and a suitably qualified Environmental Clerk of Works (EnvCoW) with support from other environmental professionals as required. Chapter 11 of the EIAR provides a Schedule of Mitigation which sets out the principles of environmental management that will be adhered to through the CEMP. The finalised versions of both the CEMP and Schedule of Mitigation should be secured by Condition.
- 8.8 The Council's Environmental Health Officer (EHO) has no objection to the proposal and advises that any impacts resulting from construction issues would be controlled through Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974. It is expected that the developer will employ the best practicable means to reduce the impact of noise and dust from construction activities with schemes demonstrating how this will be achieved required as part of the CEMP. Timing of HGV and abnormal load deliveries should also be agreed through the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) with construction traffic avoiding school travel times and identified community events.
- 8.9 The applicant has submitted a noise impact assessment which demonstrates that predicted levels at the nearest noise sensitive receptors are very low and well below the relevant criteria. A condition is attached with noise not to exceed 30dB at the curtilage of any noise sensitive premises.
- 8.10 The Environmental Health Team have no objection regarding noise and advise that generally, people are more tolerant of construction noise during typical working hours between 8am to 7pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays. Any works for which noise is not audible at the curtilage of any noise sensitive property

could still be carried out out-with these times. Should the development be granted consent however, a condition should be included to require the developer to set up of a Community Liaison Group to ensure the Community Council and other stakeholders are kept up to date and consulted on construction activities before, during, and after the construction period.

- 8.11 With regards to Private Water Supplies (PWS), the Environmental Health Team note that a site-specific investigation of further possible private water supplies has not been carried out by the applicant. Whilst reference is made to the supply serving the Culligran Power Station no details have been provided of the potential risks to the supply and reliance has been put on the procedures in the draft CEMP (EIAR Volume 2 Appendix 2.3). As such, prior to the commencement of the development, the applicant will be required to carry out an investigation to identify any private water supplies, including pipework, which may be adversely affected by the development. A report which includes details of the measures proposed to prevent contamination or physical disruption and include details of any monitoring prior to, during and following construction. Additionally, this shall include proposals for contingency measures in the event of an incident. These details are controlled by condition.

Siting, Layout and Design, Landscape and Visual Impacts

- 8.12 In terms of site selection, the applicant undertook an assessment of 3 potential locations for the replacement substation following its own site selection criteria (including consideration of environmental and engineering factors, distance from the generating station, costs etc.) and a consideration of environmental constraints. The initial 3 site options are shown in Table 3-1: Initial Site Options Plan (EIAR Chapter 3: Consideration of Alternatives) to the north, east and the preferred site to the southwest of the existing Culligran Substation. While the proposal is submitted under the Town and Country Planning Act (Scotland) 1997 (as amended), the applicant has also had in mind its obligations under the Electricity Act 1989 as a licence holder and due to its connection with the related VISTA project to have a regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest, and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interests and to reasonably mitigate effects on such features.
- 8.13 The location of the current application site was the preferred option since an early stage from engineering and technical perspectives given the location outwith areas of flood risk and designated Ancient Woodland, in comparison with the other 2 discounted sites, along with fewer impacts on the Special Qualities of the Glen Strathfarrar NSA. Following the subsequent preapplication process, Council officers advised that the development would likely be accommodated within the preferred site subject to the proposal being acceptable in all other aspects. The applicant has

since refined the substation location to minimise the loss of trees within the site through a reduction in the length of the platform by 14m, SUDS rationalised into a single basin to cover all works and steeper 1:2 slopes around platforms to minimise excavation. Additionally, trees enclosing the site will mitigate the visual effects of the development.

- 8.14 As well as the reduced platform footprint, the applicant has sought to mitigate landscape and visual effects further through lowering and tiering the platform by cutting it into the receiving ground to reduce the overall height of the built substation elements. The largest of these elements is the Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) (with Gas Insulated Switchgear being discounted) at up to 40m x 20m and up to 7.5m in height, followed by the control building with an area of up to 26m x 11m and up to 6m in height. The layout of the substation is dictated in part by access and internal movement requirements, connection to the grid, and safety standards including separation distances. Whilst the higher AIS infrastructure is set closer to Glen Strathfarrar Road and the Core Path, trees along the boundary in combination with the surrounding sloping landform of the site will limit the visual impact along the route.
- 8.15 The finalised colour, finish and materials of the proposed development along with other design elements can be secured by condition noting that officers have advised that a slate grey finish to the control building may be more appropriate for the setting and changing seasons.
- 8.16 The applicant has assessed significant landscape effects at the development site, as is to be expected, given the direct physical impacts of the development and on local landscape character up to an approximate 1km section of the Glen Strathfarrar Road and Core Path IN26.02 in the immediate surrounding area and up to an approximately 400m section of the Beinn a' Bha'ach Àrd Trail. Whilst the applicant conceded there would be significant impacts on receptors along these routes once operational the impacts are for relatively constrained portions and do not extend wider. However, the key characteristics of the Wooded Glen – Inverness LCT would very much remain intact and appreciable overall from all external locations.
- 8.17 In terms of impacts on the Glen Strathfarrar NSA and the Central Highlands WLA which is located to the north and south of the glen, the applicant has concluded that the proposal would result in a low risk to some of the Special Landscape Qualities (SLQs) and Wild Land Qualities (WLQs) of both designations (EIAR Volume 4 Appendix 5.2 National Scenic Area Assessment and Wild Land Assessment).
- 8.18 The low risk to the NSA relates specifically to its “An archetypal Highland Glen”, “Ancient Caledonian pine forest amidst rocky slopes” and “A sense of peace and Tranquillity” SLQs. The risk to the WLA relates to its “Deep glens that have steep, arresting side slopes as well as rivers and waterfalls, with some containing lochs and some revealing human land use” and “Small and extensive areas of native woodland that contribute to the sense of naturalness and highlight some arresting landscape

features” WLQs. The risks are due to the increase in man-made artefacts associated with Culligran Power Station, the loss of approximately 0.87ha of predominantly young birch woodland to be replaced with the substation, and due to the cumulative effect, particularly during the construction phase of the West of Beaully Asset Replacement and the VISTA Projects. The low risk on SLQs and WLQs is not considered to be significant while no risk was identified for the remaining SLQs and WLQs.

- 8.19 NatureScot agrees that the proposed development is likely to have some effect on “A sense of peace and tranquillity” SLQ of the NSA and agrees that the risk is unlikely to be significant, nor does NatureScot consider the proposal will impact the qualities of either the NSA or WLA in a manner that would raise issues of national interest. This is because of the relatively low-lying elevation of the proposed development which is contained and screened by a combination of landform and enclosed by trees. Additionally, the site will be read in combination with existing manmade structures such as the existing power stations. Given the applicant’s cautious assessment and NatureScot’s positive response, it is reasonable to agree with the applicant’s overall assessment on both designations.
- 8.20 In addition to the above, the regionally (Highland Council) designated Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch Special Landscape Area (SLA) is located to the northwest beyond the NSA, marginally within the 3km study area. The SLA notes SLQs which include “Grand Mountain Ridges, Long Glens and Wide Strath” along with a sense of “Wildness and Remoteness”. The stated Sensitivities to Change include buildings and infrastructure, including those related to hydroelectric schemes, that would erode the sense of wildness and remoteness while there are opportunities to (re)establish native vegetation. Many of the factors that contribute to the two qualities are experienced sequentially by receptors travelling through the glen, especially from east to west, on the Glen Strathfarrar Road/Core Path. Nevertheless, the site is not within the SLA and given that there is no intervisibility between the proposed development and the SLA, there will be no significant effects on the SLQ of the SLA, which has been scoped out of further assessment with the agreement of Council Officers.
- 8.21 The applicant has submitted a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) (shown on Figure 5.1) that indicates that the bare earth visibility of the 7.5m high external AIS at built at a level of 71m AOD would be mostly experienced to the south, southwest, southeast, northeast and a smaller portion to the north.
- 8.22 The ZTV was used to identify potential viewpoints from a range of distances, directions and elevations to give a representative sample of likely views of the proposed development, to illustrate key and important views used within this assessment. A total of 7 representative viewpoints were selected to show various receptors including residents, visitors staying at tourist accommodation, users of the

Glen Strathfarrar Road/Core Path and hillwalkers on Beinn a' Bha'ach Àrd Trail and surrounding Corbetts.

- 8.23 The significant visual effects predicted within 1km of the site which will affect recreational users of Glen Strathfarrar and along 400m of the Beinn a' Bha'ach Àrd Trail which will affect hillwalkers on higher slopes more than residential receptors. The design of the proposed development along with screening from trees along the boundary of the site will further reduce the visual intrusion of the development in the long term. However, visual impacts are considered to be within acceptable limits overall in any case.

Built and Cultural Heritage

- 8.24 The development area is not within any built or cultural heritage designation nor are there any scheduled monuments or known historic records within the development area, nor along the wider route.
- 8.25 Given the non-designated historic records in the area however, Highland Council's Archaeology Team Archaeologist requires any permission to include a further condition to ensure that works are undertaken in accordance with an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation to secure the recording, recovery, and analysis where required of any unrecorded archaeology found during works. Historic Environment Scotland does not object and has no specific comments to make on matters within its remit.

Water Environment

- 8.26 EIAR Chapter 7: Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Soils considered how the proposed development would affect sensitive receptors such as surface water bodies such as the River Farrar and Allt Cruach an Tuir, groundwater bodies including Northern Highlands Groundwater Body and Strathglass Sand and Gravel, along with designated sites including Glen Strathfarrar SSSI and Strathglass Complex SAC. The evaluation assessed the impacts of pollution of surface watercourses, groundwater and water supplies, changes to resource availability and short-term flood risk increase during the construction phase of development. It concluded there will be significant residual effects on surface water bodies once the new substation is operational, due to the replacement of natural bed with artificial material within the Allt Cruach an Tuir.
- 8.27 The applicant noted that there are opportunities to reduce this significant residual effect as part of the detailed design stage of the proposed development. It is recommended that the Principal Contractor should consider alternative design options to the replacement of natural watercourse bed with artificial materials, and should establish appropriate, more sustainable mitigation options, which will be authorised by SEPA under the Controlled Activities Regulations (CAR). Should the

Principal Contractor adopt sustainable mitigation options such as retaining the natural watercourse bed, the residual effect could be reduced to not significant.

- 8.28 Neither Highland Council's Flood Risk Management Team, SEPA nor Scottish Water had any concerns regarding the proposal following review of the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Impact Assessment due to the low flood risk to the site and the appropriateness of the drainage proposals. However, SEPA did note that a six-metre buffer between the riparian edge of watercourses should be maintained, which should be secured by condition, and an additional condition is suggested to ensure that all drainage arrangements are made available for use prior to the site becoming operational.

Natural Heritage

- 8.29 EIAR Chapter 6: Ecology and Ornithology and the accompanying Appendices include assessments of the proposal's likely impacts on designated sites, protected species and birds along with habitats.

Designated Sites

- 8.30 As noted, the site is wholly within the Glen Affric to Strathconon Special Protection Area (SPA) and both the Strathglass Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Glen Strathfarrar Special Area of Scientific Interest (SSSI). Both the SAC and SSSI designations take in the River Farrar which bounds the main development area at its eastern point. With the exception of the SSSI, the effects on these designations mean that the requirements of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) are engaged. Given that the proposal is not necessary to site management for nature conservation and that NatureScot advises that the proposal is likely to result in significant effects on both the SPA and SAC, the Council as the competent authority is required to undertake an Appropriate Assessment which is appended to this report at Appendix 3 and summarised below.
- 8.31 With regards the Glen Affric to Strathconon SPA, NatureScot advises that the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the breeding golden eagles qualifying interests of the SPA. In its response, NatureScot advised that, in its opinion, the proposal will not affect the integrity of the SPA by virtue of there being no known golden eagle territories within 1km of the site with all known golden eagle nest sites being over 2km away, and given that disturbance by construction will be localised due to topography and surrounding woodland, as well as the development not effecting golden eagle foraging habitat. As such, no specific mitigation is required however pre-construction protected species surveys will be required to be undertaken in any event, which would inform the Breeding Bird Protection Plan for golden eagle in the event they are surveyed.

- 8.32 For the Strathglass Complex SAC, there is potential for the construction works to result in pollution/contamination of the River Farrar which could have negative consequences for the SAC's aquatic habitats and associated qualifying species. However, provided the standard mitigation included in the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, which must include best practice measures for pollution prevention to be implemented during the works to prevent pollution and sediment affecting the water quality of the Allt Cruach an Tuir and the River Farrar, the integrity of the site will not be adversely impacted. The finalised CEMP should be secured by condition.
- 8.33 NatureScot also noted there would be some loss of potentially suitable otter habitat along the Allt Cruach an Tuir following construction. However, as the development area would make up a small area of loss when compared to the overall riverine habitat in the immediate area, they consider it unlikely that this loss will affect the availability of suitable habitat in the wider area.
- 8.34 The otter Species Protection Plan will be adhered to during construction to ensure any potential disturbance to otter commuting, foraging, and resting in the vicinity of the works is fully mitigated. The applicant has also confirmed the substation will not be floodlit at night once operational. With these measures in place, the otter interests of the SAC will not be adversely impacted by the development.
- 8.35 The woodland and upland habitat interests of the Glen Strathfarrar SSSI, as well as its breeding birds, otter, and dragonfly assemblages, largely overlap with the interests of the SAC and as such its integrity is not considered likely to be adversely impacted provided the mitigation measures outlined above are implemented. Notwithstanding the overlap however, NatureScot notes that the semi-natural birch woodland within the main development area would usually be a component of Caledonian forest feature by virtue of its age and structure. However, the woodland within the development site has developed on a brownfield site and, although not completely lacking in biodiversity, does not meet the requirements to be considered a qualifying feature of the SAC Caledonian forest.

Protected Species

- 8.36 Appropriate protected species surveys were undertaken initially in 2022 with further surveys in 2023 which identified habitats suitable for supporting bats, water vole, badger, otter, red squirrel and pine marten. Common lizard and common frog were also recorded incidentally but were not subject to more detailed surveys.
- 8.37 The mitigation for each of the noted species is detailed within the outline Species Protection Plans appended to the EIAR (Appendix 2.2: Species Protection Plans) for bats, otter, pine marten and breeding birds. Measures follow the mitigation hierarchy to avoid disturbance in the first instance, and include appropriately timed pre-construction surveys, timings of works, controlling light pollution, capping exposed

pipes, providing exit ramps in exposed trenches and holes, emergency procedures in the event works encounter protected species and/or their habitation.

- 8.38 Additionally, general biodiversity enhancement measures are also prescribed through the retention and stacking of felled trees into “eco-piles” for lichens, invertebrates, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians, and the erection of bird and bat boxes. There are also procedures to appropriately deal with disturbance if this is unavoidable. Finalised SPPs should be secured by condition while habitat management should also include additional mitigation and enhancements. Overall, it is considered the impacts on protected species can be appropriately managed.

Ornithology

- 8.39 In addition to the species noted above, breeding bird surveys and targeted species surveys were conducted between May and July 2022, which identified a total of 15 bird species were recorded during the breeding bird surveys. These were representative of the birch woodland, bracken and riparian habitats associated with the site and predominately comprised common and widespread species. Of the species recorded, 9 were protected or notable Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) with 4 of these considered to be holding breeding territories within the wider survey area and 1 recorded within the site. Willow warbler was breeding within the site whilst wood warbler, grey wagtail and wren were in the wider survey area.
- 8.40 A pair of golden eagles (noted in the qualifying feature of Glen Affric to Strathconon SPA) were observed flying over site during the surveys. It was not identified whether they were an adult male and female and whether they were potentially birds from a breeding pair from a territory in the wider surrounding area.
- 8.41 Appendix 2.2: Species Protection Plans also includes an outline Bird Species Protection Plan (BPPs) that follows the same mitigation hierarchy noted above to avoid disturbance in the first instance and includes requirements for appropriately timed pre-construction surveys, and general specific mitigation measures for timings of works, use of dissuasion techniques and procedures for appropriately dealing with disturbance if this is unavoidable. The finalised BPPs should be secured by condition while habitat management should also include additional mitigation and enhancements. Overall, it is considered that impacts on bird species can be appropriately managed.

Habitats and Forestry

- 8.42 The development area is predominantly Upland Birch Woodland with areas of acid grassland and bracken along with the existing developed land within the site boundary. There is no peat and there are no Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems within the development area.

- 8.43 EIAR Chapter 10: Forestry contains the assessment of tree impacts including likely significant effects on arboriculture and forestry arising from the proposed development. The wider study area contains native upland birchwood, semi-natural Ancient Woodland (ASNO1750) and is located within the Strathglass Complex SAC and the Glen Strathfarrar SSSI, which are designated for Caledonian pinewood along with native pinewood with the site located within the Caledonian Pinewood Buffer Zone. However, there are no pine trees within the site. The young native birchwood is located within the western portion of the site and mature upland birchwood in the northeastern portion of the site.
- 8.44 Tree survey work identified a total of 23 arboricultural features within the study area, consisting of 3 individual trees and 20 groups. The proposed development would result in the removal of 4 groups of trees and part removal of 5 groups of trees. No tree removal is anticipated within any ancient woodland. The total area of unavoidable woodland loss would be 0.87ha. All other arboricultural features can be retained and protected through demolition of the existing Culligran Substation and construction phase of the substation.
- 8.45 The Highland Council's Forestry Officer notes that that low quality groups of trees (G7, G8 and G9) will be fully removed with parts of groups of trees (G2 and G5) removed. Additionally, parts of moderate quality groups (G1, G3 and G11) would need to be removed along with all of moderate quality group G6.
- 8.46 Principles for tree protection are set out in the Outline Arboricultural Method Statement (Volume 4, Appendix 10.3) which includes the need for arboricultural supervision and tree protection fencing. Despite the proposed mitigation measures, the applicant notes that tree loss cannot be avoided with trees west of the existing Culligran Substation and tunnel affected. This would result in a significant adverse residual effect. No other significant effects are identified for the proposed development. This is generally agreed.
- 8.47 Tree loss would be compensated through the implementation of the compensatory planting strategy which will be prepared and provided during detailed design. Further to the compensatory planting strategy a landscape design including new tree planting is proposed (EIAR Volume 3, Figure 5.7) to the northern side of the site. The plan is limited by the existing woodland and extent of development so woodland lost to development will need to be replaced through off-site compensatory planting. However, it is noted that the mix of species proposed in the planting mix has taken account of NatureScot's preapplication advice to include under-represented broadleaf species such as aspen and oak to benefit the wider qualifying Caledonian forest woodland around the site. Introducing these species would help to provide seed source trees that would hopefully allow further expansion of these species through natural regeneration in the future, thus diversifying an area of woodland currently dominated by birch and with a poor mix of species.

- 8.48 The Forestry Officer has no objection to the proposed development subject to conditions requiring the submission of a finalised Arboricultural Method Statement, Tree Protection Plan, and Compensatory Planting Plan. The compensatory planting shall cover an area no less than 0.87ha in size consisting primarily of native species.
- 8.49 In addition to the above, a General Environmental Management Plan that covers matters relating to how the applicant will manage the proposed development's environmental impacts, minimise harm and comply with relevant environmental regulations is considered sufficient and must be implemented in full during the construction process.

Biodiversity Enhancement

- 8.50 Due to the climate and biodiversity emergency and the provisions of NPF4 Policy 3, the Council seeks to ensure that developments will deliver a positive effect for biodiversity. As a result, this project is expected to make a contribution toward the delivery of biodiversity enhancements in vicinity of the site. The habitats present across the site have been subject to a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report. The applicant's assessment of BNG has quantified the biodiversity impact of the development, predicts the resultant change of biodiversity value, and provides recommendations for biodiversity enhancement (net gain).
- 8.51 The assessment was based upon desk research and walkover habitat surveys. The assessment followed SSEN Transmission's Biodiversity Net Gain Toolkit User Guide and the SSEN Transmission Assessment Methodology and Associated Guidance which uses habitat as a proxy to determine biodiversity impacts.
- 8.52 The post-development Biodiversity Area Units (BU) are 9.83, down from 10.05, meaning that the project will result in a net loss in area-based BU. As noted within the submitted information, the proposed development lies within Strathglass Complex SAC and Glen Affric to Strathconon SPA, therefore the landscaping within the proposed development will not be used to calculate the required 10% enhancements. The applicant notes the 10% net gain will be achieved through the creation and enhancement of approximately 5.85ha of upland birchwood and that once this has been finalised will be presented through a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP).
- 8.53 Given the deficit noted within the BNG report along with no further details specified regarding the site currently proposed for restoration and enhancement measures, the Highland Council's Ecology Officer has objected due to the uncertainty at this stage of the proposal satisfying Policy 3 Biodiversity of NPF4.
- 8.54 Whilst the Ecology Officer's objection is noted, given the significant number of current and upcoming applications relating to electricity transmission and associated infrastructure in Highland, SSEN are in the process of preparing an overarching

strategy for the delivery of offsite biodiversity enhancement across the region, in line with the recent Scottish Government Minister and Chief Planner letter dated 28 April 2025, which states:

'NPF4 policy 11 (energy) supports development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies including enabling works, such as grid transmission and distribution infrastructure. Whilst proposals for much of the large-scale infrastructure required to achieve net zero will be considered by the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit under the Electricity Act, applications for standalone sub-stations are made to planning authorities under the Planning Act. The use of suspensive conditions to secure the submission and implementation of schemes such as compensatory planting and other biodiversity measures can be appropriate. Careful thought should be given to the wording of such conditions to ensure that they are proportionate and do not unduly delay development, whilst still meeting the tests for conditions set out in Circular 4/1998. For example, it is worth considering whether it would be reasonable for a condition to require a scheme to be agreed before the development can come into operation, rather than before any development can commence. The tests governing the use of planning obligations are contained in Circular 3/2012; the Circular underlines that planning obligations should not be used to address issues that can be resolved in another way, such as through a planning condition or the use of an alternative legal agreement.'

- 8.55 To that end, The Highland Council at its Economy and Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 29 May 2025 agreed the principal of the Assistant Chief Executive Officer for Place entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with developers, including the applicant, for offsite compensation and enhancement measures. While no proposal site(s) have been shared to date, discussions are ongoing with the applicant and the MoU should outline a shared understanding and commitment to collaborate on locations set aside for biodiversity. As such, and given the national development scale of the proposal, it is considered appropriate to include an appropriately worded condition to require CPP and BNG enhancements to be detailed within 18 months of the development's final commissioning so as not to unnecessarily delay the development, as set out in the Scottish Minister and Chief Planner letter. If biodiversity enhancement and compensation measures required for this application cannot be secured by way of the agreed MoU through a condition, then BNG can be secured by way of a legal agreement.
- 8.56 The Ecology Officer has requested that the submission of a Habitat Management Plan which delivers biodiversity enhancement, GIS data, Construction Environmental Management Plan, overview from an Environmental Clerk of Works (EnvCoW), undertaking a pre-construction survey, including for any nesting birds are to be controlled by conditions.

- 8.57 It is generally agreed that the proposed development along with the wider West of Beaulieu Asset Replacement and VISTA Projects will achieve positive biodiversity effects overall, and that the current application will achieve significant enhancements providing that sufficient off-site habitat creation measures are identified, implemented, and maintained. This therefore ensures that the proposed development will leave the natural environment in a demonstrably better state than before development work began.

Roads, Transport and Wider Access

- 8.58 As stated, the development area is located off the private Glen Strathfarrar Road, the first 740m of this road from THC maintained A831 is, however, adopted as the U1355. It is noted here that public vehicular access to the private section of the road is already restricted and managed privately by the estates via a locked gate. Transport Planning advises that the majority of Highland Council roads, especially single-track roads, are not 'designed' but evolved over time and rarely have suitable sub-bases capable of withstanding the loading of additional HGVs over and above what they normally carry. The U1355 (the adopted section of the Glen Strathfarrar Road) is single track with a substandard width and several substandard passing places in terms of size, geometry, and surfacing while its junction with the A831 is severely substandard with restricted visibility to the south. In addition, the A831 is a narrow single track for a 3 km section west of this junction.
- 8.59 Around 50-60% of construction traffic is anticipated to approach this route from the north via Tore Roundabout, 15-20% from the south via Inverness, and the remainder anticipated to approach from Wester Balblair for aggregate and concrete.
- 8.60 In addition to regular construction traffic, the proposal will require an abnormal indivisible load (AIL) delivery for the transformer. This delivery will follow a route from Inverness Harbour via Longman Drive to the A9(T) before leaving the A9 at the Tore Roundabout to join the A835(T) before turning left on THC maintained B9169. The route then takes in THC maintained A862 and A831 before joining the Glen Strathfarrar Road.
- 8.61 Construction works on the substation replacements are likely to run concurrently with each other and, at least in part, with the aforementioned VISTA project, while the wider area is subject to applications for other much larger transmission developments and offshoot energy storage systems. As such, Transport Planning has required the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) to include detail on likely cumulative impacts including impacts on road condition and an assessment of any preliminary upgrades to the road network that would be required.
- 8.62 To that end, the CTMP includes a works programme for the Deanie and Culligran substations along with the VISTA project, which anticipates a work programme of 30

months for the three schemes. The busiest months for HGV movements are anticipated to be month 7 through month 16 and month 19 through month 25.

- 8.63 The applicant has proposed improvements to the public road network including upgrading and/or installing new passing places along the A831 and using traffic control measures at the U1355 only during greater flows of construction traffic. It is acknowledged that widening this section of road would require major civil engineering works and that these may be disproportionate to the scale of the project.
- 8.64 Transport Planning has advised the applicant that the finalised CTMP should focus on the publicly adopted road and detail how large volumes of the construction traffic including HGVs would be managed to prevent convoys on THC maintained roads. Particular focus should be given to locations where the distance between passing places does not meet Council standards of a maximum distance of 150 m between passing places, using appropriate holding areas, stacking lanes, and temporary traffic lights, and locations for temporary speed restrictions.
- 8.65 The applicant is also required to demonstrate that any improvements to the public road such as new and upgraded passing places and road widening are achievable, particularly where these require the agreement of third-party landowners. Transport Planning also notes that the adopted section of the Glen Strathfarrar Road will require a full structural overlay as well as the upgrading of its junction with the A831 before construction begins.
- 8.66 Conditions are suggested to secure a finalised CTMP prior to works beginning on site along with a separate condition to ensure that public road improvements, which are essential to protect integrity and safety of the road network, are also carried out prior to works beginning on site. A further condition is suggested for an AIL delivery strategy to be approved prior to the delivery of AIL. There will also be a continued cumulative impact of construction traffic arising on the A831 for a prolonged period as a result of transmission related project infrastructure. As such, further mitigation is necessary to address the impacts of these developments on active travel (predominantly cyclists) using this promoted tourist route. A proportionate contribution to the delivery of active travel projects is therefore necessary, with this to be secured through the CTMP condition and finalised in consultation with Transport Planning.
- 8.67 In terms of wider public access, the proposal will impact recreational routes and wider public access for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrian users in combination with the Culligran scheme. Specifically, access to the Beinn a' Bha'ach Àrd Trail, the Glen Strathfarrar Munros Circuit, the An Sidhean summit from Loch Monar, as well as Core Path IN26.01 which corresponds with the Glen Strathfarrar Road will be affected with the private road providing access to these routes. As such, there will likely be some conflict between recreational users and HGVs, AIL deliveries and other construction traffic, as well as disruption during road upgrading works. Public access will not be

allowed to working areas during construction or the development site post construction.

- 8.68 Consequently, the applicant has committed, through the outline Recreational Access Management Plan, to undertake consultation with affected stakeholders including the local community, the Council's Access Officer, and Mountaineering Scotland, prior to commencement on site to agree the extent of information and mitigation required. These measures will include signage to warn visitors of heavy plant movements and provide guidance in the event of meeting construction traffic or construction works, as well as any diversions. Private construction staff vehicles will not be allowed beyond the construction compound at Inchmore to reduce conflict between construction traffic, residents and recreational users.
- 8.69 The Council's Access Officer has not objected subject to a finalised Recreational Access Management Plan to provide further detail on public access accommodation measures for the Beinn a Bha'ach Ard Trail along with other matters of detail including mending and making good any damage to the Core Path, to be secured by condition.

Economic Impacts

- 8.70 The development of grid infrastructure has been identified as a national priority together with investment in renewable energy. The replacement of older substations as presented within this application are not only beneficial in strengthening the robustness of the country's grid network but also result in further job and investment opportunities through the development of associated supply chains. The benefits of the development to social and economic outcomes are therefore relevant to the assessment of the application in accordance with NPF4 Policy 25 for Community Wealth Building.
- 8.71 The Council is working with public, private, and community partners to develop its priorities through the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan, while a Community Wealth Building Strategy was approved by the Council in September 2024. The ongoing Local Place Plans initiative will likely identify other local opportunities too.
- 8.72 The Council's position on Community Benefits was also updated with the approval of a new "Social Values Charter for Renewables Investment" (June 2024). The charter sets out the Council's expectations from developers wishing to invest in renewables related projects in the Highland area and what the Highland partnership will do to support and enable this contribution, namely:
- embed an approach to community wealth building into Highland;
 - maximise economic benefits from our natural environment and resources;
 - engage and involve relevant stakeholders to understand how we can continually improve our impact; and,

- unlock economic opportunities for the area.

- 8.73 To that end, the EIAR Chapter 9: Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism has assessed the proposal's impacts on each of those factors in turn. For the first, the applicant has focussed on employment impacts in a local study area, that is the Highland Council administrative area as it is not considered that meaningful employment generation will extend to the regional or national levels as a result of the development.
- 8.74 The applicant has not assessed indirect job creation however the EIAR anticipates that 5 site staff and 15 construction operatives will be directly employed by the contractor during the construction period of up to 2 years. The applicant itself has also directly recruited a new construction site manager and construction assistant project manager. It should also be acknowledged that the company is a major employer across Scotland and already has an existing workforce in place to carry through the project and undertake routine operational inspections and maintenance once the site is brought into use. Due to the temporary nature of the construction jobs and the relatively high employment rates in the study area in general therefore, the proposal is not considered to result in significant socio-economic impacts in terms of employment generation overall, although any employment generation is considered beneficial, and it is reasonable to assume additional positive effects on employment in the supply chain.
- 8.75 For recreational and tourist receptors, the chapter notes the area's high recreational value for cyclists, walkers, fishing, shooting and stalking and has considered recreational paths (i.e., Glen Strathfarrar Road Core Path and public right of way, the Sgòrr na Diollaid, Glen Cannich Walking Route, and the Glen Strathfarrar Munros Circuit) separately to activities (i.e., stalking at the Braulen Estate). Tourist assets include the Glen Strathfarrar NSA, Loch Beannacharan, Loch a' Mhuillidh and Loch Monar. The main direct non-landscape and visual (which are considered separately) impact will be during construction works on the Glen Strathfarrar Road where access will be impeded but not blocked. Indirect effects on all receptors are anticipated through noise and other construction impacts such as vibration and dust however the proposal is not considered to result in any significantly adverse effects on any receptor overall.
- 8.76 The Highlands is experiencing significant construction activity in the transmission network. The approval of the proposed development would have a positive economic impact, particularly during the proposed construction period, although significantly less impact at the operational stage. There is also likely to be some adverse effects caused by construction disruption and construction traffic. These adverse impacts are most likely to be within the service sector particularly during the construction phase when additional traffic, HGVs and / or abnormal loads are being delivered to site. These will be temporary in nature.

- 8.77 Scenery and the natural environment within the Highlands are important factors for many visitors when choosing the area as a holiday destination. Any impact of the proposed development on tourism, whether visually, environmentally or economically should be identified and considered in full. In this instance, the proposed development, will add electricity transmission equipment into an area which has had to accommodate a substantial amount of transmission infrastructure already. This addition is however well sited with appropriate mitigation to help limit these impacts to an acceptable degree. In light of NPF4 Policy 11 section c), a condition can also be secured to commit to the delivery of a Local Employment Scheme.
- 8.78 In addition to the above, the UK Government updated its published guidance Community Funds for Electricity Transmission Infrastructure (Department for Energy and Security and Net Zero) in April 2025. The guidance advises that funds of £530,000 will be available for up to 15 years for delivering local priorities in locations impacted by new and upgraded infrastructure, although with the caveat that the upgraded infrastructure will be an EIA development and/or extend the footprint of the existing operational substation by at least 1ha. As an EIA development this proposal is eligible, albeit that any contribution is deemed community benefit which is not a material planning consideration and therefore cannot be attributed any weight in the decision-making process.

Other Material Considerations

- 8.79 The application is assessed as an EIA development. Given that construction of each of the substation replacements can be carried out on an individual basis, it is not considered reasonable to conclude that the individual EIARs for the current and Deanie application are ‘salami slicing’ the EIA development.

Non-material considerations

- 8.80 A general comment submitted on behalf of Communities Before Power Companies states its concerns that the substation replacements may be used a “Trojan horse” for more wind farms in the area. This concern is not material to the assessment of this application.

Matters to be secured by Legal Agreement

- 8.81 If any compensatory planting or habitat enhancement is to take place on land located outside the application site and not under the ownership of the applicant we may require a tri-party legal agreement to first be secured between the applicant, the landowner and the Planning Authority. This requirement is subject to progress being made with the applicant concluding a Memorandum of Understanding with The Highland Council.

- 8.82 Similarly, proportionate mitigation in the form of physical provision, or an equivalent financial contribution, towards the delivery of active travel is also required. Should a financial contribution be the outcome, this can be secured by way of condition and an upfront payment or legal agreement under Section 69 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.
- 8.83 A condition is also required to secure a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) supported by a formal “Wear and Tear Agreement” in accordance with Section 96 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Scottish Government and the Council each have policies offering support to projects which increase the capacity of the grid network to serve renewable energy projects. NPF4 offers strong support for such development highlighting upgraded infrastructure supporting onshore high voltage electricity lines, cables and interconnectors and this is classed as a development of national importance.
- 9.2 Highland has been successful in attracting inward investment in renewables, enabled in part by a significant level of investment in the improvement of the electricity transmission network. This success has led to the Highlands having a good understanding of this type of project and Highland Council having appropriate policies and guidance to assist in its assessment, and to effectively manage their implementation on the ground.
- 9.3 Statutory and other consultees responding to this application have not raised any fundamental concerns and have no outstanding objections outwith the Council’s Ecology Officer. Some have requested planning conditions be attached to any grant of planning permission to effectively ensure that their specific interests are secured. The development has not attracted widespread public interest with only one representation received noting general comments regarding the EIA approach to the wider West of Beaulieu Asset Replacement Project, which is considered resolved.
- 9.4 Whilst the Ecology Officer objection is noted with regards to a lack of detail regarding off-site habitat creation and enhancement, given the significant number of current and upcoming applications relating to electricity transmission and associated infrastructure in Highland, SSEN are in the process of preparing an overarching strategy for the delivery of offsite biodiversity enhancement across the region. The biodiversity enhancement and compensation measures required for this application can be secured by way of either the recently agreed MoU (through condition) or by a legal agreement which will give Highland Council comfort that mitigation measures will comply with the relevant policies within the Development Plan.
- 9.5 There are clear impacts that might be expected from this development, particularly during its construction. These can be managed through best practice construction

management techniques to ensure surrounding interests, particularly road access and the amenity of local communities is safeguarded from the key impacts of the development. The attached planning conditions will strengthen and clarify the plans and supporting environmental information provided by the applicant. The proposal will also be overseen by an appointed Environmental Clerk of Works with any permission requiring regular compliance monitoring and ongoing engagement by means of the Community Liaison Group.

- 9.6 The Council is satisfied that environmental effects of this development can be addressed by way of mitigation. The Council has incorporated the requirement for a schedule of mitigation within the conditions of this permission at Conditions 4 (Implementation of Mitigation Measures), 7 (Construction Environment Management Plan), and monitoring of construction and operational compliance secured through conditions 5 (Planning Monitoring Officer) and 6 (Environmental Clerk of Works).
- 9.7 All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal accords with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is acceptable in terms of all other applicable material considerations.

10. IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Resource: Not applicable
- 10.2 Legal: Not applicable
- 10.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): Not applicable
- 10.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever: The project has the potential to enable the continued generation of renewable energy.
- 10.5 Risk: Not applicable
- 10.6 Gaelic: Not applicable

11. RECOMMENDATION

Action required before decision issued N

Recommended to **GRANT** the application subject to the following conditions and reasons, with authority for the finalised condition wording to be delegated to the Area Planning Manager:

1. **Commencement of Development**

The development to which this planning permission relates must commence within FIVE YEARS of the date of this decision notice. If development has not commenced within this period, then this planning permission shall lapse.

Reason: in accordance with Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended).

2. **Final Layout and Design**

- (1) There shall be no Commencement of Development on the substation and cable sealing end compound until final details of the location, layout, external appearance, dimensions, and surface materials of the substation and control room buildings, any above ground electrical equipment, associated compounds, construction compound, fencing, stone walls, external lighting and parking areas have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt the details of the sub-station shall not exceed the parameters assessed in the EIA Report.
- (2) Thereafter, the substation and control room buildings, any above ground electrical equipment, associated compounds, fencing, external lighting and parking areas shall be constructed in accordance with the details approved under part (1) and maintained as such in perpetuity.

Reason: to ensure that the environmental impacts of the sub-station and ancillary development forming part of the Development conform to the impacts assessed in the EIA Report and in the interests of the visual amenity of the area.

3. **Signage**

No part of the Development shall display any text, logo, sign or advertisement (other than health and safety signage as required by law) or be illuminated unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: in the interests of health and safety on site and the visual amenity of the area.

4. **Implementation of Mitigation Measures**

- (1) No development shall commence until a finalised Schedule of Mitigation has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. This Schedule shall encompass a list of all mitigation measures from the EIA Report, any other commitments made by the applicant and all relevant

mitigation secured by conditions attached to this permission with defined timescales for implementation of each mitigation measure.

Thereafter, the approved Schedule of Mitigation shall be implemented in full unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: to ensure that the identified mitigation through the EIA Report and supporting documents is carried out in accordance with the approved details.

5. **Planning Monitoring Officer**

(1) There shall be no Commencement of Development until the terms of appointment by the Company of an independent and suitably qualified consultant as Planning Monitoring Officer (“PMO”) have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The terms of appointment shall:

- (a) impose a duty to monitor compliance with the terms of the deemed planning permission and the conditions attached to it;
- (b) require the PMO to submit a quarterly report to the Planning Authority summarising works undertaken on site, matters of compliance or otherwise with the terms of the deemed planning permission and conditions attached to it, alongside a summary of the incidents recorded and reported by the EnvCoW; and,
- (c) require the PMO to report to the Planning Authority any incidences of non-compliance with the terms of the deemed planning permission and conditions attached to it at the earliest practical opportunity, and no later than 10 working days following the incidence of non-compliance.

(2) The PMO shall be appointed on the approved terms throughout the period from Commencement of Development to completion of construction works and post-construction site reinstatement works.

(3) the PMO shall be appointed on the terms approved under part (1) throughout the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development.

Reason: to ensure compliance with the planning permission and the conditions attached to it.

6. **Environmental Clerk of Works**

(1) There shall be no Commencement of Development until the terms of appointment of an independent Environmental Clerk of Works (“EnvCoW”) by the Company have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The terms of appointment shall:

- (a) impose a duty to monitor compliance with the ecological and environmental commitments provided in the: EIA Report, including any micro-siting; the Construction and Environmental Management Plan; the Habitat Management Plan, and Species and Habitat Protection Plans;
 - (b) require the EnvCoW to report to the nominated construction project manager any incidences of non-compliance with the EnvCoW works at the earliest practical opportunity;
 - (c) require the EnvCoW to submit a monthly report to the construction project manager, developer and Planning Authority summarising works undertaken on site.
- (2) Prior to the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development or the expiration of the operational period of the consent (whichever is the earlier), details of the terms of appointment of a suitably qualified, experienced, and independent EnvCoW by the Company throughout the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.
- (3) the EnvCoW shall be appointed on the terms approved under part (1) throughout the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development.

Reason: to secure effective and transparent monitoring of and compliance with the environmental mitigation and management measures associated with the Development during the construction, decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases

7. **Construction Environmental Management Plan**

- (1) There shall be no Commencement of Development until a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) containing site specific details of all on-site construction works, post-construction reinstatement, drainage and mitigation, together with details of their timetabling, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The CEMP shall be informed by the site and ground investigation works and best practice guidance. The CEMP shall include:
- (a) a site waste management plan (dealing with all aspects of waste produced during the construction period other than peat and other carbon rich soils), including details of contingency planning in the event of accidental release of materials which could cause harm to the environment, evidencing that all proposals comply with SEPA's guidance and the requirements of the waste management licensing regime as appropriate;

- (b) details of the location, layout, formation of the construction compound, welfare facilities, any areas of hardstanding, turning areas, internal access tracks, car parking, material stockpiles, oil, fuel and chemical storage, lighting columns, and any construction compound boundary fencing required for the construction period;
- (c) site specific details for management and operation of any concrete batching plant (including disposal of pH-rich waste water and substances);
- (d) a Pollution Prevention and Incident Plan incorporating a Pollution Prevention Plan, Pollution Incident Plan and a Pollution Control Monitoring Plan, which shall provide measures to protect watercourses, groundwater, management of natural surface hydrological flows (flushes, springs, etc.) and protection of peatland/soils, arrangements for the storage and management of oil and fuel and other chemicals on the site and sewage disposal and treatment;
- (e) a drainage management strategy, demonstrating how all surface and waste water arising during and after construction is to be managed and prevented from impacting on the water environment and to mitigate flood risk;
- (f) a surface water and groundwater management and treatment plan, including details of the separation of clean and dirty water drains, and location of settlement lagoons for silt laden water;
- (g) details of temporary site illumination, including measures to ensure light spill/pollution is minimised and avoids habitats within the site and does not extend beyond the immediate working area, and not beyond the site boundary;
- (h) Species and Breeding Bird Protection Plans which shall be informed by protected species surveys and appropriately timed pre-construction surveys including for, but not limited to, badger, breeding birds, otter, red squirrel, roosting bats, water vole, reptiles and amphibians and any other identified species as appropriate. The Plans shall provide mitigation measures to protect these species and birds, as required, and a timetable for implementation;
- (i) details of the construction of the access into the site, including associated drainage and the creation and maintenance of associated visibility splays;
- (j) details of post-construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas not required during the operation of the Development;
- (k) A Construction Noise Management Plan including details of the management of noise and vibration during construction and post-construction restoration, including that caused by construction traffic, to the lowest practicable levels and in accordance with BS 5228:2009

“Code of Practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites – Part 1: Noise and Part 2: Vibration” (or any updated version/document which superseded this document) and how any properties likely to be affected by construction noise will be kept informed;

- (l) Construction Method Statements for all roads/tracks to be altered/formed within the development site including their width, likelihood of widening or passing places, means of drainage (which shall have regard to SUDS principles), means of construction, and edge reinstatement including verge width. The specification shall be accompanied by relevant plans at a sufficient scale;
 - (m) A phasing plan for the construction works; and,
 - (n) A written scheme which details the methodology for dealing with any revisions to any of the documents required under this part (1) of the condition. Any revised documents will require to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority prior to the revisions being implemented on site.
- (2) Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in accordance with the CEMP approved under part (1) of this condition unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with NatureScot.

Reason: to ensure that all construction operations are carried out in a manner that minimises their impact on road safety, amenity and the environment, and that the mitigation measures contained in the EIA Report accompanying the application, or as otherwise agreed, are fully implemented.

8. **Habitat Management, Biodiversity Enhancement, and Monitoring Plan**

- (1) No felling or development shall commence, including site and ground investigations, until:
- a) a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) taking account of the Outline Landscape and Habitat Management Plan (EIA Report Appendix 5.3, and Figure 5.7 D REV P01: Outline Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plan), has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Council.
 - b) the applicant has entered in to either a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Council or an appropriate legal agreement to provide an updated Habitat Management Plan for offsite habitat and biodiversity enhancement for the development hereby approved.
- (2) Thereafter, no more than 18 months following the final commissioning of the development hereby approved, an updated Habitat Management Plan

(HMP) to include an additional HMP area offsite of no less than 5.85 ha, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Council.

- (3) The HMP shall set out proposed habitat management of the HMP area(s) during the period of construction, operation, and decommissioning, restoration and aftercare, and shall provide for the maintenance, monitoring and reporting of site-specific details or particular species, habitats or wetlands on site.
- (4) The HMP shall include a Tree Planting Plan and Maintenance Programme which shall be implemented in full to the satisfaction of the Council during the first planting season following commencement of development or as otherwise prior agreed in writing with the Council.
- (5) The HMP shall provide provision and details for regular monitoring and review to be undertaken against the HMP objectives and reasonable measures for securing amendments or additions to the HMP in the event that the HMP objectives are not being met.
- (6) The HMP shall include GIS Shapefiles of the HMP area including the location of the proposed deer fence.

Until otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority, the approved HMP (as amended from time to time with written approval of the Council) shall be implemented in full in line with the timescales set out in the approved plan.

Reason: to ensure the proposal achieves its habitat and biodiversity compensation and enhancement requirements in line with NPF4 Policy 3b). In the interests of good land management and the protection of habitats and to allow the HMP area to be appropriately mapped on the Council's electronic systems.

9. **Arboricultural Management**

- (1) No development, site excavation or groundwork shall commence until a suitably qualified Arboricultural Consultant has been appointed by the developer. Their appointment and remit shall first be approved in writing by the Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, the Arboricultural Consultant shall be appointed prior to the commencement of the development and as a minimum retained until the completion of the development and their remit shall, in addition to any functions approved in writing by the Planning Authority, include:
 - a) Ensuring that the Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement which shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Council prior development, site excavation and groundworks commence, are implemented to the agreed standard; and,
 - b) The preparation of Certificates of Compliance for each stage of work involved in the development, which shall be submitted to the Planning

Authority upon completion of the stage to which they relate. Prior to development, site excavation or groundwork commencing, details of each stage of work (including a general description of the type and extent of work to be carried out within that stage) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure the protection of retained trees, which are important amenity assets, both during construction and thereafter.

10. **Tree Protection Plan**

No development, site excavation or groundwork shall commence until all retained trees have been protected against construction damage using protective barriers located beyond the Root Protection Area (in accordance with BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition & Construction, or any superseding guidance prevailing at that time). These barriers shall remain in place throughout the construction period and must not be moved or removed during the construction period without the prior written approval of the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure the protection of retained trees, which are important amenity assets, during construction.

11. **Compensatory Planting**

(1) No felling or development shall commence, including site and ground investigations until the applicant has entered in to either a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Council or an appropriate legal agreement to provide a Compensatory Planting Plan for offsite compensatory planting for the development hereby approved.

(2) Thereafter, no more than 18 months following the final commissioning of the development hereby approved, a Compensatory Planting Plan (CPP) shall be provided to the Council to compensate for the removal of 0.87 hectares of existing woodland for the written approval of the Council in consultation with Scottish Forestry.

(3) The CPP shall provide:

(a) details of the location of the area(s) to be planted which shall be in the Highland Council Area, including a map and description of current land use;

(b) the nature, design/layout, species composition, purpose and specification of the proposed woodland to be planted;

(c) the phasing and associated timescales for implementing the Replanting CPP;

- (d) proposals for reporting to the Council on compliance with timescales for obtaining the necessary consents and thereafter implementation of the CPP which shall consist of no less than 0.87 ha of primarily native species;
 - (e) proposals for the maintenance and establishment of the woodland to be planted, including annual checks, replacement planting, fencing, ground preparation and drainage; and,
 - (f) details evidencing compliance with The UK Forestry Standard and the Scottish Government's Policy on Control of Woodland Removal (as amended or replaced from time to time) and The Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 where required.
- (4) The Compensatory Planting Plan shall be prepared by, and implemented under, the supervision of a suitably qualified forestry consultant prior approved by the Planning Authority.
 - (5) GIS Shapefiles showing all areas of felling and compensatory planting shall be provided to the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works on site.
 - (6) The Replanting Scheme approved under part (1) of this condition shall be implemented in full and maintained thereafter in accordance with the approved scheme until established to the full satisfaction of the Planning Authority and then shall remain as woodland in perpetuity, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council in consultation with the Scottish Forestry.

Reason: to protect Scotland's woodland resource in accordance with the Scottish Government's policy on the Control of Woodland Removal.

12. **Archaeology**

- (1) There shall be no Commencement of Development unless an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The WSI shall provide details of how the recording and recovery of archaeological resources found within the application site shall be undertaken, and how any updates, if required, to the Written Scheme of Investigation will be provided throughout the implementation of the programme of archaeological works. The WSI shall also detail how any requirement for reporting, post-excavation analysis, archive deposition, publication of results, and the delivery of public benefit (including how this will be recorded and reported) will be undertaken.

- (2) A programme of archaeological works must be carried out in accordance with the approved WSI, and any addendums to it, as agreed under part (1).
- (3) Should the archaeological works carried out under part (2) reveal the need for post excavation analysis, the development hereby approved shall not be occupied or brought into use unless a post-excavation research design (PERD) for the analysis, publication and dissemination of results, including additional public engagement, and archive deposition has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The PERD shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved details.

Reason: to ensure the protection or recording of archaeological features on the site.

13. **Construction Traffic Management Plan**

- (1) There shall be no Commencement of Development until a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which shall focus on the public road network, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority [in consultation with The Roads Authorities. The CTMP shall provide:
 - (a) the routing of all traffic associated with the Development on public roads including identification of any local quarries and suppliers that will be used in the construction of the development;
 - (b) details of the volume of material quantities to be imported and removed from the site;
 - (c) details of the number and type of vehicle movements that will be generated;
 - (d) a risk assessment for construction traffic during daylight hours and hours of darkness with reference to the peak tourist season.
 - (e) an assessment of the suitability of the proposed routes including identification of any sensitive receptors such as schools and lengths of road (outwith those which are to be upgraded) which are susceptible to damage due to extra-ordinary construction traffic or abnormal loads;
 - (f) an assessment of any structures along the public road which are susceptible to damage due to extra-ordinary construction traffic or abnormal loads;
 - (g) measures to ensure that the specified routes are adhered to, including monitoring procedures of HGV movements, the establishment of 'acceptable' levels of HGV activity manage HGV movement levels on the public road network;

- (h) details of all proposed traffic management and mitigation measures including but not limited to temporary speed limits, suitable temporary signage, road markings, and speed activated signs to be put in place;
 - (i) consideration of any concurrent construction traffic from other developments where there is significant (greater than 10%) trip generation;
 - (j) provisions for emergency vehicle access;
 - (k) a procedure for the regular monitoring of road conditions and the implementation of any remedial works required during the construction period;
 - (l) measures to ensure that all affected public roads are kept free of mud and debris arising from the development;
 - (m) provision for the submission of a Section 96 agreement (which may require to be entered in to with additional developers should development that also generates significant traffic on the identified road network) including of a roads condition survey pre-and post-construction accompanied by an appropriate agreement between the Planning Authority and the Company to ensure the delivery of any post-construction public road restoration that may be required;
 - (n) mitigation in the form of physical provision, or an equivalent financial contribution, towards the delivery of active travel improvement scheme to serve users of the A831;
 - (o) An up to date review of road accidents; and,
 - (p) identification of a nominated person to whom any road safety issues can be referred.
- (2) The approved Construction Traffic Management Plan shall be implemented in full, unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: in the interests of road safety and amenity.

15. **Public Road Improvements**

- (1) There shall be no Commencement of Development until the following has submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Council:
- a. an engineering assessment of the public road to identify sections of road with historic verge damage and provide proposals for widening and/or strengthening on these sections;
 - b. proposal to provide a full structural overlay of the U1335 to be accompanied by an engineering assessment of the public road to identify sections of road that also require a full structural overlay;

- c. an engineering assessment of the public road network up to where it meets the private Glen Strathfarrar Road with proposals for road widening, which shall be to a minimum of 3.5 metres and include a detailed design of how the road will be widened, and the provision of passing places for use by HGV. For the avoidance of doubt, the assessment shall demonstrate that the upgrades are achievable and have the agreement of third party landowners;
 - d. full details including detailed layout drawings of all upgrades required to any junctions on the public road network;
 - e. A programme for the delivery of the proposals for the public road mitigation measures as set out in Part (1) of this condition.
- (2) All works on the public road network shall comply with the Council's 'Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments'.
- (3) Thereafter, all works as set out in Part (1) shall be completed in full to the satisfaction of the Council and made available for use in accordance with the agreed delivery programme.

Reason: in the interests of road safety and amenity.

16. Abnormal Loads

- (1) There shall be no abnormal load deliveries to the site until an Abnormal Load Route Assessment Report, including proposed trial runs, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with Transport Scotland. The Abnormal Load Route Assessment Report shall provide:
- (a) Details of a communications strategy to inform the relevant communities of the programme of abnormal load deliveries;
 - (b) Details of any accommodation measures required for the local road network including the removal of street furniture, junction widening and traffic management;
 - (c) Any additional signing or temporary traffic control measures deemed necessary on the trunk road network due to the size or length of any loads being transported must be undertaken by a recognised QA traffic management consultant, to be approved by Transport Scotland.
 - (d) Details of the route for abnormal loads on the local and trunk road networks and any recommendations for delivery of abnormal loads;
 - (e) An assessment of the capacity of any bridge crossings on the route to cater for abnormal loads, and details of proposed

upgrades and mitigation measures required for any bridge crossings; and

- (f) A plan for access by vehicles carrying abnormal loads, including but not limited to the number and timing of deliveries and the length, width and axle configuration of all such traffic associated with the Development.
- (2) Prior to the first delivery of an abnormal load, a programme for abnormal load deliveries shall be submitted to and be approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with Transport Scotland which shall avoid peak times on Council maintained roads including school travel times, and scheduled community events.
- (3) Prior to any movement of abnormal loads (including trial runs) the Company must complete any mitigation works set out in in the scheme approved under part (1) of this condition, and maintain such measures during the period of abnormal load deliveries.
- (4) The trial-run shall be undertaken in accordance with the details approved under part (1) prior to the movement of any abnormal loads.
- (5) The details in the approved report shall thereafter be implemented in full prior the first delivery of an abnormal load.

Reason: to ensure that abnormal loads access the site in a safe manner in the interest of road safety and amenity.

17. **Community Liaison Group**

- (1) No development shall commence until a West of Beaully Asset Replacement and VISTA Projects Community Liaison Group has been established in collaboration with local Community Councils and stakeholders to the satisfaction of the Council. The purpose of the liaison group shall be to allow advanced dialogue between the developer and stakeholders on:
 - a. the programme and timing of construction activities including construction related traffic and AIL deliveries;
 - b. the provision of all transport and public outdoor access related mitigation measures; and
 - c. project progress.
- (2) The timing and delivery of AIL components shall be kept under review in order to ensure that local events, tourist seasons, and other developments in the wider area are considered and appropriate measures to co-ordinate deliveries are undertaken.
- (3) Thereafter, the liaison group shall be maintained until the West of Beaully Asset Replacement and VISTA Projects have been completed and are fully operational.

Reason: to reduce conflicts between all construction traffic and other road users and recreational outdoor access users, in the interests of safety and amenity.

18. **Drainage**

All drainage provision associated with the proposal shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plans and the final drainage layout brought in to use prior to the final commissioning of the development and maintained thereafter in perpetuity.

Reason: to ensure that drainage infrastructure is provided timeously for the development to protect the water environment.

19. **Riparian Buffer Zone**

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 and Schedule 1 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (as amended, revoked or re-enacted; with or without modification), no development shall take place within six metres of any watercourse without the prior written approval of the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that development is carefully managed and does not encroach onto riparian buffer strips. Such buffers strips are required a) for the maintenance of watercourses within the application site, b) to account for natural watercourse migration, and c) in order to safeguard property from flood risk.

20. **Operational Noise**

(1) Any noise arising from the operation of this development shall not exceed 30 dB at the curtilage of any noise sensitive premises when measured and/or calculated as an LZeq, 5min, in the 100Hz one third octave frequency band. The Rating Level of noise arising from this development, as determined in accordance with BS4142 Methods for Rating and Assessing Industrial and Commercial Sound, shall not exceed 31dB LAeq 15 mins at the curtilage of any noise sensitive receptor.

(2) The Rating Level of noise arising from operational land of the substation, as determined in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 Methods for Rating and Assessing Industrial and Commercial Sound, shall not exceed 28 dB LAeq 15 mins at the curtilage of any noise sensitive receptor.

(3) For the purposes of this condition, "noise-sensitive premises" includes, but is not necessarily limited to, any building, structure or other development the lawful use of which a) falls within Classes 7 (Hotels & Hostels), 8 (Residential Institutions) or 9 (Houses) of the Town and Country Planning

(Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997 (as amended), or b) is as a flat or static residential caravan.

Reason: in the interests of residential and community amenity.

21. **Public Outdoor Access**

- (1) No development shall commence until a detailed Outdoor Access Plan of public access across the site (as existing, during construction, and following completion) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The plan shall include details showing:
 - a) All existing access points, paths, Core Paths, tracks, rights of way and other routes (whether on land or inland water), and any areas currently outwith or excluded from statutory access rights under Part One of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, within and adjacent to the application site;
 - b) Any areas proposed for exclusion from statutory access rights, for reasons of privacy, disturbance or effect on curtilage related to proposed buildings or structures;
 - c) All proposed paths, tracks and other routes for use by walkers, riders, cyclists, canoeists, all-abilities users, etc. and any other relevant outdoor access enhancement (including construction specifications, signage, information leaflets, proposals for on-going maintenance etc.);
 - d) Any diversion of paths, tracks or other routes (whether on land or inland water), temporary or permanent, proposed as part of the development (including details of mitigation measures, diversion works, duration and signage).
- (3) The approved Outdoor Access Plan, and any associated works, shall be implemented in full prior to the first occupation of the development or as otherwise may be agreed within the approved plan.

Reason: in order to safeguard public access during and after the construction phase of the development.

22. **Private Water Supplies**

- (1) There shall be no Commencement of Development until a private water supplies method statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, detailing all contingent mitigation measures to be delivered to secure the quality, quantity and continuity of water supplies to all properties that are served by private water supplies at the date of this planning permission which may be affected by the Development.
- (2) The method statement shall set out:

- a) details of the methodology for water quality and quantity sampling for a period of 12 months prior to construction (including abstraction points);
 - b) details of the methodology and programme for undertaking water quality and quantity sampling during the construction period (including abstraction points); and
 - c) details of the methodology for water quality and quantity sampling for a period of 12 months post construction (including abstraction points).
- (3) The approved method statement shall thereafter be implemented in full upon the Commencement of Development.

Reason: to maintain a secure and adequate water supply to all properties with private water supplies that may be affected by the Development.

23. **Lighting**

No development shall commence until full details of any external lighting to be used within the site and/or along its boundaries and/or access have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Council. Such details shall include full details of the location, type, angle of direction and wattage of each light which shall be sensor activated and so positioned and angled to prevent any direct illumination, glare or light spillage outwith the site boundary. Thereafter only the approved details shall be implemented.

Reason: to ensure that the site is not normally illuminated during the hours of darkness and that any lighting does not spill beyond the intended target area, does not impact adversely upon the qualifying interests of the Strathglass Complex Special Area of Conservation of adjacent properties and does not result in 'sky glow'.

24. **Local Employment Scheme**

(1) Prior to the Commencement of Development, a Local Employment Scheme for the construction and operation of the development shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by The Highland Council. The submitted Scheme shall make reference to the Environmental Impact Assessment received by the Planning Authority (April 2024). The Scheme shall include the following:

- (a) Details of how the staff/employment opportunities at the development will be advertised and how liaison with the Council and other local bodies will take place in relation to maximising the access of the local workforce to information about employment opportunities;

- (b) Details of how sustainable training opportunities will be provided for those recruited to fulfil staff/employment requirements including the provision of apprenticeships or an agreed alternative;
 - (c) A procedure setting out criteria for employment, and for matching of candidates to the vacancies;
 - (d) Measures to be taken to offer and provide college and/or work placement opportunities at the development to students within the locality;
 - (e) Details of the promotion of the Local Employment Scheme and liaison with contractors engaged in the construction of the development to ensure that they also apply the Local Employment Scheme so far as practicable having due regard to the need and availability for specialist skills and trades and the programme for constructing the development;
 - (f) A procedure for monitoring the Local Employment Scheme and reporting the results of such monitoring to The Highland Council; and
 - (g) A timetable for the implementation of the Local Employment Scheme.
- (2) Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: in order to ensure compliance with NPF4 Policy 11c) and to maximise the local socio-economic benefits of the development to the wider local community.

REASON FOR DECISION

All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal accords with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is acceptable in terms of all other applicable material considerations.

REASONED CONCLUSION

The Council is in agreement with the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report that the replacement substation for the Culligran Hydro Electric Scheme is unlikely to give rise to any new or other significant adverse impact on the environment. The Council is satisfied that all environmental effects of this development can be addressed by way of mitigation. The Council has incorporated the requirement for a schedule of mitigation within the conditions of this permission. Monitoring of operational compliance has been secured through Conditions 4 (Implementation of Mitigation Measures), 7 (Construction Environment Management

Plan), and monitoring of construction and operational compliance secured through conditions 5 (Planning Monitoring Officer) and 6 (Environmental Clerk of Works). of this permission.

INFORMATIVES

Accordance with Approved Plans & Conditions

You are advised that development must progress in accordance with the plans approved under, and any conditions attached to, this permission. You must not deviate from this permission without consent from the Planning Authority (irrespective of any changes that may separately be requested at the Building Warrant stage or by any other Statutory Authority). Any pre-conditions (those requiring certain works, submissions etc. prior to commencement of development) must be fulfilled prior to work starting on site. Failure to adhere to this permission and meet the requirements of all conditions may invalidate your permission or result in formal enforcement action.

Protected Species - Ground Nesting Birds

Construction/demolition works have the potential to disturb nesting birds or damage their nest sites, and as such, checks for ground nesting birds should be made prior to the commencement of development if this coincides with the main bird breeding season (April - July inclusive). All wild bird nests are protected from damage, destruction, interference and obstruction under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Some birds (listed on schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act) have heightened protection where it is also an offence to disturb these birds while they are in or around the nest. For information please see: <https://www.nature.scot/doc/dealing-construction-and-birds>

Protected Species - Halting of Work

You are advised that work on site must stop immediately, and NatureScot must be contacted, if evidence of any protected species or nesting/breeding sites, not previously detected during the course of the application and provided for in this permission, are found on site. For the avoidance of doubt, it is an offence to deliberately or recklessly kill, injure or disturb protected species or to damage or destroy the breeding site of a protected species. These sites are protected even if the animal is not there at the time of discovery. Further information regarding protected species and developer responsibilities is available from NatureScot: <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/protected-areas-and-species/protected-species>

Contaminated Land

There is the potential for contamination at this site due to its former use as an underground fuel storage tank. As the proposed development would not appear to materially change the risk of potential contamination at the site an investigation is not required at this stage. However, be advised that all sites with a former industrial/commercial use have been prioritised by the Highland Council under duties conferred by Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and may require investigation in the future. In addition land contamination issues may affect property value. Should you wish to discuss potential contamination issues or commission your own investigation, please contact TEC Service Contaminated Land for advice.

E-mail: Land.Contamination@highland.gov.uk

Signature: Bob Roberston
Designation: Acting Area Planning Manager – South
Author: Mark Fitzpatrick
Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.
Relevant Plans: Plan 1 - BC-WSP-GIS-013 Location / Site Layout Plan
Plan 2 - BC-WSP-GIS-010 Site Layout Plan
Plan 3 - 8895-CUL-PLN-08-GA-4.4 Drainage Layout Plan
Plan 4 - 8895-CUL-PLN-08-GA 3-4 Elevation – Platform
Plan 5 - LT249_CULL_1104_0048 REV 01 Elevation
Plan 6 - 8895-CUL-PLN-08-EW1 REV PL1 Site Section

Appendix 1 – Development Plan and Other Material Policy Considerations

National Planning Framework 4

A1.1 National Development 3 - Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure

Policy 1 - Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises

Policy 2 - Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

Policy 3 - Biodiversity

Policy 4 - Natural Places

Policy 5 - Soils

Policy 6 - Forestry, Woodland and Trees

Policy 7 - Historic Assets and Places

Policy 11 - Energy

Policy 18 - Infrastructure First

Policy 20 - Blue and Green Infrastructure

Policy 22 - Flood Risk and Water Management

Policy 23 - Health and Safety

Policy 25 - Community Wealth Building

Policy 29 - Rural Development

Policy 33 - Minerals

Highland Wide Local Development Plan 2012

A1.2

28 - Sustainable Design

29 - Design Quality and Place-making

30 - Physical Constraints

36 - Development in the Wider Countryside

51 - Trees and Development

53 - Minerals

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

62 - Geodiversity

63 - Water Environment

64 - Flood Risk

65 - Waste Water Treatment

66 - Surface Water Drainage

68 - Community Renewable Energy Developments

69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure

73 - Air Quality

74 - Green Networks

77 - Public Access

Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan 2 (IMFLDP2) and West Highland Local Development Plan (WestPlan)

A1.3 There are no site-specific policies however the following subject policies are relevant:

1 – Low and Zero Carbon Development

2 – Nature Protection, Restoration and Enhancement

5 – Green Networks

In accordance with Policy 2 - Nature Protection, Preservation and Enhancement. Developments proposals for national, major and EIA development will only be supported where it is demonstrated that the proposal will conserve and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks within and adjacent to the site, so that they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention, including through future management.

Highland Council Supplementary Planning Policy Guidance

A1.4 Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance (May 2024)
Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects (August 2010)
Developer Contributions (March 2018)
Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment (Jan 2013)
Green Networks (Jan 2013)
Highland Historic Environment Strategy (Jan 2013)
Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (March 2013)
Highland Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidelines (May 2006)
Managing Waste in New Developments (March 2013)
Physical Constraints (March 2013)
Public Art Strategy (March 2013)
Small-Scale Wind Turbine Proposals: Interim Supplementary Guidance (Nov 2012)
Special Landscape Area Citations (June 2011)
Standards for Archaeological Work (March 2012)
Sustainable Design Guide (Jan 2013)
Trees, Woodlands and Development (Jan 2013)

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Other National Policy and Guidance

- A1.5 A Vision for Scotland's Electricity and Gas Networks (2019)
- Community Benefits for Electricity Transmission Network Infrastructure: Government Response, UK Department for Energy and Security and Net Zero (2024)
- Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023)
- Draft Scottish Biodiversity strategy to 2045: tackling the nature emergency (2023)
- Scottish Energy Strategy (2017)
- Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map, Scottish Government (2018)
- Highland Nature Biodiversity Action Plan 2021 – 2026 (2022)
- Historic Environment Policy for Scotland, HES (2019)
- PAN 1/2011 - Planning and Noise (2011)
- PAN 60 - Planning for Natural Heritage (2008)
- Circular 4/1998 - The use of Conditions in Planning Permissions
- Circular 1/2017: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (2017)

Appendix 2 - Compliance with the Development Plan / Other Planning Policy

National Policy

- A2.1 At the high level, NPF4 considers that Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure, which includes converter-, switching- and substations supporting on and offshore high voltage electricity lines, will assist in the delivery of the Spatial Strategy and Spatial Priorities for the north of Scotland. And, that Highland can continue to make a strong contribution toward meeting Scotland's ambition for net zero. Alongside these ambitions, the strategy for Highland aims to protect environmental assets as well as to stimulate investment in natural and engineered solutions to address climate change (NPF4 page 26).
- A2.2 Part 3 at Annex B of the document describes several National Developments with provides statements of need to set out the rationale for each in terms of how they deliver the Spatial Strategy. This proposal falls under the third National Development descriptor, Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure by virtue of being for an upgraded substation directly supporting onshore high voltage electricity lines, cables and interconnectors 'of a scale or type that would otherwise have been classified as 'major' by 'The Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009' (NPF4 Page 103).
- A2.3 Since its adoption, NPF4 Policies 1, 2, and 3 now apply to all development proposals Scotland-wide, which means that significant weight must be given to the global climate and nature crises when considering all development proposals, as required by NPF4 Policy 1. To that end, development proposals must be sited and designed to minimise lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions as far as is practicably possible in accordance with NPF4 Policy 2, while proposals for national and major developments must conserve, restore, and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks, so they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention, as required by NPF4 Policy 3 b).
- A2.4 NPF4 Policy 4 compliments the above policies by setting out the developer and officer requirements for ensuring that protected species are given adequate consideration prior to an application's determination. NPF4 Policy 5 for Soils seeks to protect carbon-rich soils, and restore peatlands, and minimise disturbance to soils from development. To that end, the application requires to demonstrate that the mitigation hierarchy has been followed in siting the facility. In other words, that the proposal has sought to avoid carbon-rich soils and peat in the first instance, and then minimise disturbance where this is unavoidable, and to include adequate mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures for any disturbance. Similarly, NPF4 Policy 6 for Forestry, woodland and trees aims to protect and expand forests, woodland and tree coverage. Similarly for built and cultural resources, Policy 7 seeks to protect and enhance historic environment assets and

places and, relevant for this proposal, sets out the developer requirements for dealing with archaeology resources.

- A2.5 Policy 18, Infrastructure First, seeks to ensure that infrastructure considerations are integral to the design and decision making process so that any impacts on infrastructure are adequately and timeously understood and addressed as required at Part b). NPF4 Policy 20 for Blue and Green Infrastructure supports facilities that design protect and enhance blue and green infrastructure and their networks by making climate mitigation, nature restoration, biodiversity enhancement, flood prevention and water management (as per Policy 22 for Flood Risk) integral to design.
- A2.6 Policy 23 for Health and safety is also relevant to the assessment as it seeks to protect people and places from environmental harm, mitigate risks arising from safety hazards, and encourage, promote, and facilitate development that improves health and wellbeing. Furthermore, NPF4 Policy 25 for Community Wealth Building sets out at Part a) that development proposals should contribute to local or regional community wealth building strategies and be consistent with local economic priorities.
- A2.7 While the above policies are salient for the application's assessment, the principal policy for developments related to energy generation and distribution is Policy 11 Energy, which aims to encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development and the infrastructure that supports it (at Part a) ii.). Part c) of the policy confirms that development proposals should maximise net economic impacts, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment along with associated business and supply chain opportunities. Section d) requires impacts on international or national designations to be assessed in relation to Policy 4, while at the same time requiring decision makers to give significant weight to the proposal's contribution to renewable energy generation targets and targets for greenhouse gas emissions. In this instance it is noted that the replacement substation will directly support a longstanding hydroelectric renewable energy generator.
- A2.8 Indeed, national guidance supplements the in principle support for the proposal with both A Vision for Scotland's Electricity and Gas Networks (2019) and the Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan acknowledging that significant investment is required in Scotland's transmission system to ameliorate constraints and ensure a secure and resilient network so that energy from renewable sources can be reliably transmitted and distributed to where it is consumed no matter how remote.

Local Development Plan Policy

- A2.13 Although the proposal site is not allocated for the specific proposed land use or any land uses in the LDP (HwLDP and IMFLDP2), meaning that there are no site specific policies that would apply, the in principle support in favour of the proposal is still reinforced within the LDP under HwLDP Policy 69 for Electricity Transmission Infrastructure. The policy requires the assessment of the proposal to have regard to the strategic importance of the proposal taking account of appropriate siting and mitigation of environmental impacts by design. This policy is supplemented by several HwLDP policies including for Sustainable Design (Policy 28) and for Development in the Wider Countryside (Policy 36), as well as the remaining subject policies listed in paragraphs 6.2 - 6.3, which set out key environmental and social considerations against which the application requires to be assessed. These policies are considered to supplement those described for NPF4 above (paragraphs 8.5 – 8.10) with no relevant policy conflicts identified.
- A2.14 As described above, subject to the proposal being satisfactory in all other aspects, the proposal benefits from in principle support in the Development Plan.

Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023)

- A2.19 The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan has been published for consultation. Limited weight can however be applied to the document given its draft status. Unsurprisingly, the material on in the document reflects in large part that contained in NPF4 and the Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement (OWPS) 2022. A fundamental part of the Strategy is expanding the energy generation sector. The draft Strategy specifically addresses energy networks (page 36) and states “significant infrastructure investment in Scotland’s transmission system is needed to ameliorate constraints and enable more renewable power to flow to centres of demand.” It states that National Grid has identified the requirement for over £21 billion of investment in GB electricity transmission infrastructure to meet 2030 targets and that over half of this investment will involve Scottish transmission owners SPEN and SSEN. Overall, the draft Energy Strategy forms part of the new policy approach alongside the OWPS and NPF4 and confirms the Scottish Government’s policy objectives and related targets reaffirming the crucial role that onshore wind and enabling transmission infrastructure will play in response to the climate crisis which is at the heart of all these policies.

Appendix 3 – Habitats Regulations Appraisal

Appropriate Assessment

Glen Affric to Strathconon Special Protection Area

Strathglass Complex Special Area of Conservation

Culligran Substation - construction and operation of a 132kV replacement substation, platform, plant and machinery, access, laydown/work compound area(s), drainage, landscaping, and other

THC Ref. 24/01234/FUL

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS AFFECTING EUROPEAN SITES

The status of both the Strathconon Special Protection Area (SPA), while both the Strathglass Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC) means that the requirements of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations 1994 as amended (the 'Habitats Regulations') or, for reserved matters the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended apply.

The above means that where the conclusion reached by the Council on a development proposal unconnected with the nature conservation management of a Natura 2000 site is that it is likely to have a significant effect on those sites, it must undertake an Appropriate Assessment of the implications for the conservation interests for which the areas have been designated. The need for Appropriate Assessment extends to plans or projects out with the boundary of the site in order to determine their implications for the interest protected within the site.

This means that the Council, as competent authority, has a duty to:

- Determine whether the proposal is directly connected with or necessary to site management for conservation; and, if not,
- Determine whether the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the site either individually or in combination with other plans or projects; and, if so, then
- Make an Appropriate Assessment of the implications (of the proposal) for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

The competent authority can only agree to the proposal after having ascertained that it will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the sites. If this is not the case and there are not alternative solutions, the proposal can only be allowed to proceed if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, which in this case can include those of a social or economic nature.

Screening in Likely Significant Effects

Glen Affric to Strathconon Special Protection Area (SPA)

It is evident that the proposal is not connected with or necessary to site management for conservation, hence further consideration is required. The development may impact on the SPA's breeding golden eagles qualifying interests due to construction works taking place during the breeding season (early February to the end of August). The Council is therefore required to undertake an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposal on the SPA.

Strathglass Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

It is evident that the proposal is not connected with or necessary to site management for conservation, hence further consideration is required. The development may impact on the upland and woodland habitats, and the aquatic habitats of the River Farrar and associated species qualifying interests due to pollution and contamination of the River Farrar during construction works as well as the direct loss of suitable otter habitat qualifying interest due to the siting of the development. The Council is therefore required to undertake an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposal on the SAC. It is noted that the semi-natural birch woodland of this age and structure would usually be a component of Caledonian forest feature, but that however woodland here has developed on a brownfield site and, although not completely lacking in biodiversity, does not meet the requirements to be considered part of the SAC Caledonian forest feature of the SAC.

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

While the responsibility to carry out the Appropriate Assessment rests with the Council, advice contained within Circular 6/1995 is that the assessment can be based on the information submitted from other agencies. In this case, the Appropriate Assessment is informed by information supplied by NatureScot, the applicant and various published information.

Appraisal Summary

Strathconon Special Protection Area (SPA)

In its initial response to the Council, NatureScot advised that the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the breeding golden eagles qualifying interests of the SPA but that in its opinion, the proposal will not affect the integrity of the site by virtue of there being no known golden eagle territories within 1 km of the site with all known golden eagle nest sites being over 2 km away, and given that disturbance by construction will be localised due to topography and surrounding woodland, as well as the development not effecting golden eagle foraging habitat. As such, no mitigation is required.

Strathglass Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

In its initial response to the Council, NatureScot advised that there is potential for the construction works to result in pollution/contamination of the River Farrar which could have negative consequences for the SAC's aquatic habitats and associated qualifying species as well as the direct loss of suitable otter habitat qualifying interest due to the siting of the development. However, provided the mitigation included in the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan including that best practice measures for pollution prevention are adopted, the water quality of the Allt Cruach an Tuir and River Farrar will not be negatively impacted. Additionally, due to the overall size of the connecting riverine habitat, the loss of otter habitat will be small and will not affect the availability or quality of remaining habitat, while the applicant will be required to ensure construction works are undertaken in accordance with an otter Species Protection Plan to ensure any potential disturbance to otter commuting, foraging and resting up in the vicinity is fully mitigated. Also, the substation will not be floodlit at night once operational. As such, the integrity of the site will not be adversely impacted.

HIGHLAND COUNCIL APPRAISAL OF THE PROPOSAL IN RESPECT OF GLEN AFFRIC TO STRATHCONON SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA)

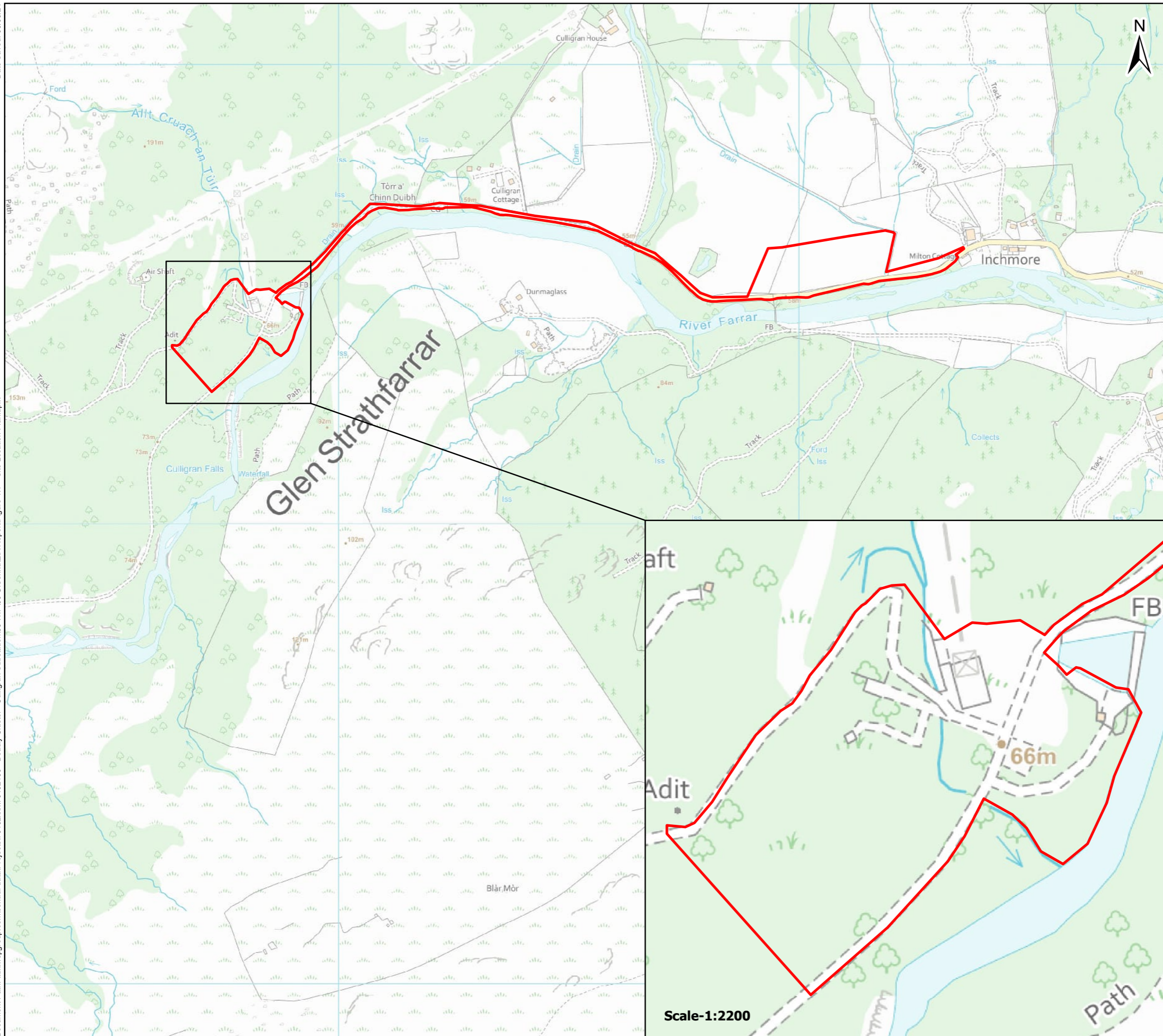
- The proposal is not directly connected with or necessary to site management for conservation;
- The proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the site either individually or in combination with other plans or projects; therefore;
- An Appropriate Assessment of the implications (of the proposal) for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives is provided below.

The impacts on the SPA are considered in terms of the different components of the development which may impact on the SPA's breeding golden eagles qualifying interests due to construction works taking place during the breeding season (early February to the end of August). However, NatureScot advises that in its opinion, the proposal will not effect the integrity of the site by virtue of there being no known golden eagle territories within 1 km of the site with all known golden eagle nest sites being over 2 km away, and given that disturbance by construction will be localised due to topography and surrounding woodland, as well as the development not effecting golden eagle foraging habitat. As such, no mitigation is required.


HIGHLAND COUNCIL APPRAISAL OF THE PROPOSAL IN RESPECT OF THE STRATHGLASS COMPLEX SAC

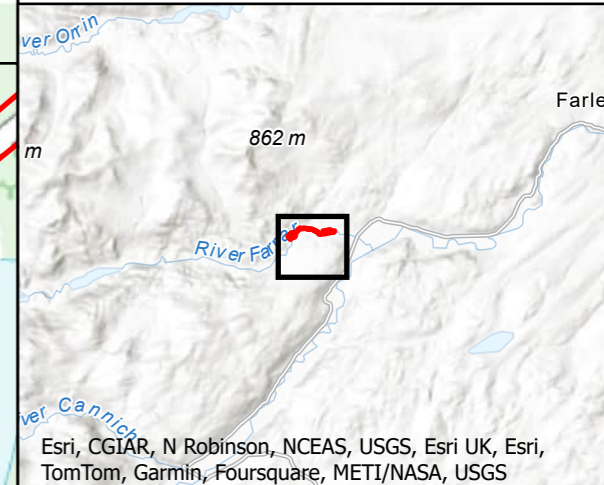
- The proposal is not directly connected with or necessary to site management for conservation;
- The proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the site either individually or in combination with other plans or projects; therefore;
- An Appropriate Assessment of the implications (of the proposal) for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives is provided below.

The impacts on the SAC are considered in terms of the different components of the development which may impact on the upland and woodland habitats, and the aquatic habitats of the River Farrar and associated species qualifying interests due to pollution and contamination of the River Farrar during construction works as well as the direct loss of suitable otter habitat qualifying interest due to the siting of the development. However, provided the mitigation included in the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan including that best practice measures for pollution prevention are adopted, the water quality of the Allt Cruach an Tuir and River Farrar will not be negatively impacted. Additionally, due to the overall size of the connecting riverine habitat, the loss of otter habitat will be small and will not affect the availability or quality of remaining habitat, while the applicant will be required to ensure construction works are undertaken in accordance with an otter Species Protection Plan to ensure any potential disturbance to otter commuting, foraging and resting up in the vicinity is fully mitigated. Also, the substation will not be floodlit at night once operational. As such, the integrity of the site will not be adversely impacted.

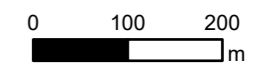


Legend

 Red Line Boundary



Esri, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, USGS, Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, METI/NASA, USGS



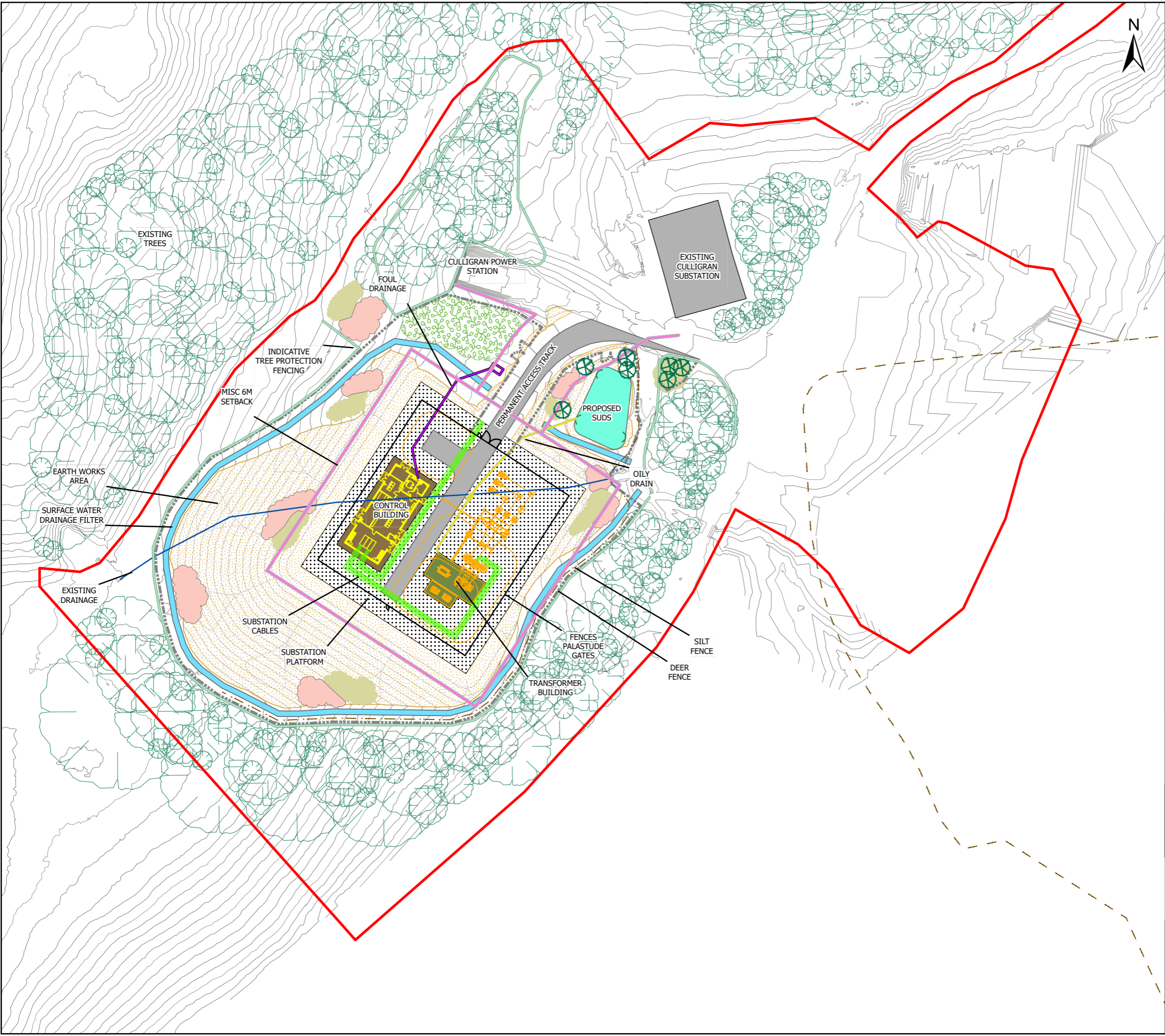
Client: 
TRANSMISSION

Project: **Culligran 132 kV Substation**

Title: **Site Location**

Date: 06/03/2024 Scale: 8,000 @ A3
 Drawn: AS Checked: IM Approved: EJ
 Drawing Number: BC-WSP-GIS-013

Scale-1:2200



Legend

- Existing Culligran Substation
- Red Line Boundary
- Earthworks Area
- Permanent Access Track

Proposed Substation

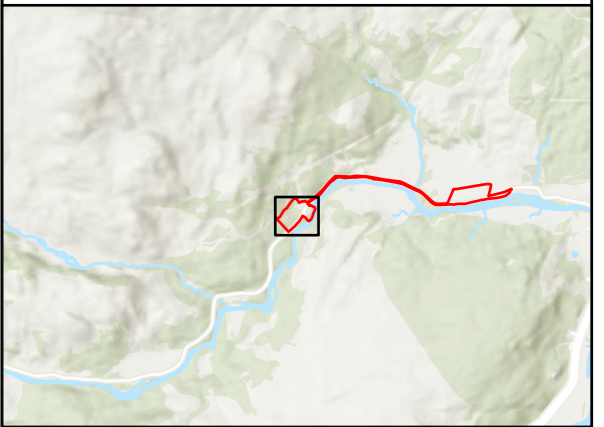
- Transformer Building
- Control Building
- Substation Platform
- Transformer Building Layout
- Control Building Layout
- Substation Cables
- Deer fence
- Fences -Palastude-Gates
- Silt Fence

Proposed Drainage

- Surface Water Drainage Filter
- Proposed SuDS
- Drainage Existing
- Foul Drainage
- Oily Drain

Proposed Landscape Design

- Deadwood
- Ground Flora
- Planting Woodland
- Indicative Tree Protection Fencing
- Misc - 6m setback
- Proposed Planting tree clusters

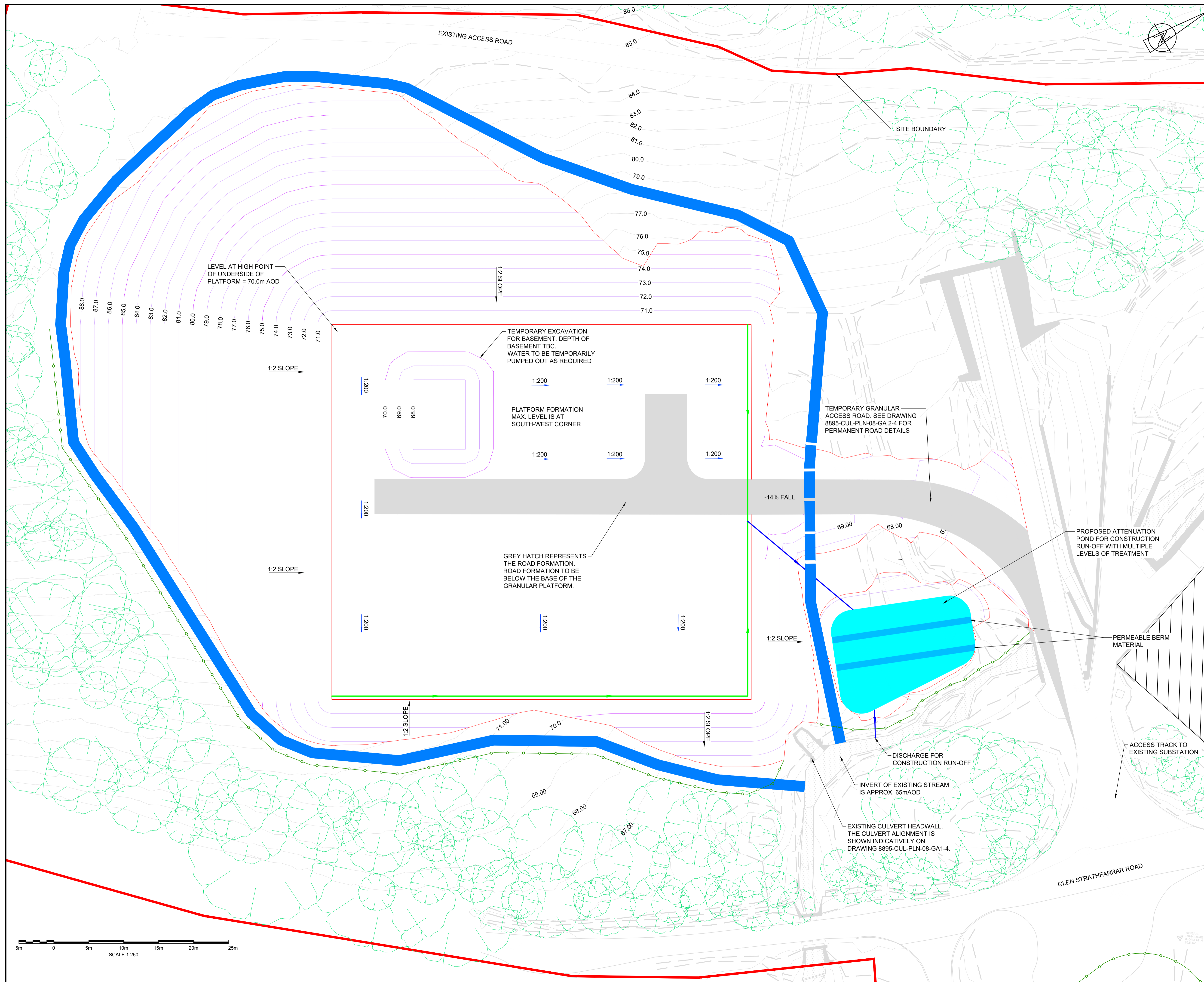


Client: **Scottish & Southern**
Electricity Networks
TRANSMISSION

Project: **Culligran 132 kV Substation**

Title: **Figure 1.2 – The Proposed Development**

Date: 15/03/2024 Scale: 1,000 @ A3
 Drawn: MAL Checked: IM Approved: BH
 Drawing Number: BC-WSP-GIS-010



DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING

NOTES

- ALL LEVELS ARE IN METRES UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
- THIS DRAWING SHOWS THE TEMPORARY DRAINAGE ARRANGEMENT DURING CONSTRUCTION. THE DRAWING SHOWS THE PLATFORM FORMATION/ UNDERSIDE OF PLATFORM DRAINAGE.
- TEMPORARY OPEN CHANNEL DRAINAGE ON NORTH AND EAST EDGES OF SITE WILL BE USED AS FORMATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION FILTER DRAINS WHICH HAVE A DIFFERENT FALL ARRANGEMENT FOR THE PERMANENT DESIGN.

LEGEND :

- EXISTING WOODED AREA
- SITE BOUNDARY
- PROPOSED SILT FENCING
- PROPOSED OPEN CHANNEL DRAINAGE
- PROPOSED CARRIER PIPE
- PROPOSED CLEAN WATER CUT-OFF DRAIN
- DIRECTION OF WATER FLOW

REV.	BY	CHKD	APPD	DATE	DESCRIPTION
P03	HT	TA	TA	31/10/23	FOR REVIEW
P02	HT	AD	TA	06/09/23	FOR REVIEW
P01	HT	AD	TA	09/05/23	PRELIMINARY DESIGN

CODE	DRAWING STATUS
S3	FOR PLANNING

Tony Gee and Partners LLP
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 Sperry Way
 Stonehouse, Gloucestershire
 GL10 3UT
 Tel: 01453 826773
 www.tonygee.com
 Consulting Engineers

ON BEHALF OF
SSE

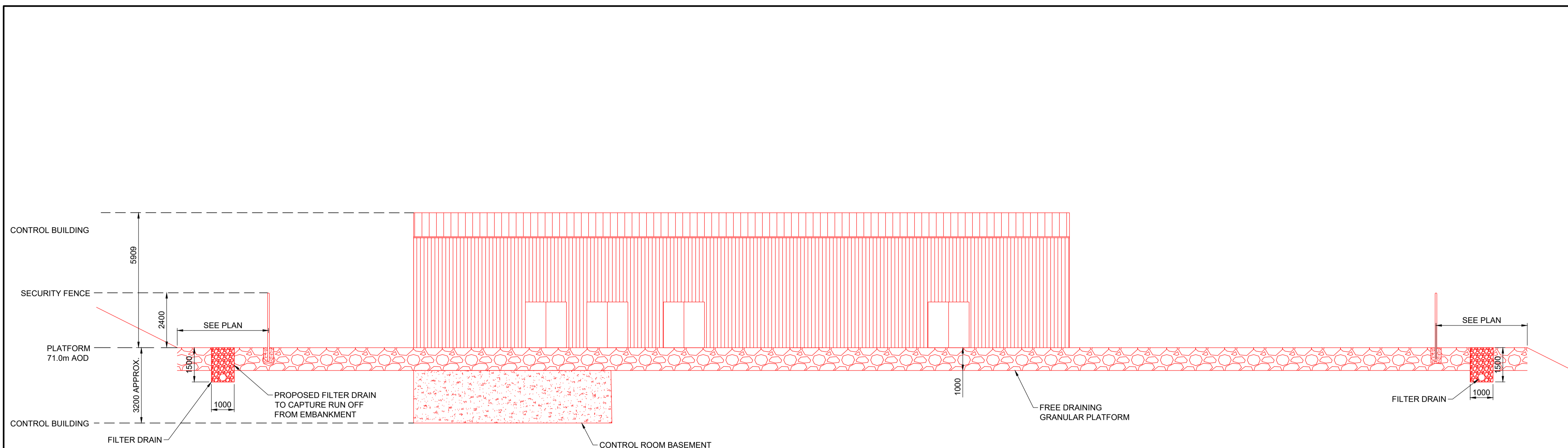
**CULLIGRAN 132kV
 SUBSTATION**

**CULLIGRAN TEMPORARY
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 DRAINAGE - GENERAL
 ARRANGEMENT**

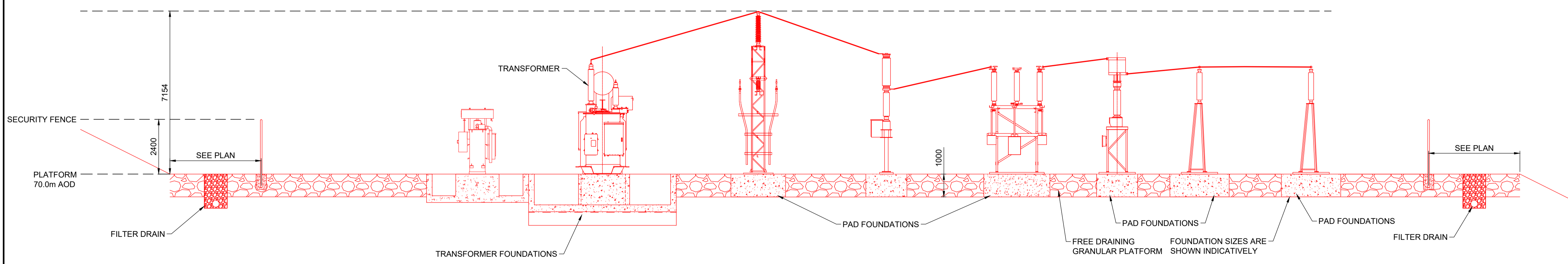
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8895-CUL-PLN-08-GA 4-4

DRAWN :	DESIGNED :	REVISION
HT	AC	PL1

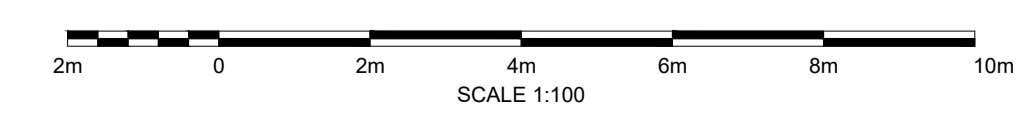
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SECTION D - D
SEE DRAWING 8895-CUL-PLN-08-GA 1-4
FOR SECTION LOCATION
SCALE 1:100



SECTION C - C
SEE DRAWING 8895-CUL-PLN-08-GA 1-4
FOR SECTION LOCATION
SCALE 1:100



DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING

- NOTES
1. ALL LEVELS ARE IN METRES UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETRES UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
 2. BURIED CABLES ARE NOT SHOWN

REV.	BY	CHKD	APPD	DATE	DESCRIPTION
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P03	HT	TA	TA	31/10/23	FOR REVIEW
P02	HT	TA	TA	06/09/23	FOR REVIEW
P01	GG	AD	TA	09/06/23	PRELIMINARY DESIGN

CODE: **S3** DRAWING STATUS: **FOR PLANNING**

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Consulting Engineers

ON BEHALF OF
SSE

**CULLIGRAN 132kV
SUBSTATION**

**CULLIGRAN
PLATFORM
ELEVATIONS**

DRAWING No.
8895-CUL-PLN-08-GA 3-4

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SCALE : 1:100	ORIGINAL SIZE : A1	PL1

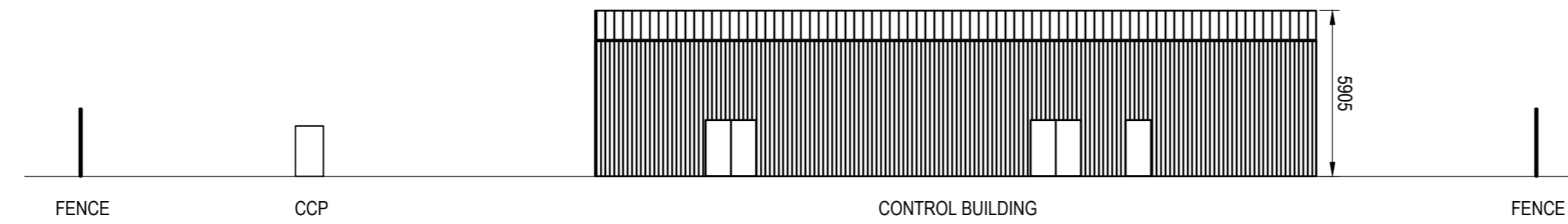
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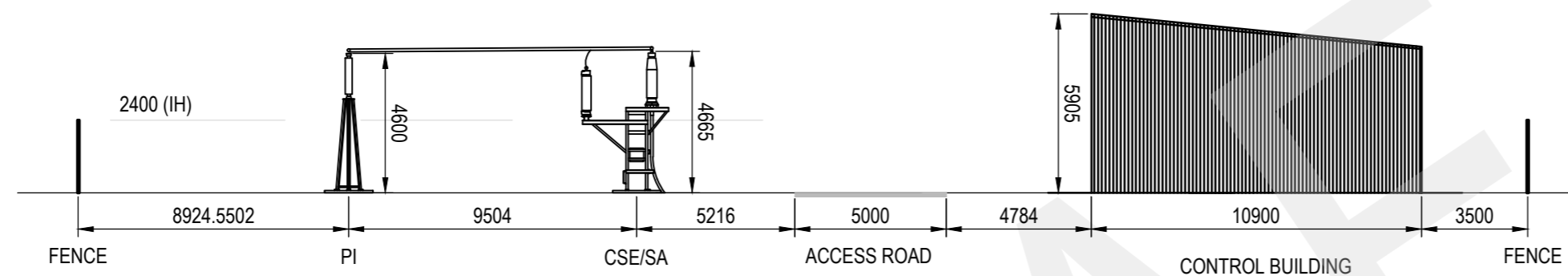
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- LAYOUT MAY BE REQUIRED TO BE AMENDED DEPENDENT ON FINAL SITE SELECTION.
- ELECTRICAL LAYOUT SHOWN IS PURELY FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY.
- ALL EQUIPMENT SHOWN TO BE FINALISED AND CONFIRMED BY ENGINEER/DESIGN TEAM AND UNTIL DONE SO ALL ASPECTS OF THE SHOWN DESIGN ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.
- ALL EQUIPMENT SHOWN TO BE CONSIDERED NEW.
- ALL DIMENSIONS GIVEN IN MILLIMETRES (mm) U.N.O.
- CONTROL BUILDING INDICATIVE ONLY - DESIGN TO BE CONFIRMED.

LEGEND:-

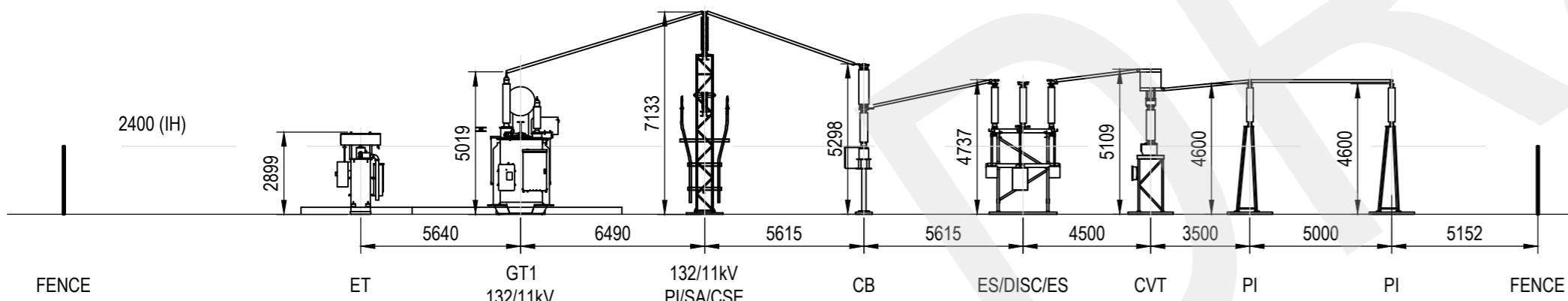
- GT GRID TRANSFORMER
- ET EARTHING TRANSFORMER
- NER NEUTRAL EARTHING RESISTOR
- ES EARTH SWITCH
- DISC DISCONNECTOR (RCP)
- CB CIRCUIT BREAKER
- CT CURRENT TRANSFORMER
- CVT CAPACITIVE VOLTAGE TRANSFORMER
- SA SURGE ARRESTER
- CSE CABLE SEALING END
- MK MARSHALLING KIOSK
- PI POST INSULATOR



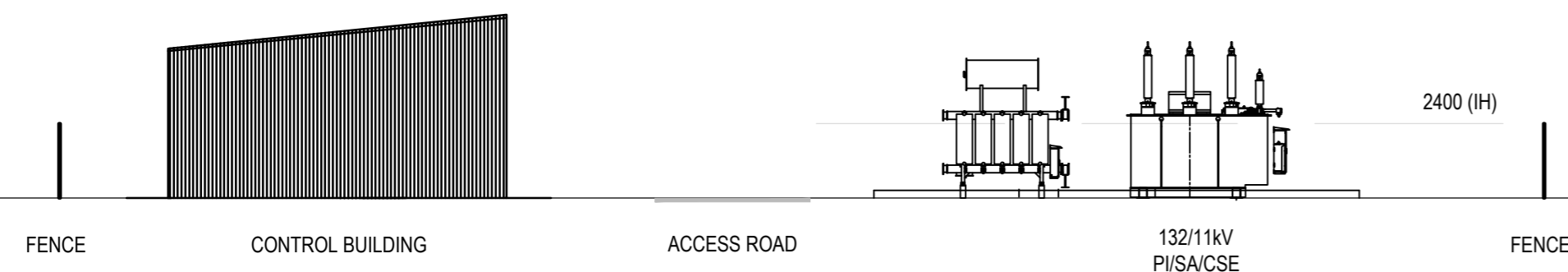
ELEVATION A-A



ELEVATION B-B

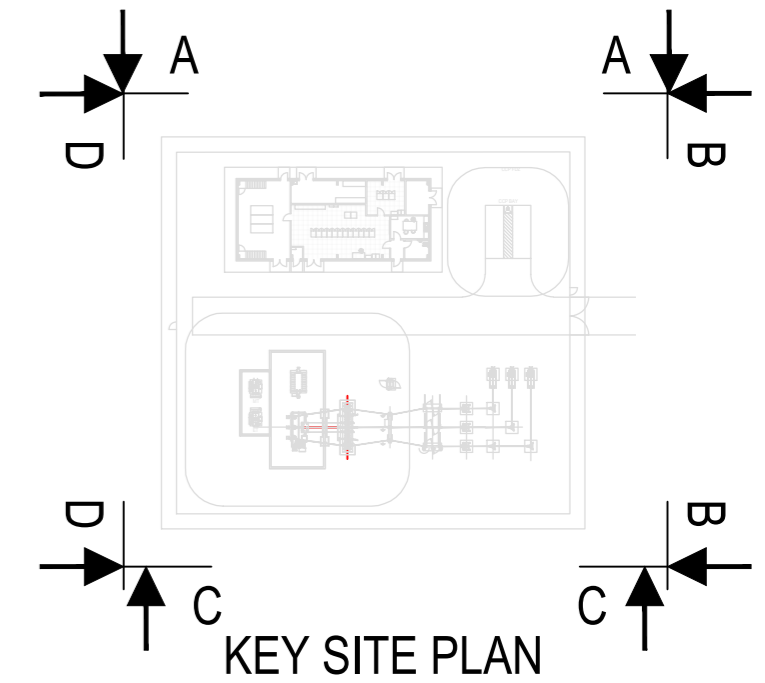


ELEVATION C-C



ELEVATION D-D

**PRELIMINARY DESIGN ONLY
NOT TO BE USED FOR
CONSTRUCTION**



KEY SITE PLAN

SUBSTATION MINIMUM ELECTRICAL CLEARANCES

REQUIREMENTS TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SSE SUBSTATION DESIGN SPECIFICATION DOC No. SP-NET-SST-501

REF	CLEARANCE (mm)	NOMINAL SYSTEM VOLTAGE			
		400kV	275kV	132kV	33kV
E	PHASE TO EARTH	2800	2100	1200	500
Ph	PHASE TO PHASE	3600	2400	1400	430
S	DESIGN CLEARANCE FOR SAFETY	5500	4800	3500	2900
SD	SAFETY DISTANCE	3100	2400	1400	800
Ds	WORKING & ACCESS CLEARANCE (VERTICAL)	5200	4500	3500	2900
Dsh	WORKING & ACCESS CLEARANCE (HORIZONTAL)	4600	3900	2900	2300
IH	INSULATION HEIGHT (PEDESTRIAN ACCESS)	2400	2400	2400	2400

WHERE EQUIPMENT CONFIGURATIONS HAVE NOT BEEN SUBJECT TO TYPE OF ROUTINE TESTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH IEC 60694 THE CLEARANCES FOR PHASE TO EARTH AND PHASE TO PHASE ABOVE SHALL APPLY. THEY APPLY UNDER CONDITIONS OF MAXIMUM SWING AND SAG.

WHEN DESIGNING ELECTRICAL CONNECTIONS THE FOLLOWING ALLOWANCES HAVE BEEN MADE TO COVER TOLERANCES IN ELECTRICAL AND CIVIL WORK AND THE SETTLEMENT OF FOUNDATIONS:- 132kV - 80mm; 33kV - 80mm

DRAFT

Rev: 0D	Drawn: MS	Approved: 11.12.23	Description: FOR INTERNAL COMMENT ONLY.
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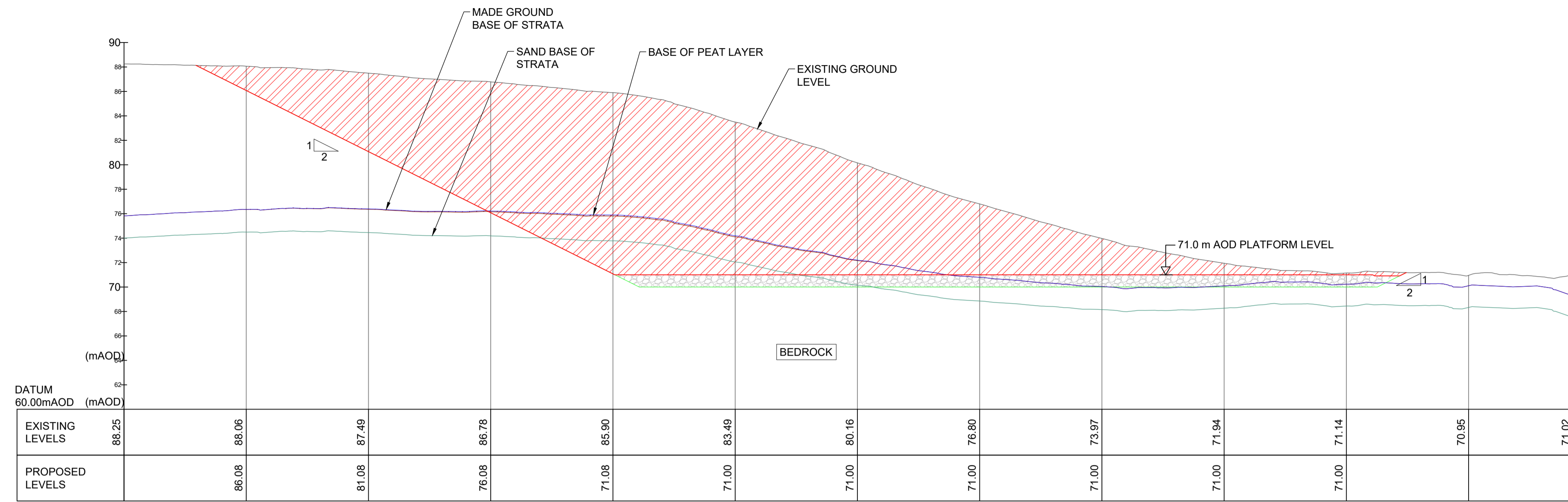


SSE Inverlmond House, 200 Dunkeld Road
Perth, PH1 3AQ, UK www.sse.com

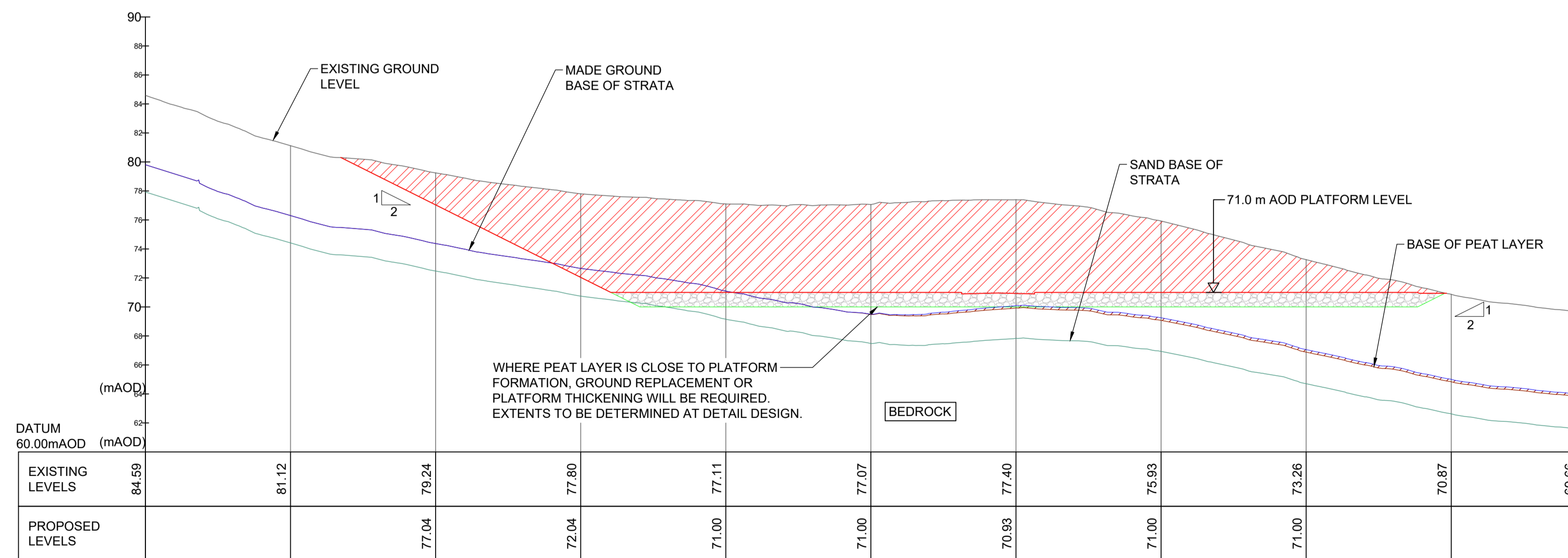
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Project Number: LT249	Location: CULLIGRAN
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Scale: 1:200 @ A1	Checked:
Date: 29.11.23	Approved:
Drawing Number: LT249_CULL_1104_0048	Sheet No: 01
	Revision No: 0D

DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING

- NOTES
- FOR SECTION LOCATIONS REFER TO DRAWING 8895-CUL-PLN-08-GA 2-4
 - REFER TO 8895-CUL-RPT-08-ES FOR EARTHWORKS STRATEGY AND CUT AND FILL VOLUMES



SECTION A - A
Scale: H 1:250,V 1:250. Datum: 60.000



SECTION B - B
Scale: H 1:250,V 1:250. Datum: 60.000

REV.	BY	CHKD	APPD	DATE	DESCRIPTION
P03	HT	AD	TA	31/10/23	FOR REVIEW
P02	HT	AD	TA	06/09/23	FOR REVIEW
P01	GG	AD	TA	09/06/23	PRELIMINARY DESIGN

CODE	DRAWING STATUS
S3	FOR PLANNING

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 GL10 3UT
 Tel: 01453 826773
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 Consulting Engineers

ON BEHALF OF
SSE

CULLIGRAN 132kV
SUBSTATION

CULLIGRAN PROPOSED
EARTHWORKS SECTIONS

DRAWING No.
8895-CUL-PLN-08-EW1

DRAWN	DESIGNED	REVISION
GG	AD	PL1

SCALE: AS SHOWN ORIGINAL SIZE: A1