Agenda Item	6
Report No	PLN/059/25

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: North Planning Applications Committee

Date: 26 November 2025

Report Title: 24/04898/FUL: Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc

Land 360M NE Of Achalone Cottage, Achalone, Halkirk

Report By: Area Planning Manager – North

Purpose/Executive Summary

Description: Banniskirk Substation - Erection and operation of an Air Insulated Switchgear 400kV substation and HVDC converter station with associated buildings, installation of new platforms, drainage infrastructure, temporary construction compound, landscaping, mounding and other ancillary works.

Ward: 03 - Wick and East Caithness

Development category: National Development

Pre-determination Hearing: Yes

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 The proposal is part of a wider project to reinforce the onshore transmission infrastructure. The development comprises the following:

- The construction of a Alternating Current (AC) platform and an outdoor Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS), 400 kV substation complete with 400 kV double busbar arrangement;
- The creation of a Direct Current (DC) platform and construction of a new 525 kV DC 2GW Bi-pole HVDC (high voltage direct current) converter station;
- Installation of two new Super Grid Transformers (SGT) within noise enclosures;
- Installation of two Synchronous Compensators (SYNCOMs);
- A new substation control building and two SYNCOM buildings;
- Security fencing around the substation and converter station;
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), foul water drainage and detention basins for drainage control;
- Realignment of the Achalone tributary;
- Six new watercourse crossings and five temporary crossings;
- A new access and a temporary site access, with internal roads;
- Forestry clearance;
- Landscaping, planting and mounding for the purposes of visual screening and cut and fill earthworks; and
- Temporary construction compounds and material storage areas for the duration of the construction phase.

1.2 The proposed AC substation platform will measure 540m x 310m, upon which the plant equipment and transformers will be located. Three buildings will also be located on the AC platform, the substation control building (31.3m x 22.74m, 6.4m in height) and the two synchronous compensator buildings (33m x 32.3m, 14.5m in height).

1.3 The adjacent HVDC converter platform has an area of 86,100 m2, hosting two main converter buildings (123m x 63m, 26.4m in height). There are also several other buildings located on this platform including an operator building (54.4m x 20.4m, 6.3m in height), storage building (20.2m x 24.3m, 10.28m in height), service building (50.9m x 17.6m, 23.05 in height), spares building (22.4m x 62.3m, 9.20m in height), and other smaller ancillary buildings. The total area of buildings on the DC platform is 26,200 m2. The proposed buildings will be metal clad, the style and scale of which are functional and retain an element of uniformity across the site.

1.4 This new substation is required to connect: 1) a proposed 400 KV overhead line between Spittal and Beauly; 2) a new Spittal to Peterhead High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) link which is part onshore and part subsea cable. There is also the requirement to connect the development with the existing 275/132 kV substation at the existing Spittal substation. This will enable the significant power transfer capability required to take power from onshore and offshore renewable schemes and transport it to areas of demand. This includes the consented West of Orkney Offshore Wind Farm, as well as the planned Ayre Offshore Wind Farm, with both of these projects intending to connect into Banniskirk via underground cable from each of their own associated onshore nearby substations. The requirement for this

development is identified in the SSEN Transmissions Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design to meet the UK's 2030 net zero targets.

1.5 The development will be served by a new permanent vehicular access from the A9, which runs along the site's western boundary. There will also be new internal access tracks. A second, temporary vehicular access is also proposed, located 200m south of the permanent access point. This will be used during the construction phase and removed once works are complete. Furthermore, a temporary network of internal access tracks is proposed to assist with vehicle segregation and traffic management during construction.

1.6 Earthworks will be required across most of the site, but less within the northern part. Cutting will be required largely for the HVDC Converter Platform and most of the fill will be required for the construction of the AC platform and landscape bunds. All materials for the construction of the earthworks are anticipated to be won on site through cutting of the existing surface to construct the platforms. The overall landscaping strategy aims to minimise the visual impact of the development through the creation of mounding adjacent to the A9. It will also include tree planting to offset woodland removal and aid habitat creation.

1.7 A three year construction phase is anticipated, with a further two years for commissioning and site landscaping. This will however be dependent on agreed hours and days of working.

1.8 The applicant utilised the Highland Council's Pre-Application Advice Service for Major Developments (23/04004/PREMAJ). This pre-application also included the connecting overhead line and the proposed Carnaig substation near Loch Buidhe. These are part of the suite of gird upgrade projects planned in Highland and are subject to separate applications and different consenting regimes. The pre-application detailed several potential locations for the current substation. The applicant presented site option 12 as its preferred location, which is the current site.

1.9 The pre-application advice given was supportive of renewable energy developments in principle, including the necessary grid connections. Key concerns were however expressed relating to minimising the landscape and visual effects of the development. Officers generally supported site option 12 but noted that further information would be required in terms of the design of the substation complex, with a preference for the taller elements of the infrastructure to be located as far from the A9 trunk road as possible, with the development encouraged to make the best use of the existing topography to screen the site. Consideration for further screening measures, including landscaping and planting was outlined. Officers would also support further consideration of site option 14, which utilised the existing Banniskirk flagstone quarry location. SEPA's preferred site was option 11 and Historic Environment Scotland's preference was the application site.

1.10 Two design workshops were held in May and August 2024 between officers and the applicant. This resulted in several changes including a reduction in the number of permanent access points, a reduction in the scale and massing of the scheme and amendments to the earthworks and bunding to enhance the screening from the A9.

1.11 The applicant has undertaken statutory pre-application consultation. A Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) was submitted to Highland Council in January 2024. The PAN (24/00291/PAN) provided an outline of the application details, dates of public events, publicity arrangements, and confirmation of the site location. This included a series of pre-consultation events which were held in March and June 2024 at the Ross Institute, Halkirk. The applicant also raised awareness of these events by contacting local ward members, MSP, and through maildrops, consultation posters, press release, website and newspaper adverts.

1.12 The application is supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) which was subject of EIA Scoping. The EIAR contains chapters on: Introduction and Background; Project Description; Site Selection and Alternatives; EIA Process and Methodology; Scope and Consultation; Planning and Energy Policy Context; Landscape and Visual; Ecology, Ornithology and Nature Conservation; Archaeology and Cultural Heritage; Traffic and Transport; Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Soils; Noise and Vibration, Land Use, Amenity and Socio-economics. The application is also accompanied by a Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report, Planning Statement, and Design and Access Statement.

1.13 During the course of the application's determination, supplementary environmental information (SEI) was received in September 2025. The SEI covered a number of matters including: noise conditions, landscaping/ planting strategies, the emerging cumulative developments and off-site woodland retention. To support this additional ZTVs, fencing details, a cumulative development plan and further landscaping/ visual mitigation plans have been submitted. Variations to the development proposal comprise:

- Amended landscape bunding, planting, with the introduction of deer fencing;
- Provision for onsite public art; and
- Offsite A9 roadside woodland retention, which could be secured via planning legal agreement.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The site is located on the eastern side of the A9, 460m northeast of the existing Spittal Substation with Banniskirk Quarry located to the east. The site broadly slopes down from 90m Above Ordinance Datum (AOD) in the south, to 70m AOD in the north. The surrounding area is predominantly flat apart from Spittal Hill (176m AOD) rising to the south and Achanarras Hill (117m AOD) to the southwest, which is extensively covered in forestry plantation. Several surface water drainage ditches are present across the site and in general, water drains in a north-westerly direction. A number of these drainage ditches are shown to drain under the A9 and ultimately into the main channel of Halkirk Burn. Two waterbodies have also been identified within the site and surrounding area, Halkirk burn and the Achalone tributary. No public foul, surface or combined water sewers have been identified within the site.

2.2 There are several scattered properties within the vicinity of the site, with the main settlement of Halkirk located 2.4km to the northwest. The closest properties and farmsteads are located along the A9. Immediately north of the site is Banniskirk House; there is woodland between this property and the site. To the northeast lies

Banniskirk Mains, and there are also properties located along and accessed from the A882.

2.3 The application site comprises mainly rough grassland with rushes, heaths, some hardstanding and an area of woodland located along the western edge bordering the A9. The construction of the proposed development will require the permanent loss of 87ha of agricultural land. The site's western boundary runs along the A9 with a drystone wall running along its length. The northern boundary consists of vertical stone slabs, a common feature in Caithness, and tree planting associated with Banniskirk House. To the east the boundary is relatively open with some coniferous plantation. There is also some plantation woodland to the south of the site, on the southern side of the road which runs to the quarry, a relatively small part of which is intended to be felled to facilitate the substation's 400 kV southern overhead line connection which is intended to follow the eastern side of Spittle Hill.

2.4 There are no nature conservation designations within the boundary of the site (see EIAR Fig 9.1a). The following designations are within 7km:

Designation	Qualifying Features	Distance to the Development
Banniskirk Quarry SSSI	Geological: Silurian-Devonian Chordata palaeontology (fossil fish)	230 m
Achanarras Quarry SSSI	Geological: Silurian-Devonian Chordata palaeontology (fossil fish) Non-marine Devonian stratigraphy.	1.9 km
River Thurso SAC	Atlantic Salmon	1.48 km
Caithness Lochs SPA and Ramsar Site including: Loch Scarmclate SSSI, Loch Watten SSSI and Loch Calder SSSI	The SPA and Ramsar designated for Whooper swan Greenland white-fronted goose Migratory Waterfowl: Greylag goose	3.2 km
Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA, Ramsar, including: - Blar nam Faoileag SSSI, Strathmore Peatlands SSSI and Shielton Peatlands SSSI Loch Caluim Flows SSSI.	The SPA is designated for Red-throated diver, black-throated diver, hen harrier, golden eagle, merlin, golden plover, wood sandpiper, short-eared owl, dunlin, and common scoter, greenshank and wigeon. The Ramsar site is designated for Freshwater pearl mussel, otter, red-throated diver, black throated diver, golden plover, wood sandpiper, dunlin, wigeon, common scoter and greenshank.	6.6 km
Ancient Woodland	Two areas are located 35m and 45m to the north of the site boundary.	

2.5 There are no landscape designations within the site, or within the 4km study area for the landscape and visual assessment. The development is located within landscape character type (LCT) 143 Farmed Lowland Plain. There is also an area of LCT 134 Sweeping Moorland and Flows to the south and southwest of the study area (see EIAR Figure 8.3). Existing electrical infrastructure is visible within the local landscape for example the buildings associated with the existing electrical substation are visible when travelling along the A9, particularly when close to Spittal Hill as the road is more elevated at this point. Electricity towers are noticeable elements within the landscape.

2.6 In terms of cultural heritage, there are no designations within the site boundary. There are eight non-designated heritage assets within the site, with four more identified during the walkover survey. There are a further eight non-designated assets within 250m of the site (EIAR Fig 10.4). Within 5km of the proposed development (EIAR Figure 10.3) there are 35 designated assets: 12 listed buildings and 23 scheduled monuments.

2.7 Recreational interests in the surrounding area include walking and cycling. The site is located adjacent to the A9 which is considered to be the main tourist route. The A882 is located to the northeast of the site and the B870 is located further to the south. The B874 is located primarily outside the study area except for a section to the north between Knockdee and the settlement of Halkirk. There are several minor unclassified roads within and crossing the study area. The location of the core paths are shown on EIAR Figure 8.4, with several located within the vicinity of Halkirk.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

Application Site

3.1	05 Mar 2024	24/00291/PAN The construction and operation of a 400kV substation, HVDC converter, access, construction compound, landscaping and ancillary infrastructure.	Proposal of Application Notice Reported to Committee
3.2	6 Feb 2024	23/05829/SCOP Spittal Substation and HVDC Converter Station - New 400kV Substation and HVDC Converter Station to Connect to the Proposed New 400kv Overhead Line between Spittal and Beauly, the New Spittal to Peterhead HVDC Link, and the existing Spittal 275/132kv Substation.	EIA Scoping Response Issued
3.3	14 Nov 2023	23/04004/PREMAJ Spittal to Beauly OHL Reinforcement Project and Supporting Development.	Advice Issued

Pertinent planning history for associated suite of transmission projects and connecting renewable energy projects. These do not form part of this current application.

3.4	18 Jun 2024	23/05353/PIP West of Orkney Wind Farm - construction of onshore transmission infrastructure comprising up to two cable landfalls, an onshore substation and up to five associated export circuits	Planning Permission in Principle Granted
3.5	Application received: 20 Aug 2025	25/02964/PIP Ayre Offshore Wind Farm - construction of onshore transmission infrastructure comprising cable landfall, substation, cable circuits, temporary construction areas, access, drainage, landscaping and associated infrastructure	Planning application pending consideration
3.6	Application received: 03 Sept 2025	25/03311/S37 Spittal to Beauly 400 kV OHL - Install, operate and keep installed 173km of new 400 kV overhead electricity line, supported on steel lattice tower structures, between proposed new substations at Banniskirk (ND 15905 56823) in the area of Spittal, and Fanellan (NH 48534 43208) in the area of Beauly, with a connection via a proposed new substation at Carnaig (NH 65053 97458) near to the existing substation at Loch Buidhe, in the area of Bonar Bridge; associated permanent diversion works to 18km of existing 132 kV and 275 kV overhead electricity lines, including the temporary diversion works, and ancillary development and associated works.	Section 37 Electricity Act application pending consideration
3.7	Application received: 13 Jan 2025	24/05062/FUL Carnaig Substation - Construction and operation of a 400kV substation and associated infrastructure, site access, and landscaping	Planning application pending consideration
3.8	Application received: 20 Mar 2025	25/00826/FUL Fanellan Substation - construction and operation of a 400 kV substation and converter station and associated infrastructure, site access, landscaping and demolition works	Planning application pending consideration
3.9	Application received: 21 Oct 2025	25/03986/S37 Beauly to Peterhead 400 kV OHL - Install, operate and keep installed 186km of new 400 kV overhead transmission line (OHL), supported on steel lattice tower structures, between proposed new substations at Fanellan (NH 48321 42717) in the area of Beauly, Greens (NJ 81960 47587) in the area of New Deer and Netherton (NK 05761 45576) in the area of Peterhead; associated crossing works, temporary diversions and permanent	Section 37 Electricity Act application pending consideration

realignment to 14.7 km of existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs, and ancillary development and associated works.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Advertised: EIA development, Schedule 3 development and unknown neighbour

Date Advertised: Edinburgh Gazette – 24.01.2025

John O'Groat Journal – 27.12.2024 / 24.01.2025

4.2 Supplementary Environmental Information (SEI) Advertised: EIA development, Schedule 3 development and unknown neighbour

Date Advertised: Edinburgh Gazette – 26.09.2025

John O'Groat Journal – 26.09.2025

Representation Deadline: 26.10.2025

4.3 Representations: Objections: 307 (from 252 households)

General / Support: 2 (2 households)

4.4 Material considerations raised in objections are summarised as follows:

- Contrary to the Development Plan.
- Inappropriate location, scale and visual impacts, industrialisation of the area. Design and external materials are inappropriate for a rural area; unacceptable visualisations.
- Natural Heritage and ecological impacts, wildlife and tree removal, insufficient survey data. Impacts on designated sites and no compensatory woodland planting.
- Impacts upon peat and peatland habitat and the Flow Country WHS.
- Net loss in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain. The predicted peat loss of 2.13ha of blanket bog requires compensation in line with NatureScot guidance.
- Any off-site biodiversity enhancement proposals include habitat management and/or creation for site faithful birds such as Curlew and Lapwing species, such as grassland management and scrape creation.
- Impacts upon heritage assets and buried archaeology.
- Amenity, noise and night-time light impacts for residents, businesses, and livestock.
- Long construction period and long construction hours.
- Health effect from electromagnetic fields and vibration.
- Potential water pollution, flood risk and drainage issues.
- Road safety and traffic impacts during construction and deterioration of road surface.
- Lead to de-population of the area; impacts upon tourism and the local economy, poor job opportunities, and location of accommodation for 400 construction workers.
- Cumulative impacts – piecemeal development, not everything has been included in the assessment.

- Lack of community engagement, incorrect advertising, not long enough to comment on the application.
- Applicants approach to maximising socio economics stated in advance of the planning committee.

4.5 Material considerations raised in support are summarised as follows:

- Site is of strategic importance to the wider transmission and renewable energy network. Renewable energy projects rely on co-ordinated access to grid infrastructure.
- Important in meeting net zero targets
- Substantial economic benefits

4.6 Non-material planning considerations

- Security risk – target for terrorism.
- Decrease in property prices.
- Speculative and no need for the development, prematurity, constraint payments, oversupply of renewable energy generation in the area. Loss in energy from transmitted power over long distances.
- No community benefit.
- Fire risk and capacity of the local fire service.

4.7 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 **Halkirk And District Community Council (Host) objects** to the application. Raises concerns about: the need and business case for the development; industrialisation of a rural area and impacts upon the landscape and quality of life; salami slicing of developments. Its objection is supported by an Annex which outlines other concerns raised by local residents, in which the Community Council supports. This raises: cumulative concerns, health impacts, noise, dust and vibration from construction and traffic and impacts upon the road network including safety. Also concerns relating to fire risk, recreational impacts, flooding, impacts upon ecology, littering and depopulation of the area. Concerned about the areas ability to accommodate workers required to undertake the projects as well as the other schemes in the area. It also raises concerns about the depreciation in house and business values.

5.2 **Caithness West Community Council objects** to the application. Concerned about the scale of the proposal and impacts upon the landscape. Raises doubts in relation to the need for this development. Impacts upon ecology, in terms of wildlife, loss of habitat, the distribution of eco-systems and a reduction in biodiversity, both in insolation and cumulatively. It also raises concerns about the impacts upon residents and businesses, in terms of construction and traffic effects, noise, visual intrusion, health and loss of property values. Concerns also include piecemeal development and consider that there are better locations for the development both in Caithness and upgrading the grid further south.

5.3 **Watten Community Council objects** to the application. Raises concerns about: the scale and visual impact upon the area; noise and impacts upon health for residents,

businesses and livestock; impact on wildlife; no reference on whether there will be any permanent jobs created nor where the workers will be accommodated during the construction with communities having not benefitted from renewable development; and impacts upon the existing roads in terms of capacity and existing damage to the roads surface.

5.4 **Access Officer** does not object to the application. Whilst this is land on which access rights are exercisable, there are no known tracks/paths or current use by the public for recreation or active travel. Outwith the substation compound this is land on which the public may reasonably be able to undertake responsible access rights during the operation of any development. To permit this the double leaf access gates from the A9 shall be provided with a side pedestrian gate to BS5709 with a 1525mm gap opening. This should be secured by condition. If public art space is proposed onsite that may require public parking.

5.5 **Community Wealth Building Team** confirmed that it will be contacting the applicant regarding the Highland Social Value Charter.

5.6 **Contaminated Land Team** does not object to the application. Noting the contents of the ground investigation report submitted with the application (EIAR Appendix 12.4), it considers that there is still potential for contamination from the adjacent quarry and request a condition to secure a scheme to deal with potential contamination. As layers of peat are identified across the site there may be an issue in terms of ground gas generation and migration which should be given due consideration within the design of any enclosed structures.

5.7 **Ecology Team Objects** to the application on the grounds of a lack of information. Further information was requested in relation to biodiversity enhancement, habitat management (including target habitat for waders), peatland restoration and a survey in relation to hen harrier winter roosts and ornithological disturbance during blasting. In response the applicant provided further clarification in relation to several of the points raised. The Ecology Team are content with most of the information and request conditions securing a Bird Protection Plan and a Habitat Management Plan. However, it still requests that further information relating to the provision of the offsite biodiversity enhancement measures and peatland restoration should be submitted in advance of determination.

5.8 **Environmental Health Team** does not object to the application. It is unlikely to result in a breach of legislation otherwise enforced by Environmental Health. There is however the potential for adverse impact on amenity of neighbouring residents and recommend several planning conditions, relating to both the construction and operational phases of the development. These conditions relate to securing a Construction Noise Management Plan; working hours; imposing a construction noise limit of 55dB; securing a dust mitigation scheme; and requirements for blasting if deemed significant. In relation to operational noise, the applicant has agreed to its recommended conditions controlling noise levels and shall not exceed current background levels at noise sensitive properties. Consideration should also be given to the likelihood of future development at the site. It would be important that any future expansion of the site in terms of permitted development does not result in increased noise levels.

5.9 **Flood Risk Management Team** does not object to the application, subject to conditions securing a finalised Flood Risk Assessment and a finalised Drainage Impact Assessment. It also confirms that it has no objection to the Riparian Buffer information.

5.10 **Forestry Team Objects** to the application on the grounds of a lack of information, regarding the extent of woodland lost, unclear compensatory planting plans and has questioned the suitability of planting trees on top of the landscaping mounds due to the prevailing weather conditions. Following discussions the Forestry Officer has requested formal confirmation regarding the removal of woodland and whether the bunding within the northern section could be realigned to increase existing woodland retention. This would in turn provide a natural windbreak to assist the establishment of additional planting. In relation to the supplementary information, the Forestry Team confirm its objection to the application.

5.11 **Historic Environment Scotland (HES)** does not object to the application. Whilst not in complete agreement with the applicant's assessment methodology. HES confirm that the proposed development would not have direct physical effects on any assets within its remit and are content that the development would not have adverse effects on the setting of the scheduled monuments in the surrounding area which would warrant its objection.

5.12 **Historic Environment Team (Archaeology)** does not object to the application. A Programme of Archaeological Works will be required, and a Written Scheme of Investigation can be secured by condition.

5.13 **Landscape Officer** does not object to the application. Generally, in agreement with the significance levels attributed to the landscape and visual effects outlined in the applicant Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. However, considers that the mitigation measures proposed need to be further strengthened. In particular, the presentation of the development at its boundary, the use of Public Art as part of the design, further design refinements in terms of the external material palette and increased screening or other mitigation as experienced from the area around VP6.

5.14 **Transport Planning** does not object to the application, subject to the recommended conditions. It raises concerns in relation to the methodology used in the assessment, for instance the traffic data not being used for the B874 or any traffic surveys being carried out in relation to the B870, U1300, U1308 and the U1782 which have also been shown within the Study Area and identified as construction traffic routes to quarries on EIAR Figure 11.1. It also raises concerns in relation to the cumulative assessment in relation to the A882. Transport Planning agree that there will be a major impact on the community of Watten and that the Construction Traffic Management Plan will need to include specific measures to ensure the safety of residents in Watten. Concerns are also raised in relation to the increase in HGVs on the A882, as the road is not capable of withstanding any additional loadings over and above the current volume of HGVs, especially over such a long construction period. The same risks could also apply to the B870, B874, U1782, U1300 and the U1308 however, there is insufficient information in the TA and the draft CTMP to confirm with certainty exactly which roads will be construction routes.

Transport Planning request that further clarification is required regarding the construction traffic routes serving bulk suppliers and quarries and the impact on any Highland Council Roads and this should be secured by condition. In addition, a Road Mitigation Schedule of Works is required which requires improvement to the A882 and B874 and any other roads where there will be a 10% increase in HGVs and set out the programme of works and timeline for delivery. In addition, an abnormal loads route, Section 96 agreement and a finalised CTMP will be required. Appropriate community liaison is also required and should be secured by condition.

5.15 **NatureScot** does not object to the application. Advises that although there are natural heritage interests of international and national importance near the site, these will not be adversely affected by the proposal. However, it advises that the Planning Authority is required to carry out an appropriate assessment in relation to the Caithness Lochs Special Protection Area (SPA), but NatureScot conclude that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the site. In relation, to the River Thurso Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SAC and SPA, NatureScot advise that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on any qualifying interests of the following sites, and an appropriate assessment is not required. It also considers that there will be no adverse effect on the Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSIs) that underpin the designations of the Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SAC and SPA and are within 10 km of the proposed development. Also confirms that the site is not hydrologically connected to the Flow Country World Heritage Site (WHS) so there will be no impact on the blanket bog within the WHS. In relation to the fossil interests at Banniskirk Quarry SSSI, it advises that these will not be affected by the proposal.

5.16 **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service** did not respond to the consultation.

5.17 **Scottish Water** does not object to the application. Confirms there are no Scottish Water drinking water catchments or water abstraction sources, which are designated as Drinking Water Protected Areas under the Water Framework Directive, in the area that may be affected by the proposed development.

5.18 **SEPA** does not object to the application, subject to conditions securing: further details of the proposed watercourse crossings; detailed designs for the watercourse diversions including a hydrological assessment; detailed hydrological modelling to quantify the impacts of flood risk to the proposed development and downstream; and a site plan detailed the flood risk area and any areas of land raising (no land raising shall take place within the floodplain). A 10m buffer from all remaining un-diverted watercourses should be secured by a condition, apart from the Burn of Halkirk where a 15m buffer minimum will be required. It agrees with the applicant's assessment regarding GWDTEs and accept the loss of these locally common habitats in this instance.

5.19 **Transport Scotland** does not object to the application, subject to conditions securing a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and upgrading of the access onto the A9 including visibility splays. In addition, an abnormal loads route must be submitted and prior to any movements, any signage or temporary traffic control measures or accommodation measures, including the removal of street furniture, junction widening and traffic management must be approved by Transport Scotland and implemented in full. It advises that there shall be no drainage

connections to the trunk road drainage system and there are several advisory notes which the applicant will be made aware of.

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, and other material policy considerations which are relevant to the assessment of the application.

7. PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.1 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. This means that the application requires to be assessed against all policies of the Development Plan relevant to the application, all national and local policy guidance and all other material considerations relevant to the application.

Planning Considerations

7.2 The key considerations in this case are:

a) Development Plan and Other Planning Policy
b) Energy and Economic Impact
c) Layout and Design Evolution
d) Landscape and Visual Impact
e) Construction Impact
f) Roads, Transport and Access
g) Noise
h) Natural Heritage, including Ornithology and Forestry
i) Water, Flood Risk, Drainage and Soils
j) Built and Cultural Heritage
k) Other Material Considerations

Development plan and Other Planning Policy

7.3 The Development Plan comprises National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP), the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (2018) (CaSPlan) and various Supplementary Guidance documents associated with these Local Development Plans.

7.4 Appendix 2 of this report provides an assessment of compliance with the Development Plan / Other Planning Policy.

7.5 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.

7.6 At a regional level, the principal Highland-wide Local Development Plan policy is 69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure. This policy offers support for electricity transmission infrastructure, having regard to their level of strategic significance in transmitting electricity from areas of generation to areas of consumption. Such support is subject to the proposals not having an unacceptable significant impact on the environment. As the development would help to reinforce the onshore transmission infrastructure and facilitate an increasing proportion of electricity generation from renewable sources, the principle of the development receives support under HwLDP Policy 69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure, subject to site selection, design and overcoming any unacceptable significant environmental effects.

Energy and Economic Impact

7.7 The development of grid infrastructure has been identified as a national priority together with investment in renewable energy. In 2022, the National Grid issued the Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design (HND). This outlined the electricity transmission infrastructure requirements needed to meet the demand from the anticipated growth in onshore and offshore renewable energy sources. This is required to meet the UK and Scottish Government's 2030 offshore wind targets of 50 GW and 11 GW respectively. As part of this pathway to 2030, the HND identified the need to increase the power transfer capacity of the onshore corridor from Spittal to Beauly. A new 400 kV connection is needed between these locations to enable the significant power transfer capability required to take power from onshore and offshore renewable generation which is proposed to connect at onshore locations on the East Coast of Scotland and transport it to areas of demand.

7.8 The advancement of substation projects as presented within this application are not only beneficial in strengthening the robustness of the country's grid network, but they will also result in further job and investment opportunities through the development of associated supply chains. EIAR Chapter 14 outlines the expected effects on the local economy. Over the construction period, the applicant anticipates that the proposed development will generate 2,414 Person Years of Employment (PYE's) in the Highlands (976 direct FTE, 579 indirect FTE and 860 induced FTE) and a further 9,657 PYE's across Scotland (3,903 direct, 2,316 indirect and 3,439 induced). The EIA reports that overall, this would equate to £125.3 million in total (direct, indirect and induced) Gross Value Added (GVA) to the highlands and £501 million to Scotland. Thereafter, post construction, the proposed development is expected to support 12 FTE jobs in the Highlands (4 direct, 1 indirect and 7 induced), with a total GVA per annum of £618,619. In Scotland this is likely to be 22 FTE jobs (6 direct, 7 indirect and 9 induced) with a total GVA per annum of £854,284. As such the project could offer investment / opportunities to the Highland and Scottish economy including businesses ranging across construction, haulage, electrical and service sectors.

7.9 Public representations have raised concerns relating to amenity impacts on the local area and economic impacts associated with the development having a detrimental

impact upon tourism. There is also likely to be adverse effects during the construction phase, particularly in relation to construction traffic, this can be managed by way of a condition seeking the provision of a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and Access Management Plan. The provision of a Community Liaison Group will also be secured by condition. Many of the impacts will be temporary in nature and managed through the mitigation measures identified in this report on handling. As such the applicant contends that there will be no long-term detrimental effect on the tourism industry.

7.10 Scenery and the natural environment within the Highlands are important factors for many visitors when choosing the area as a holiday destination. As reported in the landscape and visual section of this report, the proposed development would give rise to some significant effects, however, these have been limited through the design evolution process and the suggested mitigation measures. Containing views from the A9 which is considered to be the main road-based route for tourists has been an influential factor in the design process. Long-term the development is not anticipated to have adverse impact on the local economy, particularly tourism.

7.11 Given the requirement of NPF4 Policy 11c) for development proposals to only be supported where they maximise socio-economic impacts, in July 2023 the applicant launched a consultation on plans for their first ever community benefit fund. This is a £10 million fund which will see SSEN working with communities across the north of Scotland to channel funds into local projects. Following the Autumn Statement on 22 November 2023, the UK's Department for Energy Security and Net Zero also published its "Response to the consultation on Community Benefits for Electricity Transmission Network Infrastructure". In light of this, the applicant is expecting further community benefit funding opportunities, in the region of £100 million to be available for local projects. Community benefit however remains a non-material planning consideration and therefore the existence or absence of this fund can be given no weight in the decision-making process.

7.12 A further recent announcement was made by the UK Government on 10 March 2025 that the Planning and Infrastructure Bill will deliver an energy discount scheme for homes close to overhead transmission pylons required to deliver Clean Power 2030, with this scheme to be rolled out across England, Wales and Scotland. The statement explains that communities could get £200,000 worth of funding per km of new high voltage overhead line and £530,000 per substation. As the bill is at an early stage and is making its way through Parliamment, it remains unclear if this detail will remain unaltered or what the scheme eligibility / commencement cut-off date will be. The applicant has however confirmed that this project will be eligible. Again, although this emerging scheme may deliver socio-economic benefits, it is also to be regarded as another form of community benefit which at the present time should be given no weight in the decision-making process. However, the Council's Community Wealth Building Team have confirmed that it will be liaising with the applicant regarding the Highland Social Value Charter.

7.13 Given the requirement of NPF4 Policy 11c) for development proposals to only be supported where they maximise socio-economic impacts, it is recommended that a planning condition is used which requires the applicant to commit to the delivery of the socio-economic benefits of the scheme in line with those set out within the EIA.

Landscape and Visual Impact

7.14 The applicant has presented a number of submissions to illustrate the landscape and visual impacts of the development. The applicant's assessment is outlined in EIAR Chapter 8 and focusses on a 4km study area. The assessment was informed by desk study and site-based review, analysis of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), aerial photography, mapping and the application of professional judgement. The application is supported by photomontages which are provided from five of the seven viewpoints which were agreed with the Council's landscape officer at the scoping stage (EIAR Fig 8.1). In addition, as part of the cultural heritage assessment (EIAR Chapter 10) the applicant also produced photomontages from Achanarras hut circle (CHVP2), Broch 800m NE of Achies (CHVP3), Achies Broch (CHVP4) all of which are located between 1.24km – 2.59km to the south-west of the application site. The photomontages show the development year 1 after construction and year 12 to show the establishment of onsite planting.

7.15 The viewpoints are representative of a range of receptors including residents at settlements, recreational users of the outdoors and road users. Some discrepancies are highlighted by officers with the photomontages:

- VP5 (from the A9) - the photomontage depicts the removal of the stone wall along the site's western boundary; this is incorrect, and the applicant has confirmed that this wall will be retained;
- Incorrect distances from the development to the VPs are referenced in the EIAR Table 8.4; the correct distance are reported below; and

VP No	Location	Correct Distance (km)
1	Core path C06.05east edge of Halkirk	2.4
2	Halkirk	2.6
3	Minor road near Yellow Moss	2.1
4	Achanarras Hill (Quarry) Core path CA06.07	1.8
5	A9 alongside Project. Achalone	0.0
6	Minor road accessing Banniskirk Mains	0.7
7	A882 between crossing of railway and Clayock	2.1

- Public representations also consider that more photomontages should have been produced and questioned the location of VP5 as its too close to the site to gauge scale.

Whilst these comments are acknowledged, it must also be noted that photomontages are just one tool used by the Planning Authority in the assessment of landscape and visual impact.

7.16 The aim of the LVIA is to identify, predict and evaluate potential significant effects arising from the proposal. The methodology for the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment generally follows that set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3). As detailed in EIAR Chapter 8, assessing significance of the effect was classified by professional consideration requires consideration of the nature of the receptors (referred to as sensitivity of the receptor) and the nature of the effect on those receptors (referred to as magnitude of effect). GLVIA3 states that sensitivity, should be assessed in terms of the

susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change proposed, and the value attached to the receptor.

7.17 The sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors is described as high, medium – high, medium, medium – low, or low depending on criteria (EIAR Chapter 8, Table 8.2). The magnitude of change is described as high, medium, low, or negligible, with reference to the extent to which changes in landscape characteristics and views are likely to be discernible. This involves assessing the size and scale of the change, the geographical extent over which it will be experienced, and the duration and reversibility of the change. The evaluations of sensitivity and magnitude are considered together to provide an overall level (significance) of effect (EIAR Chapter 8, Table 8.2). The level of effect is identified as negligible, minor, moderate, or major, with moderate and major effects being considered as significant effects. The Planning Authority agrees that moderate impacts can be significant but this needs to be considered on a viewpoint by viewpoint basis.

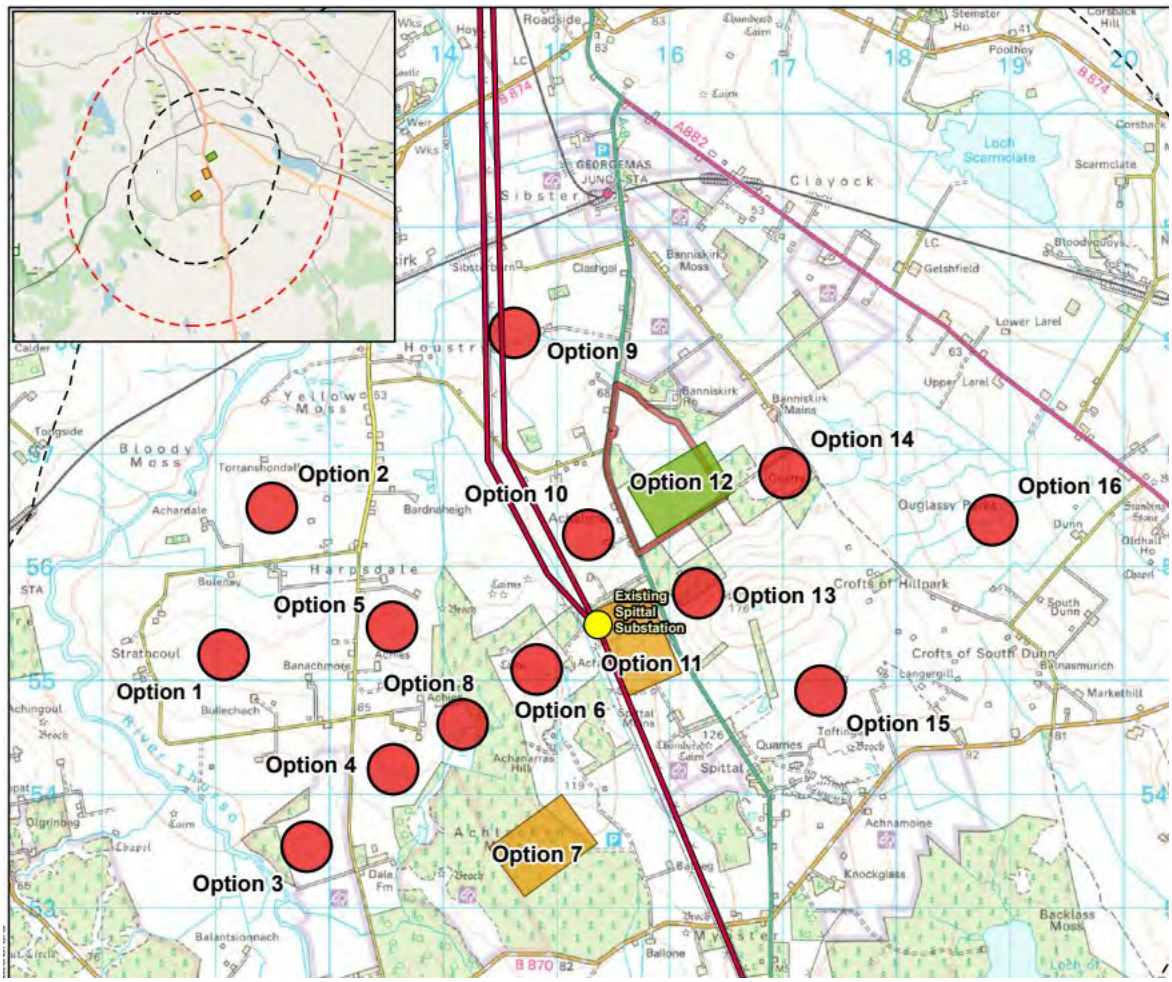
7.18 In the assessment of each viewpoint, the applicant has come to a judgement as to whether the effect is significant or not. In assessing visual impacts in particular, it is important to consider that the viewpoint is representative of particular receptors, i.e. people who would be at that point and experiencing that view of the landscape not just in that single view but in taking in their entire surroundings.

7.19 The EIAR also provides a cumulative assessment, which includes the following projects within the future baseline, which are at various stages within the planning process: West of Orkney Windfarm Grid Connection; Ayre Windfarm Grid Connection; Watten Wind Farm; Spittal to Peterhead HVDC (underground cable (UGC) into Banniskirk); cable connecting Banniskirk to existing Spittal Substation; and the Spittal to Beauly Overhead Line (OHL). Other applications for battery energy storage facilities have also emerged since the Banniskirk substation application has been made. It is however accepted practice for the most recent application made to consider the cumulative baseline of all planned development, at application stage or consented, when determining that application.

Layout and Design Evolution

7.20 The site selection process is outlined in EIAR Chapter 4 and the Design and Access Statement. The applicant states that combining the HVDC and the 400 kV substation at a single site is advantageous in terms of construction, minimising disruption and avoiding the need to development multiple greenfield sites. Moreover, the applicant argues that by having this infrastructure in one location, visual screening and mitigation measures can be more concentrated within and around that one site. In terms of site selection, the initial screening process looked at sixteen different sites, which are shown on the following plan (taken from EIAR Fig 1.2).

7.21



7.22 Based on several environmental and technical factors the 16 sites were then refined down to three (site options 7, 11 and 12):

- Site Option 7 - located 1.2 km southwest of the existing Spittal substation, partially within an area of coniferous woodland, and in close proximity to Achanarras Quarry SSSI and Conservation Review area.
- Site Option 11 - located adjacent to the existing Spittal Substation, running parallel to the A9, slightly north of Spittal, 90 m north of St Magnus Church and Burial Ground, Scheduled Monument.
- Site Option 12 - the application site.

The EIA reports that in environmental terms, site 7 has the potential for more significant landscape and visual impact. Site 11 was marginally preferable over site 12 due to the landscape and visual effects, however, site 11 would have had a greater impact upon cultural heritage. In terms of engineering, site 12 was preferred as it provided better connection and a greater potential for future connections. In terms of construction costs, the EIA reports that this would be similar across the three options, but site 12 would require less excavation work and peat and forestry removal. Overall, site option 12 was taken forward as it provides sufficient access from the A9 Trunk Road and good corridor availability for the anticipated transmission connections.

7.23 Although the site is not located within any landscape designations, it is situated within a relatively open landscape. A key visual concern pertinent to the determination of this application is the site's proximity and exposure in views obtained from the A9. Whilst acknowledging that the design of the development is largely driven by technical and safety aspects of the transmission infrastructure, officers raised several key design points at the pre-application stage, and subsequent design workshops. This included the scale of the development and its potential visual impacts and the need for comprehensive landscaping woodland retention and long term management. Consequentially, as detailed below the design of the development has evolved since the pre-application stage, with the applicant accommodating a number of mitigation measures that are key the developments acceptability.

7.24 As a key route for both locals and tourists a central design principle has been to reduce the visual impact of the proposal from the A9. In addition, the cumulative aspects of existing and forthcoming transmission infrastructure projects was also an important factor in addressing this site. Not only in cumulative visual terms but also to ensure that any landscape mitigation measures identified and secured would not be undermined by subsequent proposals. At pre-application stage, officers made the following recommendations:

- The development (including any construction compound) should be set back from the A9 as far as practical. If this was not technically feasible then the development should be set within lowered ground levels with landscaping to screen views;
- The retention of onsite woodland (as far as practical) and that consideration should be given to obtaining control over of the surrounding commercial woodland to ensure the visual reduction and integration of the proposal; and
- If the layout resulted in a significant amount of roadside land raising / bunding, then there maybe scope for the introduction of areas of visual interest. The incorporation of public art which perhaps portrayed the history and character of energy's influence on this part of Highland.

In relation to design and scale, officers recommended that the massing and height of the proposed development should be reduced as much as possible. The orientation of the building and colour should be carefully considered, with rounded rooflines and avoid hard edges with the buildings. Boundary treatments should also be carefully considered.

7.25 In response to the pre-application advice:

- The platforms were moved further to the east, away from the A9 and there was a reduction in the length and width of the AC platform. The synchronous compensator buildings have also been moved further east from the A9. The applicant contends that any further movement to the east is constrained by the site's proximity to the existing quarry and the Site of Special Scientific Interest (a concern raised by NatureScot at the pre-application stage) and the need to retain infrastructure corridors for future cabling and overhead lines;
- Removal of the second permanent access from the A9 and moving the development further to the east has allowed for screening improvements via

the proposed earthwork mounds and planting along the A9 boundary and within the main part of the site;

- In relation to land level changes, the application has sought to take advantage of and minimise changes to the existing ground form and level and the site has been designed to have a cut / fill balance. On this point officers appreciate that a balance needs to be struck between lowering the ground level to minimise visual impacts and ensuring that material generated can be utilised on site, thus avoiding the need for additional vehicle movements;
- In relation to scale, the applicant states that significant modifications have been made to the overall AC substation layout to reduce massing and height of the proposed development;
- Building sizes have been minimised as far as reasonably practicable given the need to adhere to design standards and electrical safety clearances. The roof colour has been amended to green; and
- A curved roofing was considered but not implemented due to the increase in overall massing of the proposed development, as well as an increase in safety risk due to an increase in working at height.

7.26 Although the changes made since the pre-application stage are acknowledged and welcomed, further concerns were raised by officers and consultees during the course of the application. In particular, the Councils Landscape Officer, whilst not objecting considered that more could be done in terms of the presentation of the development at its boundary with the A9, the use of public art, choice of external materials and the improvement of screening. The Forestry Officer objects to the proposals and considers more could be done in relation to on-site tree retention and raises concerns about the planting strategy. In response the SEI submission includes further information regarding on-site tree retention, wider woodland management, amendments to the landscaping strategy and a commitment to including public art. These matters are detailed further in the following sections of this report.

Landscape Impact

7.27 There are several aspects to consider in determining whether this development represents an acceptable degree of impact on landscape character, including:

- impacts on the Landscape Character Type (LCT) as a whole and on neighbouring LCTs; and
- direct impacts on landscape designations; and
- impacts on surrounding landscape designations.

7.28 No landscape designations are located within the 4km study area and are not considered further in the applicant's assessment. The EIAR does include an assessment of the Landscape Character Types (LCTs). Landscape character is the distinctive and identifiable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape and the way that this pattern is perceived. Effects on landscape character can occur both on the site, where the pattern of elements that characterise, the landscape would be directly altered by the addition of the proposed development, and outwith the site in the wider study area, where visibility of the proposed development may alter the way in which this pattern of elements is perceived.

7.29 The development is located within landscape character type (LCT) 143 Farmed Lowland Plain. There is also an area of LCT 134 Sweeping Moorland and Flows to the south and southwest of the study area (EIAR Fig. 8.3). The Farmed Lowland Plain LCT forms a broad and relatively low-lying plain bounded by the sea and expansive Sweeping Moorland and Flows. As outlined in the EIAR the key characteristics of this LCT in relation to this development are:

- A generally open, low-lying plain, gently undulating to form shallow broad valleys, which are often filled with lochs and mosses, and subtle low ridges;
- Occasional smooth hills rise above the more low-lying plain forming local landmarks (such as Spittal Hill);
- Agriculture the predominant land cover;
- Distinctive Caithness flagstone fences in some parts, creating low, sharp edges to fields;
- Sparse woodland, mainly comprising small angular coniferous plantations planted for shelter on farms;
- A number of historic environment features, including conspicuous castles, Baronial mansions and tall 'Lairds' houses, usually with broadleaf shelter woods planted around them;
- Roads reinforce the settlement pattern, often following the field and property boundaries, running straight and then swinging around sharp corners;
- Small groups of large wind turbines sited on some of the low ridges and hills and prominent visibility of larger wind farms in adjacent LCTs; and
- Extensive views due to the openness of the landscape, and the clarity of northern air and light.

7.30 In terms of landscape value, the applicant's assessment for this LCT reports it as being of medium-low value. This is in part due to its vast and exposed character, settled nature with little natural vegetation, lack of landscape designation and being typical of the area. It also notes that the evidence of disturbance and the placing of material above ground. This imparts a partially brownfield appearance although this is not widely visible. The A9 which passes the site provides an urban influence and there is clear intervisibility between the two. However, the EIAR states that despite this, the local character is predominantly rural.

7.31 The Councils Landscape Officer whilst not objecting to the application, disputes several of these assertions. For instance, the assessment fails to appreciate that in contrast with most of the country, farmland is relatively unusual within Highland. There is also limited broad and continuous farmland with most farmed ground being limited to coastal strips and narrower strath floors. That said, there is a lot of arable farmland in the north and east Caithness as well. The Landscape Officer also contends that limited weight should be given to the applicants' claims that the value of the landscape is limited by a partial brownfield quality to the site, as this is not perceptible from outwith the site. Also, that the A9 provides an urban influence; instead, it is argued that roads are not intrinsically urban and the A9 at this point lacks such characteristics, such as street lighting, pavements or 30mph speed limits which might be expected from such a description. The presence of a road should not be counted as reducing the value of a farming landscape. Overall, the Landscape Officer considers that the landscape value should be medium, although accepts that this is unlikely to lead to a higher assessment of susceptibility.

7.32 The Landscape Officer considers that the local landscape character of the site, particularly as perceived from the A9, is of smooth, gently rising ground, with some established woodland, behind dry stone Caithness flag walls, and demonstrates the dominating horizontal emphasis which is characteristic of the LCT. The development would have effects on the wider landscape character, which would take the form of a loss of open farmland and some woodland, being replaced by a large complex of buildings and equipment, not of a farming character. However, the development would be recognisable to most as being related to electricity transmission and understood to be a further part of the energy economy which has introduced wind farms to Caithness, though it is noted that most consented wind farms are outwith the Farmed Lowland Plain landscape. In addition, when seen from distance, the development would be seen to have some diminishing effects on Spittal Hill as a legible local landmark. In addition, the proposed bunding along the A9 will also bring changes to the immediate area, which will be exacerbated if the characteristic stone wall was removed (see VP5).

7.33 Overall, the EIA reports moderate (significant) effects on the LCT locally, but for the LCT as a whole the effects are considered to be minor (not significant). The Landscape Officer does not dispute the overall findings and considers that the LCT as a whole would suffer only limited changes, and these would not be significant. It is also likely that effects would increase during some hours of darkness due to site lighting. The Landscape Officer also notes that there appears to be no engagement with the incorporation of public art which was highlighted at the pre-application stage. Officers have raised these matters and in response the applicant has confirmed that the stone wall along the A9 will remain and that provision for public art will be made. These matters can be secured by condition as can a lighting scheme to minimise effects during the hours of darkness.

Visual Impact

7.34 A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) is included in the assessment (EIAR Fig 8.1). The ZTV identifies extensive theoretical visibility to the west, northwest and north within the study area which echoes the flat nature of the landscape and the downward slope of the site towards the north. Views to the east, southeast, south and southwest are interrupted by rising ground particularly at Spittal Hill and Achanarras Hill. This mapping does not account for any intervening woodland such as the blocks located outwith the site's boundary to the south. It also doesn't consider the effects of the proposed bunding and planting scheme along the site's boundary with the A9 and internal bunds within the site, thus reflecting the worst case scenario.

7.35 An additional ZTV has been included within the SEI submission. This demonstrates the differences between the higher elements (26m) of the HVDC building, and the lower ground infrastructure (4m above platform height) are isolated on ZTV 1. This shows that visibility of the lower and higher parts of the development is largely to the north and west, and the northern slopes around Spittal Hill to the south. Due to the existing higher terrain, from the north-east of the site only the taller elements of the development will be theoretically visible with the lower ground infrastructure largely obscured. Beyond Banniskirk Mains to the east and further to the south, all elements of the development are obscured due to the existing topography. Again, this ZTV

does not include any mitigation in the form of bunding, planting or the existing woodland blocks.

7.36 As detailed above and summarised by the applicant in the following table, seven VPs were included within the EIAR, with photomontages at VPs 2-6.

VP No	Location	Reason for VP Selection	Distance (km)
1	Core path C06.05east edge of Halkirk	Medium distance view from core path at edge of Halkirk village. Representative of views for recreational and nearby residential receptors.	2.4
2	Halkirk	Medium distance view from southern edge of Halkirk village. Representative of views for nearby residential receptors.	2.6
3	Minor road near Yellow Moss	Medium distance view from minor road to west of project site. Representative of views for residential receptors and road users along this minor road.	2.1
4	Achanarras Hill (Quarry) Core path CA06.07	Medium distance view from near core path which provides access to Achanarras Hill and quarry. View is representative of recreational receptors in the vicinity of the core path.	1.8
5	A9 alongside Project. Achalone	Very close view from A9 and nearby residential property. Representative of views for residential receptors and road used by tourists.	0.0
6	Minor road accessing Banniskirk Mains	Representative of close views for residential receptors in the vicinity of this location.	0.7
7	A882 between crossing of railway and Clayock	Representative of medium distance views for road users to the north traveling south along this road as well as residential receptors in the vicinity.	2.1

7.37 The EIAR identifies the following residual effects during the operational stage:

- Major (significant) effects at VP5 and VP6 at year 1. For VP5, the residual visual effect decreases at year 12 following the establishment of landscaping / planting mitigation, resulting in a moderate, albeit still significant effect;
- Moderate (significant) effects at VPs 1, 2 and 3 at year 1 and year 12;
- Minor (not significant) effects at VP4 at year 1 and 12; and
- Negligible (not significant) effects at VP7 at year 1 and year 12.

Officers are generally in agreement with the overall significance of effect rating attributed to the VPs. The Councils Landscape Officer also does not substantively contest the findings and has no objection to the application. However, as detailed below, it was considered that more mitigation could be beneficial, particularly in relation to the presentation of the development at its boundary with the A9, tree retention, the use of public art, improvements to the external material palette and further screening from the east.

7.38 **Road Receptors:** Represented by VPs 3, 5 and 7. The bare earth ZTV indicates that theoretical visibility is afforded from the B874 to the west but stops south of the road to Upper Achies. From the A882, theoretical views are available within the northern part of the study area, towards Clayock this reduces to visibility of the larger

elements, with no theoretical views available southeast of Clayock. No views will be available from the B870 in the southern part of the study area.

7.39 As noted above, a key visual concern pertinent to the determination of this application is the site's proximity and exposure in views obtained from along the A9. When approaching the site from the south, views from the A9 are fragmentary and reduced due the alignment of the road and elevated landform. No theoretical views are available from the A9 to the south of Spittal substation. As you get closer to the site the existing commercial woodland block adjacent to the sites southern boundary helps to dissipate direct views. However, beyond this, the site is very open and without mitigation the full scale of the proposal would be evident. When travelling from the north, the bare earth ZTV indicates that views are likely for the full length of the road within the study area. Although, in reality, the alignment of the road and the existing roadside vegetation punctuates views towards the site. However, beyond the existing vegetation to the north and adjacent to the application boundary views of the site open up and without mitigation the full scale of the proposal would be visible. For this reason, multiple layers of landscape mitigation are proposed, with the intention of reducing the visual effects of the development during both construction and operation.

7.40 **Proposed Mitigation from the A9:** The applicant is proposing to create landscaped bunds primarily along the alignment of the A9, western site boundary. The material needed to create the bunds will be won onsite through the required groundworks and will avoid further traffic movements if material was required to be removed from site. Other more substantial sized mounds would be located to the north and south of the site which would assist in screening the converter station from users of the A9 travelling north and the substation from users of the A9 travelling south. The additional internal bunding will also help to minimise views if there is a break in the bund for instance to create the site access or the retention of corridors for underground cabling.

7.41 The LVIA states that the bunds will vary in height from 4 to 7m, with the lesser height being in areas closer to the existing adjacent residential property (Revelstone). However, the supporting plans indicate that the bunds will be between 3-5m in height. In terms of width of the mounds the LVIA states that this will vary but are likely to be approximately 30m which will enable a more naturalistic shallow slope to face the A9. The final profile and scale of the bunds can be secured by condition. In order to maximise the screening effects, it is proposed to plant on all the mounds. This would be a mix of native woodland trees and scrub with some evergreen species and grassland habitat. All screen planting is proposed to be protected with deer fencing.

7.42 The effect of the mitigation strategy (showing year 1 and planting growth after year 12) is represented by VP5 (A9). The bund will mitigate near views of the proposal from the A9, but the photomontage shows the removal of the existing stone wall, with planting only on top of the bunds. The Landscape Officer notes that the combined effect of the sloping ground and the replacement of the stone wall with fencing, create a roadside environment which is not in keeping with the current landscape character. The proposed edge treatment lacks character and will reduce the sense of place, with both the landform and boundary demarcation being out of keeping with the character locally. The proposed boundary would also be more

successful if the tree and shrub planting came further down the slope on the road-ward face, such that as the planting matures the landform itself is de-emphasised. The Landscape Officer also considers that public art should be incorporated, noting that well designed and implemented works incorporated within the stone walling and on grassed, road-ward faces of the bunds, could be used to good effects to elevate the boundary and bring a positive element to the design, with something to draw attention to itself, rather than only away from the development.

7.43 There are also well-established areas of young broadleaved trees along the western edge of the plantation, adjacent to the A9, as well as Sitka spruce. These trees to be removed to facilitate the development. The Council's Forestry Officer objects to the application and recommends that the proposed bunding is redesigned to retain these areas of broadleaf woodland. They also raise some concern about the proposed landscaping, which includes tree planting on top of exposed bunding. The Landscape Officer also notes that established tree planting is relatively rare in the area, and it would be beneficial if even part of the existing tree planting were to be retailed to minimise the change that is brought to the view.

7.44 In response to the above concerns, officers requested further information in relation to the proposed landscaping strategy and additional ZTVs to demonstrate the screening effect if planting on the bunds failed to establish. Matters of tree retention, including woodland outwith the red line boundary, public art and boundary treatments were also raised. Further direction was also sought regarding the likely location of underground cable connections into the proposed substation, to ensure that future developments would not have a prejudicial impact upon any proposed landscaping and tree planting.

7.45 The applicant has responded to the points raised and further details have been included in the SEI submission. An updated landscaping plan (drawing 0697221-DR-LAN-101, which supersedes Figure 8.5 'Landscape Mitigation' of EIA Volume 3 and an updated site plan drawing reference: BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-XX-PLN-C-0007) have been submitted. This details additional sections of landscaping screening and bunding within both the northern and southern sections of the site.

7.46 To illustrate the effect of the proposed landscape mitigation in the form of the landscaped bunds and planting along the A9, two further ZTVs have been submitted. EIAR SEI, ZTV 2 illustrates the potential visibility of the lower ground site infrastructure once the proposed landscape mounds and tree planting is implemented and matured. This shows the effectiveness of the bunding with planting in restricting views from the A9 and for 200m to the west. This would also apply for a long section of the A9 to the north of the site. EIAR SEI ZTV 3 demonstrates the effect of just incorporating earthen bunds and no additional planting. This shows that bunds alone would not be as effective as whilst there would be screening along the A9, there is potential that top sections of the 4m high perimeter fence would still be visible above the bunds.

7.47 In relation to the suitability of the proposed planting scheme the applicant disagrees with the Forestry Officers concerns about planting on top of bunds within this location. Wind resistant scrub, which would act as a natural wind break, could be introduced on the roadside and top of the bunds, with larger specimen trees planted on the leeward side. Whilst the Forestry Team maintains its objection, this will

address the Landscape Officer comments that planting shrub planting should come further down the road-ward facing slopes, so that as the planting matures the landform itself is de-emphasised. The applicant has also provided a plan (drawing BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-XX-PLN-C-0009) which shows the known anticipated connection routing which will tie into the proposed development once operational. This illustrates that in principle, the cumulative underground connection points can be facilitated without fundamentally affecting the proposed landscaping / planting strategy. Full details of the earthworks, planting, phasing and maintenance can be secured by condition.

7.48 Officers also raised the matter of offsite woodland retention next to the A9, in order to help to reduce the visual effects of the development. This matter was raised at the pre-application stage and reiterated during the course of this application. This is pertinent as a cable route is likely within the south-western corner of the site which prohibits the use bunding in this location. In response, internal bunding within the southern part of the site has been strengthened and the applicant has now managed to secure control over a strip of plantation woodland which is located adjacent to the site's southern boundary (400m x 50m strip – drawing BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-XX-PLN-C-0010 REV P01). This will assist in reducing views when travelling on the A9 towards the site from the south. The applicant will retain control over this woodland strip for a period of 20 years. This will assist in screening the development while the proposed substation's own onsite landscape planting establishes and matures. This can be secured by a Section 75 legal agreement. Beyond the 20 years, this commercial woodland block will be felled but is expected to be re-stocked following Scottish Government's policy on control of woodland removal.

7.49 In relation to the existing trees within the northern part of the site, it was hoped that these trees could be retained and the landscaping bunds created beyond this area. This would soften the proposed earthworks when viewed from the A9 but also create a natural windbreak which would assist with the establishment of new planting. In re-assessing the feasibility of retaining the woodland the applicant has submitted drawing BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-XX-PLN-C-008) which clearly shows the existing woodland in relation to the proposed development. The applicant has confirmed that due to technical constraints associated with the drainage design, health and safety risks, and regulatory compliance obligations under the Construction, Design and Management Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015), retention is not considered feasible in this instance. Whilst this is disappointing, the applicant is committed to providing compensatory planting, which will ensure that there is no loss of woodland, these can be secured by condition.

7.50 The applicant has also confirmed that the stone wall along the A9 will remain and that provision for public art will be made, both matters will be secured by condition. In relation to phasing and the timing for the establishment of the western bund, the applicant states that it can only be established as the very first element of the site construction if material is brought in from offsite, which would significantly increase the traffic movements needed and overall construction programme. Under the current proposals, the bund is programmed to be developed first, but only after the establishment of a construction compound as the material used to create the bund will come from the earth works required to excavate and create the proposed substation platforms. The applicant considers this to be a practical solution and the

establishment of the western bunding early on in the construction process will allow suitable screening mitigation for the construction of the rest of the proposal. Officers consider it important to secure bunding at the earliest opportunity and those elements providing the greatest visual screening of the construction compound should be prioritised. As such a detailed phasing strategy together with a cut and fill schedule will be conditioned to maximise the roadside bunding early on.

7.51 **Residential Receptors**: Whilst the proposed mitigation outlined above will importantly reduce views when near to the site along the A9 or for nearby residential receptors, it is accepted that the development will be apparent from VPs further out, as evidenced by receptors at VPs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 which are representative of residential properties and recreational users.

7.52 The bare earth ZTV indicates that the main visibility from residential properties will be from the north and west including the low-lying settlement of Halkirk. However, due to the effects of landform, no visibility will be afforded from Spittal in the south and from around Clayock to the southeast. Existing roadside trees and pockets of woodland within the study area will fragment visibility further. Properties to the west along the minor road near Yellow Moss (VP3) extending as far as Harpsdale are likely to have visibility of the proposal. However, the EIAR contends that many of the properties have boundary vegetation or shelterbelts which provide a degree of screening of the site, not reflected in the ZTV modelling. Although, properties to the south of Halkirk do not appear to benefit from such enclosure and have clearer views to the south. That said, from VPs 1, 2 and 3, (as seen in photomontages for VP2 and 3) the development is seen against the rising backdrop of Spittal Hill. The effect of the rising land reduces the prominence of the buildings, however, as noted by the Landscape Officer the corollary to that is that the prominence of the hill itself is reduced by the presence of the buildings. It is also noted that the effect of the rising backdrop is not as strong in VP3 as it is in VP2 and instead relies on existing woodland planting.

7.53 In relation to properties to the east, it is acknowledged that near views as illustrated by VP6 (Minor Road accessing Banniskirk Mains, 0.7km to the site) will have direct views of the site. The EIA reports major (significant) effects during the operational period. The overall significance of this effect is not disputed by officers. Mitigation was sought in the form of landscaping or tree planting and was also raised by the Landscape Officer. However, in response the applicant has confirmed that the area to the east was left without bunding to allow for incoming connections to the converter station and substation. As detailed on drawing BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-XX-PLN-C-0009, the Spittal to Peterhead HVDC underground cable approaches from the east as does the Ayre Offshore Wind Farm connection. The applicant also states that bunding over the underground cable raises concerns such as heat dissipation and presents problems with repair and ongoing maintenance. There are also topographical challenges, with the eastern boundary being some 50m lower than the closest property of Banniskirk Mains. This means that bunding would need to be engineered to a significant height and width to have any meaningful effect, increasing its weight and further impacting the cable below.

7.54 Officers accept this explanation, and it must be noted that there are a limited number of public receptors along this minor road. In addition, as indicated by the bare earth ZTV, visibility further to the east and southeast is obscured by existing topography,

which includes a large portion of the main A882 road. In reality, views along the A882 around Clayock and the intersection with the A9 will be further filtered by roadside vegetation and existing woodland planting. This is evidenced from VP7 (A882 between crossing of railway and Clayock, 2.1km to site) and the reason that a photomontage was scoped out of the assessment. However, it is still considered important to ensure that an appropriate lighting scheme is secured by condition, to reduce hours of darkness effects from the development. In addition, the Landscape Officer considers that more could be done in relation to the external material palette to reduce the perception of scale; final details can be secured by condition.

7.55 **Recreational Receptors**: Represented by VPs 1 (core path, edge of Halkirk) and 4 (Achanarras Hill) as they are located on or near a core path. There are also several core paths located within the vicinity of Halkirk including CA06.5 (VP1). As detailed above, from VP1 the development will be seen against the rising land of Spittal Hill which will reduce its visual effect. The EIA reports moderate (significant) effects, officers agree with this assessment. The Landscape Officer is also content with the overall rating but highlights that the development may reduce the simplicity and prominence of Spittal Hill itself as a noted local landmark. In relation to VP4, the EIA reports minor (not significant) effects. However, the assessment notes that whilst some upper parts of the convertor station will be seen crossing the horizon and against a sky backdrop, making it more noticeable, this view is not from the designated core path. From the main route it is noted that direct views of the site are reduced by intervening tree and forestry. Officers accept this assessment, and the Landscape Officer also concurs that the effects from Achanarras Hill will not be significant.

7.56 Representations have raised concerns regarding the landscape and visual impact the proposal will have. However, following pre-application discussions and engagement throughout the assessment of the application, the applicant has taken on board a number of suggested mitigation measures particularly in relation to the A9, in terms of siting, scale and the provision of additional landscaping and off-site woodland retention and management. Further matters can be secured by condition, such as lighting, boundary treatment, external materials and construction phasing. As a result, it is considered that the adverse landscape and visual effects arising from the proposal are acceptable in this case.

Cumulative Effects

7.57 The LVIA also considers the cumulative effects from other developments within the study area. The EIAR includes the following within the future baseline:

- Ayre Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Connection (25/02964/PIP Under consideration). The SEI submission indicates that the underground cable is proposed to connect to Banniskirk substation via the north-east corner of the AC platform.

- West of Orkney Wind Farm - onshore transmission infrastructure (Planning Permission in Principal 23/05353/PIP Granted 18 June 2024). The Banniskirk SEI submission indicates that the underground cable is proposed to connect to Banniskirk substation via the north-west corner of the AC platform. The

proposed substation location would be across the A9 from the Banniskirk Hub.

- The Spittal to Peterhead High Voltage Cable project. The underground cable will be developed under Permitted Development Rights, so a planning application is not required. The SEI submission indicates that it is likely that the underground cable route will enter the current application site from the east and connect to the Banniskirk HVDC substation platform via its southern side.

- Underground cable connecting Banniskirk substation to the existing Spittal substation. SEI indicates that connection will be via the south-east corner of the current application site.

- Watten Wind Farm - Erection and operation of a wind farm for a period of 35 years, comprising of 7 wind turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 220m. (23/04113/S36 under consideration). Located 5.5km to the southeast of Banniskirk substation. Although outwith the study area it has been included in the future baseline due to its height and potential visibility.

- Spittal to Beauly 400 kV OHL (25/03311/S37 under consideration).

7.58 The EIAR baseline is July 2024. Officers advised the applicant to update the cumulative assessment in order to include new schemes and possibly include other renewable energy schemes, which are at various stages in the planning process. This would provide an up to date worst case scenario. As part of the SEI submission, the applicant has included a Technical Note detailing the rationale for a site's inclusion or exclusion within the future baseline assessment. This states that the cumulative assessment submitted is in line with the criteria presented in the scoping application which specified a cut of date of July 2024 and that only EIA developments which had been submitted as an application or approved would be included. Despite this request, no updated cumulative assessment has been submitted by the applicant with the onus being on other more recent proposals to consider applications such as Banniskirk which have been made before them.

7.59 The applicant has confirmed that the following were excluded from the assessment:

- Ouglassy Wind Farm (24/00902/SCOP Scoping opinion issued 11 June 2024) Up to eight wind turbines, with a blade tip height of up to 180m - discounted as no application had been submitted by July 2024 and it is still at scoping stage. Located 2km to the north of the proposed development.

- Field Spittal BESS - Construction and operation of Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) of up to 300MW - discounted as no application had been submitted by July 2024 and was at screening stage. Located 2km to the southwest of the site at the Spittal substation. **Officers note that an application has since been submitted to the Energy Consents Unit, 25/00498/S36 – currently under consideration.**

- Extension to Spittal quarry for the extraction of flagstone. Located to the south of Spittal Hill, 2.2km to the south-east of Banniskirk Substation - discounted as no application submitted by July 2024. **Officers note that although an application was submitted in July 2024 it was not valid until April 2025. 24/02943/FUL- currently under consideration.**

- **Although not referred to in the SEI submission, Officers also advise that since July 2024, Achies BESS has been submitted to the Energy Consents Unit, 25/02382/S36 – currently under consideration.** Located 1.3km southwest of the site, on the opposite side of the A9. Connection is proposed to the existing Spittal substation.

7.60 The applicant confirms that the following were also excluded as it is not EIA development.

- 24/02827/FUL Spittal Mains Quarry 49.9 MW BESS (Planning Permission Granted 28 March 2025);
- 24/02020/SCRE Achannarras BESS up to 200MW; and
- 23/02293/SCRE Loch Toftingall BESS up to 49.9MW.

Although not referred to in the applicants SEI submission, for completeness officers advise that the following schemes are also located within the 4km study area but are not EIA developments and/or not at an application stage. This would account for its exclusion from the applicant's assessment.

- 25/02189/SCRE: BESS (7 August 2025 Screening opinion issued – Scottish Ministers EIA not required). Located immediately to the south of the proposed Banniskirk Substation;
- 24/01950/SCRE Construction and operation of a BESS up to 150MW. (13 Nov 2024 Screening opinion issued – Scottish Ministers EIA not required). Located 3.9km to the south-west of Banniskirk substation; and
- 23/05424/FUL A 47MW capacity BESS (19 Mar 2025 – Planning Permission Granted). Located 3.9km to the south of Banniskirk substation.

7.61 In terms cumulative operational landscape effects, the EIAR contends that the West of Orkney Windfarm substation will contribute most towards operational cumulative effects. This is due to its close proximity to the application site to the southwest, adjacent to the existing Spittal substation and parallel to the A9. Although that development has only been granted a Planning in Principle (PIP) permission, the plans indicate that the site will be surrounded by landscaped mounds, limiting most of its visibility. The introduction of the Banniskirk and the West of Orkney substations, together with the existing Spittal substation is reported in the EIA as changing the character of the local landscape. In relation to the Ayre Wind Farm substation, it is proposed to be located to the northwest of the site in the vicinity of Clayock. The EIA reports that this introduces electrical infrastructure into a part of the local landscape which is currently without these structures. However, the applicant contends that some screening and enclosure is provided by the existing woodland in this area. The introduction of the proposed Spittal to Beauly OHL into the landscape would introduce tall towers within the proposed site, these would then extend east of Spittal Hill, so away from the A9. The applicant contends that visibility will be to 10 - 15 km but will not be as obvious as wind turbines due to their lattice metal framework.

7.62 Following construction and land reinstatement, the underground cables are not considered to have a cumulative effect. In relation to Watten Wind Farm, the ZTV indicates that visibility around Banniskirk substation will be limited due elevated landform of Spittal Hill. Overall, the EIA reports major (significant) local landscape (operational) effects, but minor (not significant) effects on the wider Landscape Character Type. The Landscape Officer agrees with the applicant's assessment.

7.63 In terms of cumulative visual effects (operational), these are reported at the point when all projects are operational and at year 1. This is before planting mitigation is established for any of the schemes, although it is noted that this is less relevant when addressing wind farms or the towers associated with the Spittal to Beauly OHL. As above, it is again reported that none of the underground cable projects would result in operational cumulative effects with the proposed development, this is accepted.

7.64 From the north (VPs 1 and 2) there is likely to be combined views of the development, with the Spittal to Beauly OHL and the West of Orkney Wind Farm substation. However, this may be reduced depending on mitigation measures proposed. The Ayre Wind Farm substation maybe partially viewed, but the EIA reports that woodland screening could provide screening. In terms of Watten Wind Farm, the ZTV indicates theoretical visibility may be available of a couple of turbines at 10km distance from these viewpoints. In relation to the schemes submitted the EIAR baseline, officers can report that from ZTV analysis, Achies BESS (25/02382/S36 -under consideration) and Spittal BESS (25/00498/S36 under consideration) are theoretically visible and clustered around the Spittal Substation. However, it is noted that existing woodland and proposed woodland along the northern boundary of the Achies BESS site will help to reduce views. Depending on the final layout of the West of Orkney substation, views of the Spittal BESS maybe obscured from these VPs. The extension to Spittal Quarry (24/02943/FUL) is not visible from these VPs.

7.65 From VP3, the EIA reports combined views of the development with the West of Orkney substation and the Spittal to Beauly OHL. The ZTV for the Watten Windfarm indicates theoretical visibility of all turbines at 7.5km distance from this viewpoint. The Ayre Wind Farm Grid Connection substation is unlikely to be visible due to intervening woodland and trees. The EIAR notes that the introduction of these projects into the landscape would greatly increase the presence of electrical infrastructure in the view. From the project ZTVs, officers report that there is visibility of Achies and Spittal BESS, but as with VPs 1 and 2, the proposed and existing woodland planting together with the placement of the West of Orkney substation it is likely to reduce views of these developments overtime. The extension to Spittal Quarry is not visible from this VP.

7.66 From the elevated positions to the south afforded by VP4, combined views of all of the cumulative projects apart from the Spittal Quarry extension are likely. This will result in a high magnitude of change, with the EIAR stating that given the proximity of the proposal with the West of Orkney Windfarm substation this could potentially result in it being read as one large infrastructure development.

7.67 VP5 is located close to the site and along the A9, there will be a combined view of with the Spittal to Beauly OHL. Watten Wind Farm, Spittal BESS and Spittal Quarry extension are not visible from this VP. The West of Orkney substation is to the rear of the receptor at this point. However, it is likely that a number of the cumulative projects and the proposed development would be seen in sequence at some point whilst driving along the A9 in both directions, this potentially includes Achies BESS. This again highlights the importance of securing screening mitigation along this route, as outlined previously in this report.

7.68 From the east (VP6) the development and the Spittal to Beauly OHL would be available. The West of Orkney Windfarm substation and the Achies BESS are likely to be hidden behind Banniskirk substation. A successive view with the Ayre Wind Farm substation would be available. The Watten Wind Farm ZTV indicates that there would be few or no turbines visible from this viewpoint. The Spittal BESS and Spittal Quarry extension are not visible from this VP. From the north-east (VP7), there would be a combined view of the development, the Ayre substation, the OHL and theoretical visibility of some turbines associated with Watten Wind Farm. West of Orkney substation is not likely to be readily visible as its beyond Banniskirk substation. Achies BESS, Spittal BESS and the Spittal Quarry extension are not visible from the VP. However, the introduction of these projects into the landscape would increase the presence of electrical infrastructure in the view.

7.69 Overall, the EIA reports that receptors at VPs 1, 2 and 3 are likely to experience medium magnitudes of change which would result in moderate (significant) cumulative effects during operation. From VPs 4, 5 and 6 receptors are reported as likely to experience high magnitudes of change which would result in major (significant) cumulative effects. Although the EIAR reduces the overall level of effect at VP4 to moderate (but remains significant), this is in recognition that the VP4 is not located on the core path route. Finally, from VP7, a low magnitude of change is reported which would result in minor (not significant) cumulative effects. Overall, officers agree with the level of significance attributed to the VPs. These developments in combination with the proposed development would increase the visibility and perceived concentration of energy related development within the area and particularly within sequential views along the A9.

Construction Impact

7.70 As detailed above, EIAR Chapter 3 anticipates a three year construction phase with a further two years for site commissioning and restoration. Details of the temporary construction works for the site are detailed on drawing BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0012. As part of the traffic assessment, the application is also supported by a Construction Development Programme which covers a five year period (EIAR Appendix 11.2). Community Council and public representations have raised concerns particularly in relation to traffic and road impacts, amenity and construction noise.

7.71 Given the scale of the project, some adverse impacts are anticipated in terms of construction traffic and disruption. A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) will be secured to manage the impacts upon the A9 Trunk Road and wider local road network. A Framework CTMP is detailed in EIAR Appendix 11.1. Timing of deliveries

(HGV's and abnormal loads) shall also be agreed through CTMP with construction traffic avoiding school travel times and identified community events. In addition, the Council will require the applicant to undertake a suite of road improvements and to enter into legal agreements and provide a financial bond with regard to its use of the local road network (a Section 96 Wear and Tear Agreement). It is considered that the CTMP should be reviewed throughout the works and informed by feedback from ongoing engagement with the community, through a Community Liaison Group. This will ensure that the community council and other stakeholders are kept up to date and consulted before and during the construction period.

7.72 A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) would be in place during the construction phase and secured by a condition. The CEMP would control potentially polluting activities and prevent adverse environmental impacts. It will outline methods of best practice and any mitigation measures required for the development will also be incorporated. The applicant has also developed General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs) (EIAR Appendix 3.1), and all construction work will be undertaken in accordance with these and would form part of the overarching CEMP. In addition, Species Protection Plans (SPPs) would also be utilised and developed with consultees. Environmental Health have also requested a condition for the suppression of dust during traffic movements. The implementation of the CEMP would be managed on site by a suitably qualified and experienced Environmental Clerk of Works (ECoW).

7.73 Developers must comply with reasonable operational practices regarding construction noise so as not to cause nuisance. Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 sets restrictions in terms of hours of operation, plant and equipment used and noise levels etc. and is enforceable via Environmental Health and not Planning. EIAR Chapter 3 identifies that working hours are currently anticipated to be between 07.00 to 19.00 during British Summer Time (March to September) and 07.00 to 18.00 during Greenwich Mean Time (October to February), although it is noted that within the applicants' noise assessment the stated start time is 07.30. Working is proposed seven days a week. EIAR Chapters 13 and 16 also outlines the applicant's commitment to minimising construction noise, this includes the following:

- A construction noise management plan (CNMP) will be developed and put in place, which considers other cumulative schemes construction programme.
- Construction methods will be chosen to reduce noise impacts.
- Deliveries to be scheduled during daytime hours only.
- Maintenance of plant and machinery and sited to minimise noise.
- Silencers on plant, machinery and vehicles where appropriate and necessary.
- Operate plant and equipment in modes of operation that minimise noise, and power down plant when not in use.
- Use electrically powered plant rather than diesel or petrol, where practicable.
- Work to take place within hours defined in the construction schedule.
- Locate plant and equipment liable to create noise as far from noise sensitive receptors as is reasonably practicable or use natural land topography to reduce line of sight noise transmission.
- Consider noise screens, hoardings and barriers should be erected where appropriate and necessary to shield high-noise level activities.

- Provide lined acoustic enclosures for equipment such as static generators and when applicable portable generators, compressors and pumps.
- Controls regarding blasting activities.
- Undertake noise assessment during detailed design to work up mitigation solution to minimise external noise impacts.

7.74 Environmental Health whilst not objecting confirm that a wide variety of construction techniques are proposed including piling and blasting which may have a temporary detrimental effect on noise sensitive receptors. Whilst the construction phase is temporary when compared to the lifetime of the site, it will be for an extended period. As such, a conditions can be imposed to secure a Construction Noise Management Plan (CNMP) and one to control blasting activities. These plans are expected to stipulate that operations, including vehicle movements associated with this development for which noise is audible at the curtilage of any noise sensitive property, shall only be permitted between 08.00 hours and 19.00 hours Monday to Friday and 08.00 hours and 13.00 hours on Saturdays, with no working on a Sunday or recognise bank holidays in Scotland. The applicant is also expected to employ the best practicable means to reduce the impact of construction noise. Attention should also be given to construction traffic and the use of tonal reversing alarms.

7.75 The application details the realignment of the Achalone tributary around the edge of the site and the construction of six permanent and five temporary watercourse crossings. These will be designed to convey the 1 in 200 year including climate change flows. SEPA and the Flood Risk Management Team support this approach and request that the further detailed design for the watercourse crossing and diversion is secured by a planning condition. The development would also be regulated under SEPA's Controlled Activities Regulations (CAR) regime.

7.76 Following commissioning all temporary construction areas will be reinstated. This will include the removal of the temporary access tracks and site compound. The reinstatement principles are detailed in the GEMPs (EIAR Appendix 3.1). This will be secured though the CEMP and the Landscape Management Plan.

Roads, Transport and Access

7.77 EIAR Chapter 11 assesses the expected impact of the proposed development, particularly through the construction phase. As detailed above, the applicant is committed to using a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) to manage the expected traffic impacts of the development. A Framework CTMP is detailed in EIAR Appendix 11.1. The application is also supported by a Transport Assessment, and the study area and traffic count locations are shown on EIAR Figure 11.1. In particular, the A9, A882, B870, B874, and the U1300, U1308 and U1782 which provides access to the three potential quarries sites which may supply aggregate for the development. Traffic count locations 1 to 5 are located on the A9 and 6 and 7 are on the A882. Community Council and public representations have highlighted concerns regarding the level of traffic and safety implications of the proposed development for car users and pedestrians.

7.78 A new access to serve the site is proposed from the A9 Trunk Road, in addition a new temporary construction access to south of the permanent access is required to build the platforms. This will be closed off and reinstated following the construction

period. Transport Scotland have confirmed that the proposed access arrangements are acceptable but request that the access standard and visibility splays are secured by condition.

7.79 It is estimated that 20 abnormal loads will be required (6 for the substation and 14 for the HVDC converter station). The EIAR details that two abnormal load access routes for the delivery of components including transformers have been considered. The preferred route is from the north with the ALVs originating from Scrabster Harbour then travelling southbound towards the site. An alternative route is from the northeast, with ALVs originating from Wick Harbour, travelling southbound on the A99 and then northbound on the A9 towards the site. Transport Scotland have no objection, but request that details of the final route is secured by condition, together with any accommodation measures required to facilitate the abnormal loads. Transport Planning whilst not objecting note that no information has been submitted to clarify why the loads are classed as abnormal, for instance, their weight or size, or both. In addition, no swept path analysis has been carried out and there is no information with regards to any structures which may not be suitable for abnormal loads. These matters can be secured by condition.

7.80 In relation to general construction traffic, the EIAR states that the origin of this is not currently known. However, it is assumed that Scrabster Harbour will be used for standard deliveries originating overseas and will follow the preferred ALV route (outlined above). Furthermore, the exact location of the quarries which will supply the aggregate for the development has also not been determined, but three options within 8km of the site have been identified in the EIAR, the location of these is shown on EIAR Figure 11.1.

7.81 In terms of effects, the EIA reports that the proposed development would lead to a temporary increase in traffic volumes on the road network during the construction phase. However, the effects are not constant, and traffic volumes would decrease outside the peak period of construction. An indicative programme of anticipated construction traffic during the construction phase is provided in EIAR Appendix 11.2. Construction and commissioning are estimated to run for 60 months. Using a worst-case scenario in which all predicted traffic passes each location within the Study Area, the peak is month 20. During this month 12,522 two-way vehicle movements have been estimated (7,040 car / LGV and 5,482 HGV movements), equating to a maximum of 570 two-way vehicle movements per day (320 car/van and 250 HGV movements).

7.82 The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment Traffic and Movement guidelines (IEMA 2023) Guidelines suggests that a full assessment should be carried out where traffic flows are predicted to increase by more than 30% or where HGVs increase by more than 30%, or it is a particularly sensitive location that a lower threshold of 10% should be applied. The EIAR predicts (Chapter 11 Table 11.11) that the peak average daily traffic is considered to increase the total vehicle movements between 3% and 30% at various points on the A9 and between 15 – 25% at the two traffic counts on the A882. In terms of HGV movements, the peak increase on the A9 will be between 16% and 133%, on the A882 between 72-139%.

7.83 Significant effects due to the increase in HGV movements were identified in relation to non-motorised user amenity, non-motorised delay as well as fear and intimidation

on and by road users at sensitive receptors on the A882 in Watten and Wick (Count Locations 6, Oldhall and 7, Haster). The EIAR contends that the high percentage increase in HGV levels along this road is due to the low baseline traffic levels. However, the assessment concludes that with suitable mitigation all effects can be reduced to minor and not significant. No significant effects at traffic count locations 1-5 along the A9 are predicted, however, mitigation measures are proposed in relation to non-motorised user amenity and severance to ensure disruption to these effects is minimised particularly on the A9 sections outside Thurso.

7.84 In terms of cumulative effects, the EIAR does not identify any additional significant effects. It notes that other developments are unlikely to be constructed simultaneously as the limitations of local suppliers will stagger demand and that the Council can manage construction traffic through controlling separate CTMPs. In addition, the applicant states that the Council can take adequate steps to minimise any impacts. However, Transport Planning point out that such measures are yet to be defined and further engagement is required going forward.

7.85 The proposed mitigation measures which would be built into the CTMP include:

- the scheduling of deliveries outside of school opening/closing times, during community events;
- ensure that deliveries do not arrive in a convoy and avoid potentially congested networks at peak hours;
- possible installation of a temporary pedestrian crossing on the A9 at Spittal to minimise any non-motorised amenity and severance effects;
- temporary construction phase signage along routes; and
- no HGVs will be allowed to lay-up in surrounding roads.

In addition, a road condition survey will be undertaken. Any deterioration in road condition which is agreed as attributable to construction traffic will be restored to at least the same standard upon completion of construction.

7.86 Vehicle movements associated with the operational phase will be limited to 2 – 3 people travelling daily to the site and during routine maintenance visits using cars or LGVs once a week. The effect of operational traffic is expected to be negligible.

7.87 Overall, in relation to effects on the A9 Trunk Road, Transport Scotland have no objection, subject to conditions securing a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), site access and visibility splays, no drainage connection into the road drainage system, an abnormal loads route and details of any proposed signage or temporary traffic control measures or accommodation measures, including the removal of street furniture or junction widening and traffic management.

7.88 In terms of the local road network, Transport Planning raise concerns and whilst not objecting, they do so only based on the recommended conditions being secured. It raises some methodological concerns in relation to the scope of the traffic survey. It also does not accept the cumulative assessment in relation to the A882 as the applicant has not clarified the construction traffic routes for the other developments or provided details of forecast construction traffic or clarified what other suppliers will be used.

7.89 In terms of potential effects, Transport Planning consider that there will be a major impact on the community of Watten, and this will need to be specifically addressed in the CTMP. Concerns are also raised in relation to the increase in HGVs on the A882, as they consider that the road is not capable of withstanding any additional loadings over and above the current volume of HGVs, especially over such a long construction period. The same risks could also apply to the B870, B874, U1782, U1300 and the U1308, however, there is insufficient information in the assessment and the draft CTMP to confirm with certainty exactly which roads will be used as construction routes. Consequentially, Transport Planning request that further clarification is required regarding the construction traffic routes serving bulk suppliers and quarries and the impact on any Highland Council Roads and this should be secured by condition. In addition, a Road Mitigation Schedule of Works is recommended. This requires improvements to the A882 and B874 and any other roads where there will be a 10% increase in HGVs and set out the programme of works and timeline for delivery.

7.90 In response, the applicant acknowledges that there will be a requirement to confirm with certainty and prior to commencement, the construction traffic routes serving bulk suppliers and the impact on any Highland Council Roads. The traffic volumes set out in the EIA represent the worst-case scenario and the applicant is actively working closely with its principal contractor to find alternative ways to limit traffic impact.

7.91 In addition, to the above, Transport Planning also recommended that an abnormal loads route is secured, and a Section 96 agreement will be required. The finalised CTMP will need to include the following:

- Confirmation of quarries and suppliers for bulk materials and the identification of all Highland Council roads that serve the bulk suppliers;
- Updated construction traffic forecast with details of the number and type of construction vehicles including staff, HGVs delivering supplies and components and abnormal loads;
- Identification of all structures and an assessment of the structures' load-bearing capacity considering the projected volume of HGVs;
- A risk assessment for transportation during daylight hours and hours of darkness;
- Proposed traffic management and mitigation measures within settlements along the access routes;
- Agreed construction traffic routes to be used by site staff, contractor, sub-contractors and deliveries, and steps to be taken for deterring/preventing construction traffic using non-designated construction traffic routes;
- A procedure for the regular monitoring of road conditions and the implementation of any remedial works required during the construction period.
- Measures to ensure that all affected public roads are kept free of mud and debris arising from the development;
- Marking of vehicles to enable easy identification in the event of problems arising, such as speeding or discourteous driving;
- Monthly traffic count reports submitted to the Transport Planning Team;
- Provisions for emergency vehicle access; and

- A timetable for the implementation of the measures detailed in the CTMP.

An appropriate community liaison strategy will also need to be secured by condition. A condition controlling significant HGV and abnormal load movements during the operational period is required, and a condition relating to any site decommissioning.

7.92 Representations have raised concerns regarding the potential impacts on roads. Whilst the development will result in a noticeable increase in vehicle movements, including HGV, on the road network, the proposed mitigation measures outlined above and controlled by conditions are deemed appropriate and will minimise disturbance to road users and surrounding communities. Subject to the recommended conditions, The Council's Transport Planning Team and Transport Scotland do not object to the application.

7.93 In terms of wider public access, the Councils Access Officer has confirmed that there no known tracks/paths or current use by the public for recreation or active travel across the site, however, like most land in Scotland, the site is also subject to the provisions of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. In view of this the Access Officer considers that outwith the substation compound, is land on which the public may be reasonably able to undertake responsible access rights during the operation of any development. A pedestrian access gate should be provided and secured by condition. In addition, if public art is provided on site, then there may be a requirement for public parking, this can be secured by condition.

Noise (Construction and Operation)

7.94 EIAR chapter 13 outlines the applicant's assessment in relation to the potential construction and operational noise and vibration effects on receptors. Within the study area, the assessment identifies six noise sensitive receptors (NSRs) which are detailed in the table below. Four background measurement locations were used.

Noise Sensitive Receptor (NSR)	Distance from Site Boundary (m)	Distance from the nearest operational noise source (m)
NSR 1 – Mossgiel	20m	389m
NSR 2 – Achalone	10m	320m
NSR 3 – Revelstone	6m	447m
NSR 4 – Achalone Croft	10m	613m
NSR 5 – Banniskirk House	170m	438m
NSR 6 – Banniskirk Mains	550m	856m

7.95 NSR 1 (Mossgiel) and NSR 2 (Achalone) are situated to the west of the site and are located on the opposite side of the A9 to the proposed development. Landscaped bunds and planting is proposed along the western boundary. However, these properties are located close to the permanent access point into the site, which

results in a break in the bund. Of the six NSRs these two properties experience the highest background noise levels (33 dB(A) in the day and 32 dB(A)) at night).

7.96 NSR 3 (Revelstone) is located to the north-west and adjacent to and on the same side of the A9 as the proposed development. It is the closest NSR to the application site boundary. Landscaped bunds and planting will be created between this NSR and the platform of the development. NSR 4 (Achalone Croft) is located further along the A9 from NSR 3 and is located on the other side of the A9 to the development site. Landscaped bunds and planting will be created along the western boundary of the site, opposite NSR4. The background noise levels for NSR 3 and 4 are daytime - 31 dB(A) and night-time 27 dB(A).

7.97 NSR 5 (Banniskirk House) is located to the north of the site. This residential property is set within existing woodland, which is out with the site boundary. The application proposes to provide landscaping bunding and planting near the north-eastern boundary. The background noise at this property is 27 dB(A) during the day and 21 dB(A) at night-time. NSR 6 (Banniskirk Mains) is located to the east of the site. As detailed elsewhere in the report, for technical and land levels reasons the eastern boundary of the development cannot be augmented by additional landscaping. Consequentially, this will remain more open than the other site boundaries. However, NSR6 is the furthest NSR away from the boundary of the development. The background noise at this property is 31 dB(A) during the day and 18 dB(A) at night-time.

7.98 Estimated noise emissions from construction activities and plant items are based on previous projects of a similar nature. EIA reports that the assessment considers conservative assumptions with the aim of producing a worst-case assessment. Public and Community Council representations have raised concerns regarding noise and amenity impacts of the proposed development, during both the construction and operational phases.

7.99 **Construction Noise:** The EIAR identifies major (significant) effects in relation to all six of the NSRs during the construction period. The platform works for the proposed development is predicted to cause the most construction noise out of all the phases. As detailed in the 'Construction' section above, mitigation is however proposed in the form of a Construction Noise Management Plan (CNMP). Subject to this mitigation the assessment reports a minor (not significant) residual effect. Environmental Health have no objection subject to conditions relating to a CNMP, hours of operation, controls on blasting and a scheme for the suppression of dust.

7.100 **Operational Noise:** In terms of operational noise, the EIA reports that the highest noise producing equipment at nearby receptors is the synchronous compensator buildings, external valve cooler banks, and the AC equipment in the HVDC converter station such as capacitors and filters. The assessment further states that the majority of the equipment within the HVDC design is housed indoors and the noise will be sufficiently attenuated by the buildings. The scheme has also internalised the air handling units and noise sources such as transformers and reactors, specifying acoustically treated chimneys and louvres on the buildings with noise-producing equipment is necessary to ensure minimal noise impact. The proposed earth

bunding has also been factored into acoustic measures for the site. However, some high noise equipment remains external.

7.101 The following table (EIAR Table 13.18) outlines the applicants operational noise assessment for day and nights scenarios at the six identified NSRs.

Receptors	Night				Day			
	Specific Noise from Proposed Equipment (dB(A))	Rating Level (including +6 dB tonal penalty)	Background Noise Level, L_{A90} (dB(A))	Excess above Background Noise	Specific Noise from Proposed Equipment (dB(A))	Rating Level (including +6 dB tonal penalty)	Background Noise Level, L_{A90} (dB(A))	Excess above Background Noise
NSR 1 – Mossgiel	30.2	36	32	4	29.9	36	33	3
NSR 2 – Achalone	31.7	38	32	6	31	37	33	4
NSR 3 - Revelstone	28.6	35	27	8	30.5	37	31	6
NSR 4 – Achalone Croft	26.6	33	27	6	28.9	35	31	4
NSR 5 - Banniskirk House	27.6	34	21	13	30.9	37	27	10
NSR 6 - Banniskirk Mains	26.6	33	18	15	29.3	35	31	4

7.102 In relation to external noise (including cooling equipment) from the development during the daytime, the assessment predicts an excess above background at all receptors (including a conservative 6 dB tonal penalty). The maximum excess above background noise is predicted as 10 dB at NSR 5 (Banniskirk House). The EIA reports a major (significant) effect at NSR 5 and medium for the remaining NSRs, which range from 4 dB to 6 dB above background. The EIA reports that once mitigation measures are factored in then the overall effect is reduced to minor (not significant) for all NSRs. Proposed mitigation measures are outlined below.

7.103 For external noise at nighttime the assessment predicts an excess above background at all receptors (including a conservative 6 dB tonal penalty). The maximum excess is 15 dB at NSR 6 (Banniskirk Mains) and 13 dB at NRS 5 (Banniskirk House). The EIA reports (significant) effects at NSR 5 and 6 and medium (not significant) at all other NRSs. Again, this is reduced to minor (not significant) for all NSRs when mitigation measures are considered. In relation to internal property noise levels (with a partially open window), the maximum internal noise level is predicted to be 16.2 dB(A) at NSR 2 (Achalone). This is reported as being minor (not significant) for all NSRs.

7.104 Operational noise has the potential for cumulative significant effects with the West of Orkney Grid Connection electrical infrastructure such as the substation, which is geographically close to NSR 1 and 2. However, the EIAR contends that the noise control strategy proposed will ensure that the impacts remain low and reports that the cumulative noise effects will not be significant.

7.105 Mitigation: As the assessment identifies major (significant effects), further mitigation measures are required. The EIA reports that the input noise data at this stage of the design has not been acoustically optimised. However, an optimised design will be progressed during the engineering detailed design and procurement phase of the project. It further contends that there are various engineering solutions and potential mitigation strategies that could be implemented to reduce noise levels from specific equipment such as the step up transformers, coolers, and other synchronous condenser equipment. Options could include:

- specification of low noise units;
- housing any external equipment within enclosures buildings;
- noise barriers to target propagation from specific noise sources;
- use of an active fan system with variable speed drive;
- use of liquid to liquid cooling; and/or
- a system with a larger number of fans operating at lower duty.

Following this, a revised updated Noise Assessment will be submitted prior to the installation of any above ground transmission infrastructure as identified in the recommended planning condition.

7.106 Environmental Health have no objection and consider that the development is unlikely to result in a breach of legislation otherwise enforced by Environmental Health. However, whilst not objecting it advises that there is the potential for an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents and recommends several planning conditions. There were some initial disagreements between the applicants proposed noise limits (as identified in the EIAR) and Environmental Health's requirements. In particular, the requirement from Environmental Health restricting noise limits to 30 dB when measured from the curtilage of any noise sensitive property. However, following further discussion, the applicant has confirmed through the SEI submission that it is accepts the Councils requirements and agree to this being secured through conditions. Environmental Health accept that further mitigation measures can be advanced through the detailed design stage for the plant and machinery, and request that this is secured and implemented through a final Noise Impact Assessment.

Natural Heritage (including Ornithology and Forestry)

7.107 The applicant's assessment is outlined in EIAR Chapter 9 and is supported by several surveys: including a protected species, bird survey, habitat and fauna, an NVC survey and a bat survey. Representations have raised concerns with regards to the ecological and ornithological impacts of the proposal.

7.108 The EIAR does not identify any significant effects relating to ecology, ornithology or nature conservation interests either individually or cumulatively with other developments. The applicant is committed to ensuring that construction practices will be in line with best practise guidance. Environmental protection measures will be fully detailed through the GEMPs and Species Protection Plans (SPPs), which will be embedded within the finalised CEMP. A pre-construction survey of the site will be undertaken by an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW), to confirm or update the baseline results presented in the EIAR. Should a new species be identified, the appropriate SPPs would be included within the CEMP and an assessment

undertaken to understand the impacts as well as any further mitigation measures which may be required.

Designated Sites – Natural Heritage

7.109 The site is not located within any statutory sites designated for its ecological interests and NatureScot have no objection to the scheme. However, there are several internationally important sites within 7km of the site. The status of these sites mean that the requirements of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, andc.) Regulations 1994 as amended (the 'Habitats Regulations') apply. Consequently, The Highland Council as the competent authority is required to consider the effect of the proposal on the European sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Special protection Areas) before it can be consented. If significant effects are likely on the qualifying interests, then an appropriate assessment is required to be carried out under these regulations.

Caithness Lochs Special Protection Area (SPA)

7.110 Caithness Lochs SPA is located 3.2 km north-west of the site and is designated for its non-breeding bird interests, Greenland white-fronted geese, greylag geese and whooper swan. The proposed development site and adjoining habitats could provide supporting habitat for the SPA species in terms of foraging and additional roosting opportunities. As there is potential connectivity between the proposed development site and this SPA, NatureScot advise that the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the qualifying interests and as competent authority, The Highland Council is required to carry out an appropriate assessment. The applicant has submitted a Shadow Habitat Assessment and NatureScot have offered further advice. The Councils Appropriate Assessment is contained within Appendix 3 of this report. In line with detailed advice from NatureScot the Appropriate Assessment concludes that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of this designation.

7.111 NatureScot have also advised that the proposal is unlikely to have significant effect on the qualifying interests of the following designations, so appropriate assessments are not required:

- The River Thurso Special Area of Conservation (SAC): Although the site is located within the catchment area for the River Thurso; NatureScot are content that subject to the embedded mitigation outlined in EIAR chapter 12, the risk of a deterioration in water quality/quantity will be avoided.

- Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SAC/ Ramsar: NatureScot advise that there is no hydrological connectivity between the site and the peatland interests of these designations. In relation to otters, as detailed in the next section, no signs of otters were observed, however, a pre-construction survey will be carried out and an SPP will be included in the CEMP.

- Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA / Ramsar: designated for several breeding bird species. Very limited flight activity over the site from birds that form part of the qualifying interest.

- The Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSIs) that underpin the designations of the Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SAC and SPA and are within 10 km of the site, are designated for features that are covered by these European interests, except for breeding Arctic skua. Very limited flight activity over the site from birds that form part of the qualifying interests.

- The site is not hydrologically connected to the Flow Country World Heritage Site (WHS) so there will be no impact on the blanket bog within the WHS.

7.112 The footprint of the proposed development will be over 600m from the closest area of ancient woodland, as such no impacts on designated woodland are anticipated. This is not disputed by the Councils Forestry Officer. Impacts upon non-designated woodland is discussed later in this report.

Species Protection

7.113 Protected species surveys found no evidence of badgers, pine marten, otter, water vole, red squirrel or wildcat and consequentially the EIA reports negligible (not significant) effects. However, the applicant proposes to carry out pre-construction surveys for these species, which can be secured by condition. In relation to bats, no potential roost features were identified within the site boundary. However, prior to felling of trees, they will be assessed for their potential to support roosting bats. No reptiles were recorded during the survey, but suitable reptile habitat was present. The EIAR identifies that works will be timed to avoid vegetation clearance during hibernation periods and pre-clearance checks will be undertaken by the ECoW. Overall, there is no objection from NatureScot or the Ecology Team in relation to protected species. The pre-construction surveys, use of an ECoW and SPPs will be secured by condition. The Ecology Team also recommend that bat friendly lighting is used and secured by condition.

7.114 In relation to ornithological interests, the EIA reports negligible (not significant) effects on birds but recommends that works should be undertaken outwith the breeding bird season as much as possible. Where work must be undertaken during the breeding bird season, nesting bird checks will be undertaken by the ECoW. NatureScot raise no objection. Further clarification was provided by the applicant in relation to wintering raptor surveys, as requested by the Councils Ecology Team. In response they have no objection but recommend a Bird Protection Plan (BPP) is secured by condition. RSPB have no objection but note that a number red-listed Birds of Conservation Concern breed on or near the site, such as Curlew and Lapwing. It recommends that the off-site biodiversity enhancement proposals include habitat management and/or creation for these species, such as grassland management and scrape creation.

Habitat Loss

7.115 The study area is mainly characterised by grassland, with some woodland/forests, heathland and shrub and a smaller area of wetland (blanket bog) (EIAR Fig. 9.2a). The EIAR details that most of the site is underlain by area of Class 3 with two small areas of Class 4 peat and concludes that there will be no significant effects on habitats. However, the Councils Ecology Team requested further clarification on the extent of blanket bog which will be lost, the provision of a Peat Management Plan

(PMP) and details of the proposed scheme to offset the expected peatland loss which is in line with NatureScots compensation guidance of 1:10 (loss: restore) ratio, plus 10%. RSPB also concurred that this level of compensation is appropriate and required.

7.116 In response, the applicant has confirmed that 1.23 ha of blanket bog will be lost under the footprint of the proposal (0.73 under the permanent footprint and 0.5 ha under the temporary construction areas). The blanket bog identified on site was considered to be in good condition but is a small and isolated area of bog. Based on the worst-case scenario of 2.13 ha of blanket bog lost, the applicant is committed to delivering a total area of peatland restoration of 21.51 ha, which is in line with guidance. The applicant proposes to deliver the peatland compensation off-site and have requested that details of this together with a PMP are secured by a condition. In addition, peatland restoration will be overseen by the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW).

7.117 Whilst the Ecology Team accept that the PMP can be secured by condition, it still requests that the area set aside for peatland offsetting is identified and submitted prior to determination of this application. The applicant however contends that this matter can be dealt with post consent. Given the significant number of current and upcoming applications relating to electricity transmission and associated infrastructure in the Highland area, SSEN are in the process of preparing an overarching strategy for the delivery of offsite biodiversity enhancement across the region. The supplementary information confirms that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is currently with the Councils Legal Team, with a view to establishing a forum to discuss and seek endorsement for proposed compensatory planting and biodiversity enhancement schemes.

7.118 In reviewing this matter, officers also note the contents of the recent letter from the Chief Planner and Minister Letter (April 2025) which states that ….

> "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".

Based on the advice from the Chief Planner and the advancement of the minute of agreement with the Council, it is considered that a formal legal agreement securing the off-site compensatory measure is not required but instead can be dealt with by condition.

Biodiversity

7.119 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 contribute towards the delivery of biodiversity enhancements in the vicinity of the site. The habitats present across the site have been subject to a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report. This has quantified the biodiversity impact of the development, the predicted resultant change of biodiversity value, and provides recommendations for biodiversity enhancement (net gain).

7.120 The assessment utilises a biodiversity metric with the biodiversity of the site summarised using SSEN Transmission's biodiversity toolkit which uses habitat as a proxy to determine biodiversity impacts. In summary, the losses to non-irreplaceable habitats resulting from the proposed development would be 60 biodiversity units (BU). The applicant also details that a comprehensive Landscape and Ecology Management Plan would be advanced going forward to ensure the delivery of a range of natural habitats are achievable in the short term and long-term meeting the objectives of the environmental mitigation in relation to landscape character, visual amenity, BNG and protected species considerations.

7.121 The Councils Ecology Team requested further information to demonstrate compliance with the 10% bio-diversity enhancement target, more detail regarding enhancement measures and the provision of an Outline Habitat Management Plan (OHMP). It also outlines several additional biodiversity enhancement measures which should be included, e.g. wader habitat, wildlife ponds, wildlife corridors, wildflower meadows and bat boxes.

7.122 In response, the applicant supports the use of a planning condition securing a Habitat Management Plan. It has also reiterated its commitment to delivering a minimum 10% in biodiversity net gain. As the assessment demonstrated that this could not be fully achieved on site, offsite options are being actively pursued with a preference for this to be close to the application site. The Ecology Team consider that given the deficit noted within the BNG report along with no further details specified regarding the site currently proposed for restoration and enhancement measures, this has led to an objection from Highland Council's Ecology Officer as they cannot confidently assess whether the proposed development would satisfy Policy 3 Biodiversity of NPF4 without these details.

7.123 Whilst the Ecology Teams objection is noted, officers must be mindful (as with the off-site peatland restoration) of the latest advice from the Chief Planner and Minister (April 2025) outlined above. This clearly outlines that the use of suspensive conditions to secure biodiversity enhancement measures can be appropriate. Given this advice and the applicant's advancement regarding the Memorandum of Understanding, which is currently with the Councils legal team, officers have a

suitable level of comfort that a scheme can be delivered through a suitably worded planning condition.

Forestry

7.124 There are well-established areas of young broadleaved trees along the western edge of the plantation, adjacent to the A9, as well as Sitka spruce. This is to be removed to facilitate the development. The Councils Forestry Officer objects to the application noting that the first consideration for all woodland removal decisions should be whether the underlying purpose of the proposals can reasonably be met without resorting to woodland removal. The applicant therefore needs to quantify and present all options which avoid or minimise the need for woodland removal. It was recommended that this area is retained and the proposed bunding redesigned to incorporate the areas of broadleaf woodland. The Forestry Officer also raised some concerns about the proposed tree planting on top of the bunds within this exposed location and whether these could be effective in mitigating the loss of woodland. Officers also raised issues regarding the need to secure additional on or off site compensatory planting in the event of tree failure. Further direction was also sought regarding the likely location of underground cable connections into the proposed substation, to ensure that future developments would not have a prejudicial impact upon any proposed landscaping/ tree planting.

7.125 Through the SEI submission the applicant has confirmed that 5.32ha of woodland is to be removed to facilitate this development (plan BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-XX-PLN-C-008). The applicant has also re-assessed the feasibility of retaining the woodland. However, the applicant has confirmed that due to technical constraints, health and safety risks, and regulatory compliance obligations under the Construction, Design and Management Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015), retention is not considered feasible. The SEI submission also states that removal will also allow for the construction of a continuous bund along the western boundary, which is a key mitigation measure for visual and environmental screening. The applicant has also shown that in principle the cumulative underground connection points can be facilitated without fundamentally affecting the proposed landscaping / planting strategy. Furthermore, the applicant has maintained its commitment to providing compensatory planting which will ensure there is no net loss of woodland. As detailed above a Memorandum of Understanding is currently with the Councils Legal Team, which is likely to cover any required offsite compensatory planting and delivered as part of co-ordinated and strategic approach with other projects of this type. Therefore, whilst the Council's Forestry Officer has objected and onsite woodland loss is regrettable, this loss has been justified and a robust long term landscaping and compensatory planting scheme can be secured by condition.

Water, Flood Risk, Drainage and Soils

7.126 EIAR Chapter 12 sets out that mitigation by design has been used as far as practical to reduce potential adverse effects. These are summarised in EIAR Chapter 12 Table 12.10 and include no development buffers around watercourses and the use of existing tracks. The developer is also committed to employing best practice techniques during construction and operation of the proposed development. Furthermore, as detailed above a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be in place, which will ensure that potential sources of pollution on site

can be effectively managed. The CEMP will be secured by planning condition to ensure the agreement of construction methodologies with statutory agencies following appointment of the contractor and prior to the start of development or works. As part of this the applicant states that several General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs – EIAR Appendix 3.1) will be produced to inform the CEMP. Those relevant for this section include GEMPs for private water supplies, watercourse crossings, soil management, contaminated land, oil and refuelling.

7.127 In terms of flood risk, SEPA's online strategic flood mapping shows that the site lies outwith any significant areas of fluvial or coastal flooding during a 200 year plus climate change storm event. This suggests that the flood risk from these sources may be low. In relation to surface water flooding, the SEPA flood map indicates that the majority of the site is free from flooding, with the exception of two small, isolated areas. These are associated with localised depressions at the head of artificial drainage channels but do not encroach on the proposed development. However, as noted in the EIAR and the Councils Flood Risk Management Team (FRM), there are several modified watercourses and an extensive network of drainage channels and features traverse the site, which will not have been picked up by SEPA's strategic mapping. FRM suggest that the flood risk from these sources may be medium to high. The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) (EIAR Appendix 12.3).

7.128 The application details the realignment of the Achalone tributary around the southern and eastern edges of the site. The EIAR states that a more natural channel will replace the current linear routing of the watercourse. The design will also incorporate measures to maintain the riparian area of the watercourse, the channels water capacity plus climate change allowances and the enhancement of the in-channel and riparian habitat quality. SEPA confirm that this is generally acceptable but that the detailed design should be improved prior to submission of a Controlled Activity Regulations (CAR) application, taking in account SEPA's recommendations regarding the construction of the bedding material, the avoidance of exposed bedrock and the use of a two stage channel. A footnote will be included to this effect on the decision notice if planning permission is granted.

7.129 The application also proposes the construction of six permanent and five temporary watercourse crossings (summarised in EIAR Chapter 12, Table 12.11). The EIAR states that the new crossings will be designed to convey the 1 in 200 year including climate change flows. SEPA support this approach and request that the further detailed design for the watercourse crossing is secured by a planning condition. SEPA also request that a detailed design for the watercourse diversion including a hydrological assessment is also secured by condition. This will also need to include confirmation of whether those watercourses diverted for any temporary works will be reinstated on completion of the works. The watercourse crossings/alterations would also be regulated under SEPA's Controlled Activities Regulations (CAR) regime.

7.130 In line with national policy, developments must not increase flood risk elsewhere and that there should be no land raising within the flood risk area. SEPA confirm that there appears to be sufficient room on site to achieve this, but request that this is secured by condition. In addition, SEPA request that the proposed 10m buffer from

top of bank for all remaining un-diverted watercourses is secured by condition, except for the Burn of Halkirk where a minimum 15m buffer will be required.

7.131 In addition, the Councils FRM team are content with the submitted FRA which demonstrates that flood risk can be managed such that off-site flood risk will not be increased and that the operational resilience to flooding would be meet the required 200 year plus climate change requirement. It requests that a finalised FRA is secured by condition. The FRM team also have no objection to the watercourse alterations, noting that the diversion appears to be to modified channels.

7.132 The application is also supported by a Drainage Impact Assessment (DIA). It is proposed to capture and attenuate the runoff from the hardstanding surfaces. That includes from roads, buildings, transformer bunds and concrete refuelling areas. Elsewhere it is proposed to let water permeate through the remaining surfaces, including the free draining fill making up the substation platform. Detention basins are proposed to attenuate and provide treatment to the runoff from the hardstanding surfaces within the platforms, which is to be discharged into the existing watercourses. The FRM team are content that the DIA demonstrates that there is site capacity to accommodate the Sustainable Drainage System (SUDS) and any other drainage adaptations. A finalised DIA is required with further detailed calculations, design and maintenance plans to be secured by condition.

7.133 In relation to Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs) (EIAR Figure 9.2b), several were identified during the National Vegetation Survey (NVC). SEPA have no objection and agree with the assessment that the potential found are of low-moderate sensitivity, having been significantly modified and drained for agriculture and forestry. SEPA accept the permanent loss of these locally common habitats in this case.

7.134 Scottish Water have confirmed that the proposed development will not affect any drinking water catchments or water abstraction sources, which are designated as Drinking Water Protected Areas under the Water Framework Directive. In relation to private water supplies (PWS), the EIA reports that there are no known PWS within 2km of the site. However, wells are noted on the first edition OS map, but these appear to correlate with the location of properties that are now served by mains water. Whilst it is anticipated that the wells are no longer functional, the EIAR confirms that the principial contractor will further assess PWS prior to construction to identify any unidentified PWS to date and verify source locations, types and uses.

7.135 The EIAR notes that activities associated with the site's use as agricultural land may have resulted in contamination associated with fuel, oils, and substances such as fertilisers. Construction of the adjacent A9 may have also resulted in contamination of the soils. However, the EIA considers that there is unlikely to be significant levels of contamination. Whilst the Councils Contaminated Land Team have no objection, it considers that there is potential for contamination from the adjacent quarry and request a condition to secure a scheme to deal with potential contamination. It also highlights that layers of peat are identified across the site and there may be an issue in terms of ground gas generation and migration to enclosed structures and should be given due consideration within the design of any enclosed structures.

7.136 The Carbon and Peatland Map 2016 details that most of the site is underlain by Mineral Soils, with substantial areas of Class 3 peat also present as well as two small areas of Class 4 peat. These are not designated as high priority peatland habitat. The preliminary Ground Investigation (GI) report (EIAR Appendix 12.4) shows that the soil materials consist of topsoil and peat below the excavation area. The platform area shows peat, rockfill, topsoil, sandy clay, silt, made ground, and gravelly sandy silt. The southwest, west, east, and southeast areas of the site show topsoil and isolated occurrences of peat. The north of the site indicates topsoil and made ground.

7.137 The borehole data suggests that peat depths range from 0.1m to 1.4m with an average peat depth of 0.6m. Peat was also recorded in 13 of the 70 trial pits with depths ranging from 0.2m to 0.55m averaging 0.3m. The EIAR outlines several measures regarding peat and soil management, including the handling, temporary storage and reinstatement. The applicant also confirms that a GEMP will cover these matters and can be secured via the overarching CEMP. Peat Management measures will also be in place to ensure there are no significant effects relating to peat slide. Neither SEPA nor NatureScot have raised any concerns in relation to impacts upon Peat.

7.138 Banniskirk Quarry is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to the presence of fossils. A significant risk was identified during early pre-application consultation with NatureScot and resulted in moving the DC converter station to the west. NatureScot have confirmed that fossil interests will not be affected.

Built and Cultural Heritage

7.139 EIAR Chapter 10 considers the archaeological and historic environment value of the site and assesses the potential for direct and indirect effects on archaeological features and heritage assets. The assessment is supported by a walkover survey (EIAR Appendix 10 part 1) and visualisations (EIAR Fig 10.5 and Appendix 8.1).

7.140 **Direct effects:** Within the application boundary there are no designated heritage assets but there are 12 non-designated assets (EIAR Fig. 10.4). The EIA reports that the proposed development will have a moderate (significant) effect on the following non-designated assets.

- Achalone (SPI_007) - one un-roofed long building.
- Achalone (SPI_010) - one roofed building with enclosure.
- Achalone (SPI_011) - one partially roofed building.
- Achalone (SPI_012) - longhouse rectangular farm with a circular kiln.
- Knockanruah (SPI_014) - medieval sheep fold.
- Achalone (SPI_015) - one un-roofed building.
- Achalone (SPI_016) - one unroofed building and an enclosure.
- Cairn (SPI_017) - cairn under grass and moss.

These assets will be subject to pre-commencement recording and excavation. A further three further non-designated assets (SPI_010, 012 and 013 – EIAR Fig. 4) may be affected by the development but it is proposed that these are subject to a watching brief and fenced off to limit the impact. These works will be carried out by a qualified archaeologist.

7.141 In relation to the potential for currently unknown buried archaeology to be encountered during groundworks, the EIA reports that there is a low/moderate risk. However, subject to the following mitigation measures the overall residual effect is reported as not significant. It is proposed that all groundbreaking activities in areas which have not been previously disturbed should be subject to a watching brief and works shall be supervised by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

7.142 The Councils Historic Environment Team (HET) has no objection to the application and confirm that the EIAR contains an appropriate level of information and assessment. The identified mitigation is also considered acceptable, and the final details will be secured by a condition.

7.143 **Indirect effects**: As detailed in EIAR Fig. 10.3 and EIAR Appendix 10.3, within 5km of the proposed development there are 35 designated sites: 12 listed buildings and 23 scheduled monuments. Based on ZTV analysis (EIAR Fig. 10.2) and following site visits, the majority of these have been scoped out of further assessment by the applicant. However, six scheduled monuments have been taken forward for a full assessment. Five of which are reported as experiencing a minor adverse (not significant) effect on its setting: Achies Broch (SM2235); Achanarras cairn (SM2400); Achanarras cairn (SM2401); Achanarras hut circle (SM2402); and St Magnus Church and Burial Ground (SM5413), and a negligible (not significant) effect is reported for Achies broch (SM509).

7.144 The EIAR details that five of the Scheduled Monuments derive value from their setting within a wider prehistoric landscape. These are located approximately 1 km to the southwest of the proposal and are on or near Achanarras hill. From here, whilst the proposed development will be visible in views to the east, it is not anticipated to interrupt key views or be overly prominent on the horizon, this is further assisted by screening within the landscape.

7.145 In relation St Magnus Church and Burial Ground (SM5413) which is approx. 2.3km to the southwest of the site. The EIA reports that this Scheduled Monument derives value from its setting within the environment and its views to the north and south as it's a prominent stop on a historic pilgrimage route. However, the assessment considers that the topographic and plantation screening will limit views of the development to the northeast. The assessment also contends that proposed planting around the development will limit visibility further.

7.146 Historic Environment Scotland (HES) have confirmed that notwithstanding some methodological points mostly regarding the scoping criteria, that it has no objection to the development. HES further confirm that proposals would not have direct physical effects on any assets within its remit and are content that the development would not have adverse effects on the setting of the scheduled monuments in the surrounding area that would warrant objection. In addition, the Councils Historic Environment Team have raised no objection.

Other Material Considerations

7.147 Light pollution significantly affects the rural countryside, from disturbing the way animals and plants perceive daytime and night-time. The EIA reports that floodlights are to be installed but would only be used in the event of a fault during the hours of

darkness; during the over-run of planned works; or when sensor activated as security lighting for nighttime access. The access roads would not be lit under normal operation. A light would also be provided permanently at access gates and would be sensor activated. The use of LED lighting to provide a focused area of illumination, with external lighting controlled by PIR sensors and angled in a downwards direction can significantly reduce the effects of light pollution and should be utilised. Full details and specification for the lighting can be secured by condition.

7.148 The applicant is seeking planning permission in perpetuity for the development. However, in the event of decommissioning, the EIAR states that it would be carried out in line within with the best practice processes and methods at that time and managed through a Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan. This can be secured through a planning condition.

7.149 Given the complexity of major developments, and to assist in discharge of conditions, the Planning Authority usually seeks that the developer employs a Planning Monitoring Officer (PMO). The role of the PMO, amongst other things, would include the monitoring of, and enforcement of compliance with, all conditions, agreements and obligations related to this permission (or any superseding or related permissions) and shall include the provision of a bi-monthly compliance report to the Planning Authority.

7.150 Public representations have raised the issue of accommodation for construction workers. There are no definite locations for this, but this matter will be advanced post consent, once contractors are identified. Traffic associated with construction staff can be managed and guided through the CTMP, and any offsite workforce accommodation is required to be the subject of a separate planning application.

Non-Material Considerations

7.151 Non-material considerations raised in representations relate to the speculative, profiteering and lack of need for the development, in addition, matters regarding the perceived oversupply of renewable energy generation in the north of Scotland and reference to constraint payments. Such matters are not material to the determination of this application, with the Scottish Government having declared a climate and nature crisis, with there being an urgent need to reduced emissions. Transmission infrastructure to support this is identified as a national development and as such receives in principle support. Similarly, in relation to community benefit, whilst this can aid the just transition towards net zero, this is currently a voluntary arrangement and not a material planning consideration as previously explained in the socio-economic section of this report.

7.152 Impacts upon property prices is also not a material planning consideration as this is deemed a private rather than public interest. Matters relating to fire risk are covered by other legislation which should not be replicated through planning. Finally, the site being a security risk from a terrorist attack - whilst design measures can be used to reduce the risk such as fencing, surveillance, and access control gates, attacks in any form, such as from drones, is not a matter than be factored into a planning decision, but are a consideration for the network operator, with the design of the network to be resilient to any outages.

8. MATTERS TO BE SECURED BY LEGAL AGREEMENT

8.1 On other applications, a section 75 legal agreement has been used to secure off-site compensatory/ enhancement measures. However, based on the latest advice from the Chief Planner and Minister (April 2025) outlined previously, there is a clear indication that the use of suspensive conditions to secure such matters can be appropriate. Given this advice, and the applicant's progression with the Minute of Agreement with the Council, officers are content that a suitable off-site scheme can be delivered through a planning condition, rather than through planning legal agreement.

8.2 The applicant's commitment to the retention of forestry, which is outwith the application site boundary, requires to be secured by Section 75 legal agreement. This relates is the existing commercial forestry to the south of the site, adjacent to the A9. The legal agreement shall prevent felling within 20 years of the substation's commencement of development. This timescale is to allow the proposed substation's onsite landscape planting to establish and mature, prior to this offsite intervening woodland being felled.

8.3 A wear and tear legal agreement will also be required under Section 96 of the Roads (Scotland) Act. This would include the provision of a Road Bond or similar security. The agreement would take account of any neighbouring developments that might progress concurrently with the works proposed and would make provision for a mechanism for apportionment of costs between respective developers.

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, particularly for strategically important infrastructure which enables significant levels of investment in renewable energy. NPF4 offers strong support for such development, identifying developments of this nature to be of national importance.

9.2 To date, this is the most strategically important application for the operation of the transmission network in Highland. The application is one of many in our region now pending consideration, and form part of the suite of transmission projects which are collectively integral to the UK's transition to net zero. The requirement for this infrastructure and its strategic importance must be attributed significant weight when undertaking the Council's duty of making a balanced planning decision.

9.3 There are clear impacts that might be expected from this development, particularly during its construction. The site selection has however been well informed through collaborative engagement between SSEN and all consultees and affected communities. Although the development's infrastructure requirements are of a considerable scale, there is a strong rational to co-locate this development in a rural area which has been proven to have the capacity to accommodate renewable and other grid related infrastructure. The site's selection strikes an appropriate balance between respecting natural heritage designations and cultural heritage interests in the region, avoiding Highland's best landscapes, and maintaining an appropriate setback from nearby settlements. From a constructability and network operation perspective, citing this infrastructure in this location, is a logical point between

planned and consented north and eastward offshore renewable development projects, which will bring continued business investment and socio-economic benefits to Highland. This decision also has the benefit of avoiding the more settled and attractive coastal areas, offering a degree of reprieve from the in combination effects of on and offshore renewable energy related development.

9.4 The design of the development facilities grid transmission across both land and sea of a scale not experienced in Highland to date. This is in the wider UK interest to maximise energy generation where there is adequate wind resource and move that power south to areas of highest demand. This comes with considerable renewable and energy security benefits, but equally landscape, visual and wider environmental cost and challenges, with Council officers appraising each element of this suite of transmission projects on their own merit.

9.5 Having assessed the development proposed, its environmental effects can be managed through best practice construction management techniques to ensure surrounding interests, particularly road access and the amenity of local communities is safeguarded. The site is well served by the A9 Trunk Road. Whilst traffic impacts will be considerable, the proposal is well located in this regard. Road mitigation measures have been well specified by Transport Planning who will oversee the projects Construction Traffic Management Plan. Construction and operational noise and dust will be controlled through a suite of conditions proposed by Environmental Health, with predicted impacts to be mitigated further through finalised project design. The suite of 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. The Council has incorporated the requirement for a schedule of mitigation within the conditions of this permission. Monitoring of construction and operational compliance has been secured through conditions.

9.6 Highland has been successful in overseeing inward investment in renewables for several years. This is as a consequence of its geography, water and wind resource, which has led to significant investment in the electricity transmission network. This has led to the Highlands having a good understanding of this type of project and the Council having appropriate policies and guidance to assist in its assessment, and to effectively manage their implementation on the ground.

9.7 Statutory and other consultees responding to this application have not raised any fundamental concerns. There are however unresolved objections raised by the Council's Ecology and Forestry teams, with the network operator continuing to work constructively with these consultees to fulfil their compensatory woodland and biodiversity enhancement obligations. Several consultees have requested planning conditions to be attached to any grant of planning permission. These are to be attached to effectively ensure that their specific interests are secured. The development has also attracted significant public interest with representations objecting to the proposal. Whilst all concerns raised have assisted with the assessment of the application, and considering the adequacy of the mitigation

measures proposed, overall, it is considered that there are no insurmountable issues that merit the proposal be refused.

9.8 Whilst the Ecology Officer objection is noted with regards to a lack of detail regarding off-site peatland restoration and habitat 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. Scotland's Chief Planner has recently advised that these matters can be secured by condition and should not be the reason for holding up developments of a national scale.

9.9 Similarly, whist the loss of existing woodland onsite is disappointing, the applicant has justified this loss with its removal being fundamental to the design and layout of the development. This is to allow for a watercourse diversion, site drainage, and grid connections with provision for enhanced site landscaping. In addition, further onsite and offsite compensatory woodland planting plan can be secured by condition, ensuring that there is no net loss of this woodland resource.

9.10 In relation to landscape and visual impacts, significant effects are anticipated, but the mitigation proposed will help to mitigate these to an acceptable level. Key to the suitability of the proposed development's location is the proposal being back clothed by Spittal Hill when viewed from the closest settlement of Halkirk, and the ability for the lower elements of the development to be screened from the A9 by the proposed landscaping strategy. The landscaping provisions within the application have therefore been carefully assessed, with the long-term planting and earthwork creation being secured by condition. Retention of woodland outwith the site's boundary can also be controlled through a Section 75 legal agreement. In addition, the applicant has agreed to retaining the stone wall which runs along the site's western boundary and for the provision of public art.

9.11 The application is supported in the context of the Development Plan and in particular NPF4 Policy 11 Energy and HwLDP Policy 69 Electricity Transmission Infrastructure, with there being underlying support for renewable energy development which is consented in this area. 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: If the committee determine that the application should be refused, the application may be subject to an appeal prior to determination by Scottish Ministers.

10.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): Not applicable

10.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever: The application allows for the connection of renewable energy to the grid therefore helping to deliver a contribution toward climate change targets.

10.5 Risk: Not applicable

10.6 Gaelic: Not applicable

11. RECOMMENDATION

Action required before decision issued	**Y**	S75 legal agreement to secure offsite woodland retention.

Subject to the above actions, it is recommended to **GRANT** the application subject to the following conditions and reasons.

CONDITIONS AND REASONS

1. Time Limit for the Implementation of Planning Permission

In accordance with Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended), 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. Accordance with the Provisions of the Application

The development shall be constructed and operated in accordance with the provisions of the Application and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Supplementary Environmental Information (SEI) except in so far as amended by the terms of this consent. The operational land associated with this substation and HVDC converter station shall be as per the red line boundary, as identified on Drawing Number BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-XX-PLN-C-0004 REV P06 (received 21st Nov 2024). this being the extent to which the statutory undertaker's permitted development rights apply under the terms of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, Class 40, Part (1)(d), (e) and (f).

Reason: To identify the extent and terms of the development consent.

3. Schedule of Mitigation

No development shall commence until a 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 is carried out in accordance with the approved details.

4. Biodiversity Enhancement and Compensatory Planting

(1) Within 18 months of the commencement of development, the applicant shall submit a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP) for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The BEP must include:

a. Details of compensation and enhancement measures, to ensure the development results in at least 10% biodiversity net gain and for peatland restoration achieves at least a 1:10 ratio of loss to offsetting;
b. Details and timing of habitat and peatland enhancement delivery, including plans confirming compensatory tree planting (within an area of at least 5.32ha), defining tree numbers, species mix, ground preparation, plant size, plant spacing and protection measures along with management, maintenance and monitoring strategies of the compensation and enhancement measures, that ensure longevity of the proposals;
c. GIS Shapefiles of the biodiversity loss, compensation and enhancement areas; and
d. Should any of the BEP cover land out with the application site, in the event that the applicant has not entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Council, secure the details of the agreed scheme as a planning obligation registered in the Land Register of Scotland or recorded in the General Register of Sasines against the title of the relevant landholding pursuant to Section 75 (1) (a) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended).

Prior to the date of first commissioning of the development the agreed scheme shall be implemented in full, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

Reason: To secure biodiversity enhancement and allow the compensation and enhancement areas to be mapped to ensure no developments occur on these sites for a minimum of 30 years.

5. Construction and Reinstatement Phasing Plan

No development shall commence until a detailed Construction Phasing Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall:

a) Include phasing drawings for each aspect of the site enabling works, platform construction, building and above ground infrastructure, and progressive site reinstatement and landscaping works, with associated timescales;
b) cut and fill calculations which demonstrate the anticipated material extraction and placement from each element of the required groundworks; and
c) prioritise the installation of the A9 roadside/ boundary bunds and landscape planting within the earliest practical phase of the construction period.

Thereafter the works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan, unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in appropriate phases in accordance with the range and scale of impacts assessed and measured in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

6. Landscaping

(1) No development shall commence until details of a scheme of hard and soft landscaping works have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. Details of the scheme shall include:

a) All earthworks and existing and finished ground levels in relation to an identified fixed datum point;

b) A plan showing existing landscaping features and vegetation to be retained;

c) The location and design, including materials, of any existing or proposed walls, fences and gates;

d) All soft landscaping and planting works, including plans and schedules showing the location, species and size of each individual tree and/or shrub and planting densities; and

e) A programme for preparation, completion and subsequent on-going maintenance and protection of all landscaping works.

(2) Thereafter, landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme, with all planting, seeding or turfing as may be comprised to be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the commencement of development, unless otherwise stated in the approved scheme.

(3) Any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, for whatever reason are removed or damaged shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of the same size and species.

Reason: In order to ensure that the approved landscaping works are properly undertaken on site.

7. Landscaping / Screening Bunds

No development shall commence until full details of the proposed bunding, have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. This shall include:

a) Plans, elevations, cross-sections, finished ground levels, fencing and landscaping and planting details;
b) Phasing and timescales for the implementation of the bunds. For the avoidance of doubt this shall prioritise the installation of the A9 road-side / boundary bunds within the first phases of the development which shall be between 3 and 5 meters in height;
c) The bunds shall be contoured and profiled, with the soil from the siteworks to be reused to form the bund; and
d) A programme for preparation, completion and subsequent on-going maintenance and protection of all landscaping works during the construction phases of the development.

Thereafter, the bunds shall be constructed in full in accordance with the approved details and maintained as such for the operational lifetime of the development.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to ensure that construction works are screened at the earliest practical point within the project's construction.

8. External Materials and Site Levels

No development shall commence until elevation, and cross section drawings of the proposed above ground infrastructure, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. These details shall include:

a) The external materials, colours and finishes of all external buildings and structures. The details shall include the use of a non-reflective finish;
b) all boundary treatments and internal fencing and any other enclosures, for the avoidance of doubt this shall show the retention of the existing stone wall along the site's western boundary with the A9, with the exception of the area required to facilitate vehicular access to the site;
c) parking areas and EV charging units;
d) any raised areas of hardstanding to support all onsite infrastructure; and
e) no element of the development shall have any text, sign or logo displayed on any external surface of the facility, save those required by the applicant's safety systems and law under other legislation.

Thereafter, the development shall be built out in accordance with these approved details and, with reference to part (a) above, the site shall be maintained in the approved colour, free from rust, staining or discolouration until such time as the development is decommissioned

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

9. Retention of the Western Boundary Stone Wall

No development shall commence until a plan showing the retention of the existing stone wall located along the western boundary of the site with the A9 has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The plan should also show

a) any section of the wall which is required to be removed to facilitate permanent access to the site; and
b) any part of the wall which is required to be removed to facilitate temporary construction works; and
c) any wall removal required under (b) will be required to be reinstated in full and to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority within 3 months of completion of the construction, unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

10. External 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 Planning Authority. Such details shall include

a) full details of the location, type, angle of direction and wattage of each light which shall be so positioned and angled to prevent any direct illumination, glare or light spillage outwith the site boundary.
b) This shall also include the provision of bat friendly lighting.

The lighting shall thereafter be implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of amenity, to minimise light pollution and to ensure the development does not have an adverse impact on bats.

11. Construction Noise Management Plan (CNMP)

No development shall commence until a Construction Noise Management Plan (CNMP) which demonstrates how the developer will ensure the best practicable measures are implemented in order to reduce the impact of construction noise and vibration, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The CNMP shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

a) A description of the most significant noise sources in terms of equipment; processes or phases of construction;
b) The proposed operating hours and the estimated duration of the works for each phase;
c) A detailed plan showing the location of noise and vibration sources and noise sensitive receptors; and
d) A description of noise mitigation methods that will be put in place including the proposals for community liaison. The best practice found in BS5228 Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites should be followed. It shall also include mitigation measures outlined on pages 13-19 and 13-20 of the EIAR Noise Impact Assessment received November 2024.

Thereafter the development shall progress in accordance with the approved CNMP with all approved mitigation measures to be in place prior to the commencement of development, or as otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of safeguarding residential amenity.

12. Operational Noise Specifications and Monitoring

(1) Prior to the installation of any above ground transmission infrastructure an updated Noise Impact Assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, in consultation with Environmental Health. The Noise Impact Assessment shall include detailed design and mitigation measures and will demonstrate that the operational development can comply with the following noise specifications.

a) Noise arising from the development, and operational area of the substation site, when measured and/or calculated as an LZeq, 5min, in the 100Hz one third octave frequency band must not exceed 30 dB, at the curtilage of any noise sensitive premises.

b) The Rating Level of noise arising from the development, and operational area of the sub-station and HVDC converter station site shall be determined in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 Methods for Rating and Assessing Industrial and Commercial Sound shall not exceed current background levels at noise sensitive properties. In determining suitable mitigation measures and the design of the proposed new sub-station and HDVC convertor station, consideration should be given to the likelihood of future development at the site. It would be important that any future expansion of the site in terms of permitted development does not result in increased noise levels.

(2) The development shall proceed in accordance with the approved Noise Impact Assessment referred to in part (1). Mitigation measures identified in the assessment shall be in place prior to the commencement of operation and thereafter maintained in perpetuity.

(3) Prior to the development becoming operational, if there are any changes to the proposed equipment or mitigation measures which could result in an increased noise level, a revised noise impact assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall proceed in accordance with the revised assessment.

(4) Compliance Monitoring 1 - Within 21 days from receipt of a written request of the Planning Authority, following a complaint to it alleging noise disturbance at a noise sensitive location, the site operator shall, at its expense, employ an independent consultant to assess the level of noise in terms of compliance with consented noise limits. The site operator shall submit the report of the independent consultant's assessment for the approval of the Planning Authority within 2 months of receiving the written request. If the noise level exceeds the prescribed noise limits, the assessment report shall include a scheme of mitigation to be enacted, including timescales for implementation, to ensure compliance with consented noise limits. Details of the proposed compliance monitoring must be agreed in writing beforehand with the Council's Environmental Health Service.

(5) Compliance Monitoring 2 - Within 21 days from receipt of the development becoming fully operational the site operator shall, at its expense, employ an independent consultant to assess the level of noise in terms of compliance with consented noise limits. The site operator shall submit the report of the independent consultant's assessment for the approval of the Planning Authority within 2 months of the development becoming fully operational. If the noise level exceeds the prescribed noise limits, the assessment report shall include a scheme of mitigation to be enacted, including timescales for implementation, to ensure compliance with consented noise limits. Details of the proposed compliance monitoring must be agreed in writing beforehand with the Council's Environmental Health Service.

Reason: In the interest of safeguarding residential amenity.

13. Dust Suppression

No development shall commence until a dust mitigation scheme designed to protect neighbouring properties from dust (including movement of construction traffic) arising from this development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall progress in accordance with the approved dust suppression scheme.

Reason: In the interest of residential amenity.

14. Blasting

No development shall commence until a blasting method statement, prepared by a suitably qualified and competent person in accordance with PAN 50 Annex D: The Control of Blasting at Surface Mineral Workings, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The method statement should include but is not limited to the following:

a) The best practicable measures to be taken to reduce the impact of air overpressure and vibration at sensitive properties;
b) The approximate number of blasts on a weekly or annual basis and the periods of the day when blasting will be carried out; and
c) The methods for providing the public with advance warning of blasting.

Ground vibrations as a result of the blasting operations shall not exceed a peak particle velocity of 6mms-1 in 95% of all blasts within any 6 month period. No individual blast shall exceed a peak particle velocity of 12mms-1 as measured at noise sensitive properties. The measurement shall be the maximum of three mutually perpendicular directions taken at ground surface at any vibration sensitive building.

Thereafter to the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring properties and occupants.

15. Flood Risk

No development shall commence until a finalised Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with SEPA. The FRA shall be informed by full level and site surveys and finalised construction proposals and include:

a) details of all new proposed watercourse crossings over diverted or existing watercourses with the support of a further detailed assessment of 1 in 200 flows plus climate change;
b) detailed proposals for the design of the watercourse diversions including a hydrological assessment to illustrate the new channels can convey the estimated design flood. This should also include confirmation of whether those watercourses diverted for any temporary works will be reinstated on completion of the works;
c) detailed hydrological modelling shall be submitted to quantify the impacts of flood risk to the proposed development and upon downstream flood risk; and

d) a site plan showing the flood risk area and the development, including any areas of land raising. This shall demonstrate that no land raising will take place within the floodplain.

Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to reduce the risk of flooding occurring both within and outwith the application site.

16. Drainage

No development shall commence until a finalised master Drainage Impact Assessment (DIA) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. This shall include

a) finalised drainage information, including all calculations and simulations; and
b) if necessary, finalised DIA(s) for any significant area of the site not detailed in the master DIA, these shall be provided before their respective construction to ensure complete, finalised information.
c) There shall be no drainage connections to the trunk road drainage system.

Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that surface water drainage principles of SUDS; in order to protect the water environment and to reduce the risk of flooding occurring both within and outwith the application site. Also to ensure that the efficiency of the existing Trunk Road drainage network is not affected.

17. Riparian Buffer Zones

For the avoidance of doubt a 10 metre riparian buffer zone shall be maintained from the top of the bank for all un-diverted watercourses within the site boundary with the exception of the Burn of Halkirk (which is being diverted) for which a 15 metre riparian buffer zone is required to be maintained.

Reason: To ensure that development does not encroach onto riparian buffer strips in the interests of flood risk.

18. Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP)

1) No later than three months prior to the Commencement of the Development, 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, in consultation with SEPA, NatureScot, Environmental Health and other consultees as appropriate. The CEMP shall be informed by the site and ground investigation works and best practice guidance. The CEMP shall include (but is not limited to) details of:
   a) An updated Schedule of Mitigation (SM) as it relates to construction highlighting mitigation set out within each chapter of the Environmental

Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), within the EIAR Supplementary Environmental Information (SEI), and the conditions of this consent;

b) Processes to control / action changes from the agreed SM
c) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction-type activities on the environment;
d) Soil Management, with details of soil placement and measures to utilise the soils' existing seed base in the finalised landscaping plan;
e) Habitat and Species Protection, mitigation to protect the ecological resources on site, including biodiversity protection zones, location and timing of works;
f) A Pollution Prevention Plan including drainage management strategy and mitigation measures, demonstrating how all surface water run-off and wastewater arising during and after development is to be managed and prevented from polluting any watercourses or sources. This must also include arrangements for the storage and management of oil and fuel on the site;
g) Water quality monitoring regime;
h) Details of all pollution prevention and mitigation measures, which shall maintain hydrological connectivity of Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems;
i) Details of foul and contaminated site drainage arrangements;
j) Details of soil storage and management;
k) A surface water and groundwater management and treatment plan, including details of the separation of clean and dirty water drains, the location of settlement lagoons for silt laden water, drainage by SUDS to accommodate the 1 in 200 plus an allowance for climate change; mechanisms to ensure that construction will not take place during periods of high flow or high rainfall; and a programme of water quality monitoring;
l) A drainage management strategy, demonstrating how all surface and waste water arising during and after development is to be managed and prevented from polluting any watercourses or sources;
m) Dust Management, covering demolition and construction activity, including vehicle movements;
n) Site Waste Management;
o) Public and Private Water Supply Protection Measures, including a programme of water quality monitoring
p) Details of the formation of the construction compound, welfare facilities, any areas of hardstanding, turning areas, internal access tracks, car parking, material stockpiles, oil storage, lighting columns, and any construction compound boundary fencing;
q) The maximum height and location of all stockpiles of aggregate;
r) Construction Noise and Vibration (refer to Condition 11);
s) Habitat Management Plan (refer to condition 29);
t) Details of temporary site lighting;
u) Emergency Response Plans;
v) Phasing plans for the construction (refer to condition 5);
w) Timetable for post construction restoration/reinstatement of the temporary working areas, construction access and construction compound; and
x) Other relevant environmental management as may be relevant to the development.

2) A statement of responsibility to 'stop the job/activity' if a breach or potential breach of mitigation or legislation occurs; and

3) Methods for monitoring, auditing, reporting, and the communication of environmental management on site and with client, Planning Authority and other relevant parties.

The approved CEMP shall be implemented throughout the construction, post construction site reinstatement phases in full unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority.

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 Environmental Impact Assessment Report which accompanied the application, or as otherwise agreed, are fully implemented.

19. Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP)

No later than three months prior to commencement of the development, a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) to manage all construction traffic with the exception of abnormal indivisible loads, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, in consultation with Transport Scotland, affected Community Councils and the Local Roads Authority. The CTMP shall be carried out as approved in accordance with the timetable specified within the approved CTMP. The CTMP shall include but is not limited to:

a) Confirmation of quarries and suppliers for bulk materials;
b) The identification of all Highland Council roads that serve the bulk suppliers;
c) Measures to control the use of any direct access onto the Trunk Road;
d) Updated construction traffic forecast with details of the number and type of construction vehicles including staff, HGVs delivering supplies and components and abnormal loads;
e) Identification of all structures on construction traffic routes and an assessment of the structures' load-bearing capacity considering the projected volume of HGVs. The assessment should include a detailed protocol outlining preventative and corrective works throughout the construction period to prevent damage and ensure the safety of the public;
f) A risk assessment for transportation during daylight hours and hours of darkness;
g) Proposed traffic management and mitigation measures within settlements along the access routes as required. Measures such as temporary speed limits, suitable temporary signage, road markings and the use of speed activated signs should be considered, especially within local communities. During the delivery period of construction materials, any additional signing or temporary traffic control measures deemed necessary due to the size or length of any load being delivered or removed must be undertaken by a recognised Quality Assured traffic management consultant;
h) Avoidance of construction traffic routing past schools during their opening and closing times, whilst also promoting appropriate traffic speeds through communities located on along construction traffic routes;
i) Scheduling and timing of movements, respecting any large public event taking place in the local area which would be unduly affected or disrupted by construction vehicles using the public road network;
j) Non convoying of HGV or site staff vehicles;

k) Agreed construction traffic routes to be used by site staff, contractor, sub-contractors and deliveries;
l) Steps to be taken for deterring/preventing construction traffic using non-designated construction traffic routes to and from the site;
m) A procedure for the regular monitoring of road conditions and the implementation of any remedial works required during the construction period.
n) Measures to ensure that all affected public roads are kept free of mud and debris arising from the development;
o) Identification of a nominated person to whom any road safety issues can be referred and measures for keeping the Community Council informed and dealing with queries and any complaints regarding construction traffic;
p) Providers of products and materials to this development (such as aggregate, concrete, staff minibuses) should mark their vehicles with a unique number identifier on the front, sides and rear of vehicles and a Banniskirk Substation identifier. This is to enable easy identification in the event of problems arising, such as speeding or discourteous driving;
q) Monthly traffic count reports submitted to the Transport Planning Team and Local Area Roads Team detailing the number of HGVs using construction traffic routes on Highland Council roads. The locations for traffic counts must be agreed before any work commences on site;
r) Provisions for emergency vehicle access;
s) The provision of a wear and tear agreement under Section 96 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 under which the developer will be responsible for the repair of any damage to the local road network attributable to construction related traffic. As part of the agreement, pre-start and post construction road condition surveys must be carried out by the developer to the satisfaction of the Roads Authority. It will also require the submission of an appropriate financial bond acceptable to the Council in respect of the risk of any road reconstruction works; and
t) A timetable for the implementation of the measures detailed in the CTMP.

Reason: To mitigate the adverse impact of construction traffic on the safe and efficient operation of the trunk road and wider local road networks. Also to ensure adequate road safety measures are in place including measures to minimise conflict with routes to schools, cyclists and local events.

20. Abnormal Loads

No delivery of abnormal indivisible load (AIL) shall be made to site until an Abnormal Indivisible Load Construction Traffic Management Plan (AIL-CTMP) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority, in consultation with Transport Scotland, affected Community Councils, Police Scotland and the local Roads Authority. The AIL-CTMP shall provide a detailed protocol for the delivery of AILs, including details of their proposed routing on the local and trunk road network, with any accommodation measures required. The details shall include but is not limited to:

a) A review of maximum axle loading on structures along the access route;
b) A review of overhead services along the access route;

c) A review in summer conditions of roadside vegetation along the access route and clearance of any vegetation that may interfere with construction traffic;
d) A review of road works or road closures that could affect the movement of construction traffic;
e) Full details of all road improvements and mitigation measures needed to facilitate abnormal load movements shall be agreed with Transport Scotland and the Local Roads Authority. The said measures shall be fully implemented to the satisfaction of Transport Scotland and the Local Roads Authority. Such measures may include: the removal of street furniture, modifications to bridges and culverts, junction and carriageway widening and/or edge strengthening, road safety improvements and traffic management. These measures are to be undertaken by a recognised Quality Assured traffic management consultant;
f) A detailed protocol for the delivery of abnormal loads prepared in consultation and agreement with interested parties. The protocol shall identify any requirement for convoy working/and or escorting of vehicles and include arrangement to provide advance notice of demountable signs or similar approved, when required to alert road users and local residents of expected abnormal load movements. All such movements on Council maintained roads shall take place outwith peak times on the network including school travel times and shall avoid community events;
g) A detailed assessment of structures along the routes of any Highland Council Road shall be carried out in consultation with and the satisfaction of the Council's Structures Section;
h) A contingency plan prepared by the abnormal laud haulier. The plan shall be adopted only after consultation and agreement with the Police and the respective roads authorities. It shall include measures to deal with any haulage incidents that may result in public roads becoming temporarily closed or restricted; and
i) A detailed delivery programme for abnormal load movements which shall be made available to Highland Council and community representatives.

The AIL-CTMP shall be prepared in consultation with all interested parties and thereafter be carried out as approved.

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

21. Site Access and Visibility Splays

Prior to construction of any part of the development, the site access and visibility splays, generally as illustrated on the Murphy Drawing No. BANN4-LT407-JMS-ROAD-XX-LAY-H-019 Revision P06, shall be constructed and implemented to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, in consultation with Transport Scotland.

Reason: To ensure that the standard of access layout complies with the current standards and that the safety of the traffic on the trunk road is not diminished. It will also ensure that drivers of vehicles leaving the site are enabled to see and be seen by vehicles on the trunk road carriageway and join the traffic stream safely.

22. Road Mitigation Schedule of Works

No later than three months prior to commencement of the development, a Road Mitigation Schedule of Works. including details of phased implementation, shall be submitted to, and approved by, the Planning Authority, in consultation with the Local Roads Authority. The works, unless otherwise agreed by the Planning Authority must include, but are not limited to:

a) Widening of the A882 from Langley Lane, Wick to the A9 to a minimum width of 7.3 metres. To avoid differential settlement on any longitudinal construction joints, new sections of carriageway must be keyed into the existing carriageway and a bituminous structural overlay provided. Longitudinal joints are points of weakness so a new structural overlay should be provided to ensure the extraordinary increase in HGVs does not cause failure at these points. The works should also identify any changes to existing drainage or proposals for new drainage and the requirement for road markings, either centre line and/or edge of carriageway.

b) Widening of the B874 to a minimum of 6 metres on any twin tracked sections and 3.5 metres on single track sections from its junction with the B870 to the A9. The works should also identify places required for verge strengthening where there is verge overrun and/or edge deterioration. Proposals for new/improved drainage should also be included. The scheme must also include new and improved passing places to meet Council guidelines on intervisibility. A full structural overlay will be required on any areas that are widened.

c) Other Construction Routes: confirm the construction traffic routes from quarries and suppliers and provide an engineering assessment of these roads where the HGV traffic flows will increase above 10%. Detailed designs will be required to provide full width strengthening and any necessary reshaping of the carriageway identified in the assessment. The scheme must also provide new or improved passing places to meet Council guidelines on intervisibility and geometry. All of the above improvements must consider the provision of road markings and signage as per the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions.

Thereafter, prior to the commencement of development, or on a phased basis the approved Road Mitigation Schedule of Works, shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Permission to carry out these works will be required from the Council as Roads Authority and may be carried out under Section 21 or 56 of the Roads (Scotland) Act.

Reason: To ensure the local road network is enhanced and thereafter maintained to safely accommodate the increased traffic arising from the construction traffic associated with this development and existing road users.

23. Access Management Plan

No development shall commence until an Access Management Plan (AMP) has been submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the Planning Authority. The plan should look to maintain public access during construction of the development, as far as it is practicable and safe to do so and thereafter enhance public access during the operation of the development (with the exclusion of the main substation compound

and HVDC converter station). The plan shall include a side pedestrian gate at the main vehicular access gate from the A9, this shall have a 1525mm gap opening and designed in accordance with BS5709. The plan as agreed shall be implemented in full, unless otherwise approved in writing with the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of maintain public access rights.

24. Public Art

Within 18 months of the commencement of development a scheme for the inclusion of public art either on or off site, including types and locations of artworks, public parking (if applicable) and the management and maintenance thereof, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to first commissioning of the development, unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the Planning Authority, and thereafter maintained for the operational lifetime of the development.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and creation of place.

25. Environmental Clerk of Works (EnvCoW)

No development shall commence unless and 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. This must include a EnvCoW schedule, detailing when the EnvCoW shall be present on site. For the avoidance of doubt, the EnvCoW shall be appointed as a minimum for the period from the commencement of development to the final commissioning of the development and their remit shall, in addition to any functions approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

The terms of appointment shall include (but not be limited to):

a) Impose a duty to monitor compliance with the environmental commitments provided in the EIA Report as well as the following (the EnvCoW works):

    i. the Pre-Construction Ecological Survey under Condition 28;
    ii. the Construction Environmental Management Plan under Condition 18;
    iii. the Peat Management Plan under Condition 30;
    iv. the Habitat Management Plan under Condition 29;
    v. Biodiversity Enhancement and Planting under Condition 4;
    vi. Species and Bird Protection Plans under Conditions 26, 27;
    vii. the landscape and planting plans under Conditions 5, 6 and 7.

b) providing training to the developer and contractors on their responsibilities to ensure that work is carried out in strict accordance with environmental protection requirements;
c) Require the EnvCoW to report to the nominated construction project manager, developer and Planning Authority any incidences of noncompliance with the EnvCoW works at the earliest practical opportunity;
d) Undertake a pre-construction survey not more than 3 months prior to commencement of construction and as required throughout the duration of the project to protect the ecological resources within the site;

e) maintains a Register of all inspections and audits, to include an inventory of all measures on the site, their effectiveness, as well as any advice provided; and
f) Require the EnvCoW to submit a monthly report to the construction project manager, developer and Planning Authority summarising works undertaken on site.

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.

26. Species Protection Plans (SPPs)

No development shall commence until Species Protection Plans (SPPs) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The SPPs shall be informed by pre-commencement bird surveys and proposed mitigation and should include the following;

a) Bats (including pre-construction tree checks, prior to tree felling, and proposed mitigation, should any roosts be identified);
b) Badger and Otter (with inclusion of pre-construction works and mitigation);
c) Water vole (with inclusion of pre-construction works in suitable habitat 50m up and downstream from proposed works, and standard mitigation); and
d) Pine marten (with inclusion of pre-construction works in suitable habitat within a 250m buffer from proposed works, and standard mitigation).

Thereafter, the approved Species Protection Plans shall be implemented in full within the timescales set out in the approved SPPs.

Reason: To ensure that all construction and operation of the proposed development has a limited impact on the aforementioned protected species, and to ensure that the mitigation measures contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report which accompanied the application, or as otherwise agreed, are fully implemented.

27. Bird Protection Plan (BPP)

No development shall commence until a Bird Protection Plan (BPP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The BBP shall be informed by pre-commencement bird surveys and proposed mitigation and should include the following;

a) Pre-construction surveys, prior to blasting, to ascertain the absence of nest sites of sensitive species (hen harrier, merlin, short-eared owl) in the vicinity of project site, and to limit disturbance to wintering birds (geese and swans);
b) Nesting checks prior to any earthworks to protect ground nesting species (such as curlew, lapwing, skylark, or meadow pipit); and
c) Vegetation clearance of the woodland to the west (inside the site boundary) is required to consider the presence of a common buzzard nest there.

Thereafter, the approved BBP shall be implemented in full within the timescales set out in the approved BPP.

Reason: To ensure that all construction and operation of the proposed development has a limited impact on the aforementioned protected species, and to ensure that

the mitigation measures contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report which accompanied the application, or as otherwise agreed, are fully implemented.

28. Pre-Construction Ecological Survey

A pre-construction survey is required to been undertaken not more than 3 months prior to works commencing and a report of the survey has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The survey shall cover both the application site and an appropriate buffer from the boundary of application site and the report of survey shall include mitigation measures where any impact, or potential impact, on protected species or their habitat has been identified. Development and work shall progress in accordance with any mitigation measures contained within the approved report of survey and the timescales contain therein.

Reason: To ensure that the site and its environs are surveyed and the development does not have an adverse impact on protected species or habitat.

29. Habitat Management Plan (HMP)

(1) There shall be no commencement of development until an updated Outline Habitat Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, in consultation with NatureScot. This shall quantify and map the extent and quality of habitat and peat losses, direct and indirect areas of disturbance, and biodiversity impact associated with the finalised development proposals. This shall also account for any additional intended storage areas, laydown areas, and all other temporary construction areas, identifying existing habitat features and vegetation to be retained.

(2) Within 18 months of the commencement of development, the applicant shall submit a finalised Habitat Management Plan (HMP) for the approval in writing of the Planning Authority. The finalised HMP shall set out proposed habitat management of the site including all mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures, during the period of construction and operation, and shall detail the long-term management regimes of the compensation and enhancement measures required of the site. All planting, seeding or turfing as may be comprised in the approved details shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the commencement of development, unless otherwise stated in the approved scheme.

(3) The HMP shall include provision for regular monitoring and review to be undertaken against the HMP objectives and measures for securing amendments or additions to the HMP in the event that the HMP objectives are not being met. Any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, for whatever reason are removed or damaged shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of the same size and species.

Unless and until otherwise agreed in advance in writing with the Planning Authority, the approved HMP (as amended from time to time with written approval of the Planning Authority) shall be implemented in full.

Reason: In the interests of protecting ecological features and to ensure that the development secures positive effects for biodiversity.

30. Peat Management Plan

No development shall commence until a works specific finalised Peat Management Plan (PMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The PMP shall draw upon the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment and consider the findings of any additional ground investigations carried out prior to development commencing and include a management / reinstatement scheme for all peat areas within the application site. The PMP shall details and plans for all peat and soil stripping and excavation and the storage and proposed use and replacement of peat, topsoil and subsoil. It shall include a method statement setting out the measures to protect peat during excavation, storage, handling and reuse.

Thereafter, the plan shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: In the interests of the protection of the habitats identified in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and EIA Supplementary Environmental Information (SEI).

31. Programme of Archaeological Works

No works in connection with the development hereby approved shall commence unless an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority and a programme of archaeological works has been carried out in accordance with the approved WSI. The WSI shall include 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. Should the archaeological works reveal the need for post excavation analysis the development hereby approved shall not be [occupied/brought into use] unless a Post-Excavation Research Design (PERD) for the analysis, publication and dissemination of results 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. In order to protect the archaeological and historic interest of the site.

32. Local Employment Scheme

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 Report (EIAR) (November 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.

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 community. To make provision for publicity and details relating to any local employment opportunities.

33. Contaminated Land

No development shall commence until a scheme to deal with potential contamination on site has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Planning Authority. The scheme shall include:

a) the nature, extent and type of contamination on site and identification of pollutant linkages and assessment of risk (i.e. a land contamination investigation and risk assessment), the scope and method of which shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by with the Planning Authority, and undertaken in accordance with PAN 33 (2000) and British Standard BS 10175:2011+A2:2017 Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites - Code of Practice;
b) the measures required to treat/remove contamination (remedial strategy) including a method statement, programme of works, and proposed verification plan to ensure that the site is fit for the uses proposed;
c) measures to deal with contamination during construction works;
d) in the event that remedial action be required, a validation report that will validate and verify the completion of the agreed decontamination measures; and
e) in the event that monitoring is required, monitoring statements shall be submitted at agreed intervals for such time period as is considered appropriate by the Planning Authority.

No development shall commence until written confirmation has been received that the scheme has been implemented, completed and, if required, monitoring measurements are in place, all to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure that the site is suitable for redevelopment, given the nature of previous uses/processes on the site.

34. Planning Monitoring Officer

No development shall commence until the Planning Authority has approved in writing the terms of appointment by the applicant of a suitably qualified environmental specialist to assist the Planning Authority in monitoring compliance with the planning permission and conditions attached to this consent. The terms of Planning Monitoring Officer (PMO) appointment shall:

a) Impose a duty to monitor compliance with the planning permission and conditions attached to this consent;
b) Require the PMO to submit a report at least every three months to the Planning Authority, or monthly at the further written request of the Planning Authority, summarising works undertaken on site; and
c) Require the PMO to report to the Planning Authority any incidences of non-compliance with the planning permission and conditions attached to this consent at the earliest practical opportunity.

The PMO shall be appointed on the approved terms throughout the period from the commencement of development to completion of post construction restoration works.

Reason: To enable the development to be suitably monitored to ensure compliance with the consent issued.

35. Community Liaison Group

No development shall commence until a community liaison group is established by the applicant, in collaboration with the Planning Authority and affected local Community Councils.

The group shall act as a forum for the community to be kept informed of project progress and, in particular, should allow advanced dialogue on the provision of all transport related mitigation measures and to keep under review the timing of the delivery of abnormal loads and performance of the Construction Traffic Management Plan.

This should also ensure that local events and tourist seasons are considered and appropriate measures to co-ordinate deliveries and work with these and any other major projects in the area to ensure no conflict between construction traffic and the increased traffic generated by such events / seasons / developments.

The liaison group, or element of any combined liaison group relating to this development, shall be maintained until the construction of the development and all site infrastructure becomes fully operational.

Reason: To assist project implementation, ensuring community dialogue and the delivery of appropriate mitigation measures for example to minimise potential hazards to road users, including pedestrians, travelling on the road networks.

36. Operational Management Plan

Prior to the energisation of the development, a site Operational Management Plan shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. This plan shall detail:

a) An updated Schedule of Mitigation (SM) as it relates to the operational phase of the development highlighting mitigation set out within each chapter of the Environmental Appraisal (EA) and supplementary environmental information, as well as the conditions of this consent;
b) Processes to control / action changes from the agreed SM;
c) A scheme outlining the notification and approval process of the planning authority in consultation with the respective roads authorities and community representatives as required, for any abnormal load movement required during the operation of the approved development, or prior to any decommissioning of the development.

Thereafter, the OEMP shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details from first commissioning of the development until the cessation of the use of the development, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of environmental amenity, pollution prevention, maintaining water quality, and provision of adequate parking and charging facilities.

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 broad agreement with the findings of the Environmental Appraisal for the Banniskirk Substation, which comprises the construction of a substation platform, erection of substation buildings, HVDC converter station, associated plant and infrastructure, and ancillary development which includes fencing, drainage, new and temporary access, construction compound and material storage areas, landscaping and other ancillary works. Whilst the proposed development would give rise to some visual and cumulative effects, amenity and traffic effects particularly during the construction period. The Highland Council is satisfied that the environmental effects of this development can be addressed sufficiently by way of mitigation. The Council has incorporated the requirement for a schedule of mitigation within the conditions of this permission. Monitoring of construction and operational compliance has been secured through Conditions 4, 11, 12, 18, 19, 22, 25, 34, 35 and 36 of this permission.

FOOTNOTE TO APPLICANT

Initiation and Completion Notices

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) requires all developers to submit notices to the Planning Authority prior to, and upon completion of, development. These are in addition to any other similar requirements (such as

Building Warrant completion notices) and failure to comply represents a breach of planning control and may result in formal enforcement action.

1. The developer must submit a Notice of Initiation of Development in accordance with Section 27A of the Act to the Planning Authority prior to work commencing on site.

2. On completion of the development, the developer must submit a Notice of Completion in accordance with Section 27B of the Act to the Planning Authority.

Copies of the notices referred to are attached to this decision notice for your convenience.

Flood Risk

It is important to note that the granting of planning permission does not imply there is an unconditional absence of flood risk relating to (or emanating from) the application site. As per Scottish Planning Policy (paragraph 259), planning permission does not remove the liability position of developers or owners in relation to flood risk.

Scottish Water

You are advised that a supply and connection to Scottish Water infrastructure is dependent on sufficient spare capacity at the time of the application for connection to Scottish Water. The granting of planning permission does not guarantee a connection. Any enquiries with regards to sewerage connection and/or water supply should be directed to Scottish Water on 0845 601 8855.

Septic Tanks and Soakaways

Where a private foul drainage solution is proposed, you will require separate consent from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). Planning permission does not guarantee that approval will be given by SEPA and as such you are advised to contact them direct to discuss the matter (01349 862021).

Contaminated Land

There is the potential for contamination at this site due to its use as a Substation. 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, please be aware of potential health and safety issues for site workers and 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 Community Services, Contaminated Land for advice.

Local Roads Authority Consent

In addition to planning permission, you may require one or more separate consents (such as road construction consent, dropped kerb consent, a road openings permit, occupation of the road permit etc.) from the Area Roads Team prior to work commencing. These consents may require additional work and/or introduce additional specifications and you are therefore advised to contact your local Area Roads office for further guidance at the earliest opportunity.

Failure to comply with access, parking and drainage infrastructure requirements may endanger road users, affect the safety and free-flow of traffic and is likely to result in enforcement action being taken against you under both the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

Further information on the Council's roads standards can be found at: http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/roadsandtransport

Application forms and guidance notes for access-related consents can be downloaded from:

http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20005/roads_and_pavements/101/permits_for_working_on_public_roads/2

Mud and Debris on Road

Please note that it an offence under Section 95 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to allow mud or any other material to be deposited, and thereafter remain, on a public road from any vehicle or development site. You must, therefore, put in place a strategy for dealing with any material deposited on the public road network and maintain this until development is complete.

Transport Scotland Roads Directorate

The applicant should be informed that the granting of planning consent does not carry with it the right to carry out works within the trunk road boundary and that permission must be granted by Transport Scotland Roads Directorate. Where any works are required on the trunk road, contact details are provided on Transport Scotland's response to the planning authority which is available on the Council's planning portal.

Trunk Road modification works shall, in all respects, comply with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and the Specification for Highway Works published by HMSO. The developer shall issue a certificate to that effect, signed by the design organisation.

Trunk Road modifications shall, in all respects, be designed and constructed to arrangements that comply with the Disability Discrimination Act: Good Practice Guide for Roads published by Transport Scotland. The developer shall provide written confirmation of this, signed by the design organisation.

The road works which are required due to the above Conditions will require a Road Safety Audit as specified by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

Any trunk road works will necessitate a Minute of Agreement with the Trunk Roads Authority prior to commencement.

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

Protected Species - Ground Nesting Birds

Construction works have the potential to disturb nesting birds or damage their nest sites, and as such, a nesting bird survey should be made, not more than 24 hours prior to the commencement of development if this coincides within the main bird breeding season (March- August inclusive) and throughout the breeding bird season if new areas are being developed or there has been a break in construction. 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.

Watercourse diversion: For the Controlled Activity Regulations (CAR) application, SEPA will require a set of drawings that clearly and only show the following:

- Channel planform (relative to the existing channel and including the length of realigned channel).
- A long profile of the realigned channel showing the variation in channel slope along the realigned channel.
- A number of cross-sections along the entire realigned channel illustrating variations and including tie-in to existing ground level. These cross-sections should show dimensions for channel widths, bank heights and bank slopes.
- Bed material (size and distribution).
- Bed forms including dimensioned details as necessary (e.g. plane-riffle, pool-riffle, step-pool, bedrock etc).
- Bank materials (type, thickness/depth and height above bed).
- Details of any crossings (culvert width, height, length, slope and embedment depth).

Further details of regulatory requirements and good practice advice, for example in relation to construction site drainage, can be found on the regulations section of our website. If you are unable to find the advice you need for a specific regulatory matter, please contact a member of the local compliance team at NHNI@sepa.org.uk.

Signature:	Dafydd Jones
Designation:	Area Planning Manager – North
Author:	Peter Wheelan
Background Papers:	Documents referred to in report and in case file.

Relevant Plans:

- **Plan 1 Location Plan** BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-XX-PLN-C-0004 REV P06 (received 21st Nov 2024).
- **Plan 2 Proposed Site Layout Plan** BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-XX-PLN-C-0007 REV P01 (received 5th Sept 2025).
- **Plan 3 Proposed Elevation Plan** - ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-ELE-A-0022 REV P04 (received 21st Nov 2024).
- **Plan 4 Landscaping Plan** 0697221-DR-LAN-101 REV B (received 5th Sept 2025)

- **Plan 5 Temporary works** - BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0012 REV P05.
- **Plan 6 Converter Building Elevations** - ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-2104 REV P03. (received 21st November 2024).
- **Plan 7 Converter Building Elevations**- ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-2105 REV P03. (received 21st November 2024).
- **Plan 8 HVDC Substation Section** - BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-ELE-C-0160 REV P04. (received 21st November 2024).
- **Plan 9 AC Substation section and elevation** - BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0011 REV P07. (received 21st November 2024).
- **Plan 10 Section Plan** BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0013 REV P01. (received 21st Nov 2024).
- **Plan 11 Section Plan -** BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0014 REV P01. (received 21st Nov 2024)
- **Plan 12 Section Plan** - ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-ELE-A-0032 REV P04. (received 21st Nov 2024).
- **Plan 13 Synchronous Condenser building Elevation** - BANN4-LT407-JMS-BLDG-SCND-ELE-A-0066 REV P04. (received 21st Nov 2024).
- **Plan 14 Synchronous Condenser building Elevation** BANN4-LT407-JMS-BLDG-SCND-ELE-A-0067 REV P04. (received 21st Nov 2024).
- **Plan 15 Synchronous Condenser Floor Plan** - BANN4-LT407-JMS-BLDG-SCND-LAY-A-0064 REV P03. (received 21st Nov 2024).

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Development Plan and Other Material Policy Considerations

Appendix 2 - Compliance with the Development Plan / Other Material Policy Considerations.

Appendix 3 - Appropriate Assessment

Appendix 4 - Letters of Representation

Appendix 1 – Development Plan and Other Material Policy Considerations

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

National Planning Framework 4 (2023) (NPF4)

A1.1 National Development 3 – Strategic Renewable Electricity generation and Transmission Infrastructure

1 - Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises

2 - Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

3 - Biodiversity

4 - Natural Places

5 - Soils

7 - Historic Assets and Places

11 - Energy

20 - Blue and Green Infrastructure

22 - Flood Risk and Water Management

23 - Health and Safety

25 - Community Wealth Building

29 - Rural Development

33 - Minerals

Highland Wide Local Development Plan 2012 (HwLDP)

A1.2 28 - Sustainable Design

29 - Design Quality and Place-making

30 - Physical Constraints

31 - Developer Contributions

36 - Development in the Wider Countryside

55 - Peat and Soils

56 - Travel

57 - Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage

58 - Protected Species

59 - Other important Species

60 - Other Importance Habitats

61 - Landscape

63 - Water Environment

64 - Flood Risk

65 - Waste Water Treatment

66 - Surface Water Drainage

69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure

72 - Pollution

73 - Air Quality

74 - Green Networks

77 - Public Access

Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (2018) (CaSPlan)

A1.3 The site is not covered by any specific development allocation or safeguarding notion. The CaSPlan does confirm the boundaries (including any refinements) of the Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) within the plan area.

Highland Council Supplementary Planning Policy Guidance

A1.4
- Developer Contributions (Nov 2018)
- Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment (Jan 2013)
- Green Networks (Jan 2013)
- Highland Historic Environment Strategy (Jan 2013)
- Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (Mar 2013)
- Physical Constraints (Mar 2013)
- Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments (May 2013)
- Special Landscape Area Citations (June 2011)
- Standards for Archaeological Work (Mar 2012)
- Sustainable Design Guide (Jan 2013)
- Trees, Woodlands and Development (Jan 2013)
- Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance (May 2024)

OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A1.5
- Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 – interim and annual targets replaced by Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill in November 2024
- Climate Change Committee Report to UK Parliament (July 2024)
- UK Government Clean Power Action Plan (Dec 2024)
- The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023)
- Draft Scottish Biodiversity strategy to 2045: tackling the nature emergency (2023)
- Scottish Energy Strategy (2017)
- 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy (2011)
- Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map, Scottish Government (2018)
- Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (2019)
- Scheduled Monuments Consents Policy (2019)
- PAN 1/2011 - Planning and Noise (2011)
- PAN 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (Jan 2008)
- Developing with Nature Guidance (NatureScot 2023)

- Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects (2010)
- Community Benefits for Electricity Transmission Network Infrastructure: Government Response, UK Department for Energy and Security and Net Zero (2023).
- Advising on peatland, carbon-rich soils and priority peatland habitats in development (NatureScot, Feb 2024)

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

National Policy

A.2.1 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) forms part of the Development Plan and was adopted in February 2023. NPF4 comprises three distinct parts. Part 1 sets out an overarching spatial strategy for Scotland in the future. Outlining that Scotland is facing unprecedented challenges and that we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and embrace and deliver radical change so we can tackle and adapt to climate change, restore biodiversity loss, improve health and wellbeing, and build a wellbeing economy while striving to create great places. Therefore, NPF4 sets out that choices need to be made about how we can make sustainable use of our natural assets in a way that benefits communities.

A.2.2 NPF4 outlines 18 national developments that support the plan's spatial strategy. National developments will be a focus for delivery, as well as exemplars of the Place Principle, placemaking and a Community Wealth Building (CWB) approach to economic development. Six of the national developments support the delivery of sustainable places. Among these is national development number 3 - Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure, which "supports electricity generation and associated grid infrastructure throughout Scotland, providing employment and opportunities for community benefit, helping to reduce emissions and improve security of supply." National development 3 accords national development status to electricity transmission that includes c) New and/or upgraded Infrastructure directly supporting on and offshore high voltage electricity lines, cables and interconnectors including converter stations, switching stations and substations. This proposal aligns with part c) and therefore, is classed as a national development, and as such received in principle support.

A.2.3 The spatial strategy reflects existing legislation by setting out that decision making requires to reflect the long-term public interest. However, in doing so, it is clear that the decision maker must make the right choices about where development should be located, ensuring clarity is provided over the types of infrastructure that need to be provided and the assets that should be protected to ensure they continue to benefit future generations. To that end, the Spatial Priorities support the planning and delivery of sustainable places, which will reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity; create liveable places, where residents can live better, healthier lives; and create productive places, with a greener, fairer, and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

A.2.4 Part 2 of NFP4 sets out the National Planning Policy which cover three themes: Sustainable Places, Liveable Places, and Productive Places; within which there are a total of 33 policies and many of these consist of distinct sub-policies. These 33 national planning policies form part of the development plan and will be assessed along with the Council's LDP policies for development management decisions. The most relevant policies are outlined below.

A.2.5 Part 3 provides a series of annexes that provide the rationale for the strategies and policies of NPF4, which outline how the document should be used, and set out how the Scottish Government will implement the strategies and policies contained in the document. With Annex A: 'How to use this document' noting that the policies within Part 2 should be read as a whole and '…it is for the decision maker to determine what weight to attach to policies on a case-by-case basis….' It goes on to state that '…where a policy states that development will be supported, it is in principle, and it is for the decision maker to take into account all other relevant policies….'.

A.2.6 Many of NPF4's policies are relevant to consideration of this proposal, but attention is particularly drawn here to the following key policies. Policy 1 - Tackling the climate and nature crises aims to encourage, promote and facilitate development that addresses the global climate emergency and nature crisis. It requires 'significant weight' to be given to those crises in decision making.

A.2.7 Policy 3 - Biodiversity aims to protect biodiversity, reverse biodiversity loss, deliver positive effects and strengthen nature networks. Every development proposal has to maintain or improve biodiversity. Biodiversity measures can be secured through several conditions including the landscaping strategy, the Habitat Management Plan and the requirement for 10% biodiversity net gain.

A.2.8 Policy 4 - Natural Places aims to protect, restore and enhance natural assets making best use of nature-based solutions. Policy 4 section e) requires project design and mitigation to demonstrate how the following various impacts on communities and individual dwellings, including, residential amenity, visual impact, and noise, landscape, visual and cumulative impacts, public access, traffic and roads, historic environment, hydrology, water environment and flood risk, trees, biodiversity, decommissioning and site restoration are all addressed. These matters are all addressed in the report above and subject to conditions are considered to be acceptable.

A.2.9 Policy 11 - Energy aims to encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development onshore and offshore. This includes energy generation, storage, new and replacement transmission and distribution infrastructure. Section a) notes development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies will be supported, including (ii.) enabling works, such as grid transmission and distribution infrastructure. Section c) confirms development proposals will only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities. Section d) requires development proposals that impact on international or national designations to be assessed in relation to Policy 4. In considering these impacts, significant weight will be placed on the contribution of the proposal to renewable energy generation targets and on greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

A.2.10 Policy 25 - Community wealth building aims to encourage, promote and facilitate a new strategic approach to economic development that also provides a practical model for building a wellbeing economy at local, regional and national levels. While NPF4 considers national developments as a focus for delivery, they should also be exemplars of the community wealth building approach to economic development. A socio-economic condition can be secured. Further measures outwith the planning application can be developed through the Councils Social Charter.

Highland wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP)

A.2.11 The principal HwLDP policy against which the application requires to be determined is the Policy 69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure. This policy offers support for electricity transmission infrastructure, having regard to their level of strategic significance in transmitting electricity from areas of generation to areas of consumption. Such support is subject to the proposals not having an unacceptable significant impact on the environment.

A.2.12 As the development would provide additional grid capacity for the transmission network and would help to facilitate an increasing proportion of electricity generation from renewable sources, the principle of the development receives support under HwLDP Policy 69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure, subject to site selection, design and overcoming any unacceptable significant environmental effects.

A.2.13 In this regard, the site does not benefit from specific policy designations. The HwLDP does confirm the boundaries of Special Landscape Areas. Policies 28, 57, 61 and 69 seek to safeguard these regionally important landscapes. The impact of this development on landscape is primarily assessed in the Landscape and Visual Impact section of this report. HwLDP Policy 36 Development in the Wider Countryside applies and sets out that all development in the countryside will be determined on the basis of a number of criteria. Pertinent matters to this proposal include siting and design, being compatible with the existing pattern of development, landscape character and capacity, as well as drainage and servicing implications. The site also does not form part of any natural heritage or, built heritage designation

Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (2018) (CaSPlan)

A.2.14 The site is not covered by any specific development allocation or safeguarding notion. The CaSPlan does confirm the boundaries (including any refinements) of the Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) within the plan area.

Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement (2022), Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023), and Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland (2023)

A.2.15 The Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement supersedes the previously adopted Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement which was published in 2017. The document sets out a clear ambition for onshore wind in Scotland and for the first time sets a national target for a minimum level of installed capacity for onshore wind energy being 20 Gigawatts (GW). This is set against a currently installed capacity of 9.4 GW (June 2023). Therefore, a further 10.6 GW of onshore wind requires to be installed to meet the target. It is however acknowledged that targets are not caps. In delivering such a target Scotland would play a significant role in meeting the requirement of 25-30 GW of installed capacity across the UK identified by the Climate Change Committee.

A.2.16 Like the previous iteration of the Onshore Wind Energy Policy Statement, the document recognises that balance is required and that no one technology can allow Scotland to reach its net zero targets. The document is clear that in achieving a balance, environmental and economic benefits to Scotland must be maximised. In taking this approach, this echoes Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy. Benefits to rural areas, such as provision of jobs and opportunities to restore and protect natural habitats, are also highlighted in the document.

A.2.17 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.

A.2.18 To deliver the ambition for onshore wind, the Onshore Wind Sector Deal for Scotland was introduced in September 2023. The document focuses on necessary high level actions by Government and the Sector to support onshore wind delivery. Jointly, Government and the Sector are committed to working together to ensure a balance is struck between onshore wind and the impacts on land use and the environment. The document looks to expediate decision making and consent implementation to achieve 20 GW of installation by 2030, meaning we should be seeing faster decisions on applications that are already in the system, with more consents being build out.

Appendix 3 – Appropriate Assessment

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

CAITHNESS LOCHS SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA)

24/04898/FUL

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS AFFECTING EUROPEAN SITES

The status of the Caithness Lochs Special Protection Area (SPA) means that the requirements of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, andc.) Regulations 1994 as amended (the 'Habitats Regulations') or, for reserved matters the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended apply.

This 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:

- Consider whether the proposal is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the SPA for conservation; and, if not,

- Consider, on a precautionary basis, whether the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the SPA either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

- Make an Appropriate Assessment of the implications (of the proposal) for the SPA in view of the SPA'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 SPA. If this is not the case and there are no 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.

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 in its consultation response dated (20th January 2025) and the applicant.

HIGHLAND COUNCIL APPRAISAL OF THE PROPOSAL

- The proposal is not connected with or necessary to the management of the SPA for conservation.

- The proposed development is not located within the Caithness Lochs SPA but is located some 3.2km to the northwest of the site.

  However, the SPA is designated for its non-breeding bird interests, Greenland white-fronted geese, greylag geese and whooper swan. The proposed development site and habitats adjoining the site could offer supporting habitat for the SPA species in terms of foraging and additional roosting opportunities. Consequentially, there is potential for connectivity between the proposed development site and this SPA. NatureScot and the applicant both recognise this.

- NatureScot advise that the Council, as competent authority is required to undertake an Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the implications of the proposal on the Caithness Lochs Special Protection Area, in view of the SPA's conservation objectives of its qualifying interests. In addition, the applicant produced a Shadow Appropriate Assessment which was sent to NatureScot.

Appraisal Summary
It is the view of the Planning Authority, following the receipt of advice from NatureScot and considering the baseline results reported in the applicants EIA, that this proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the designation.

As summarised by NatureScot the baseline survey results do not suggest that the proposed development site or immediately adjoining habitats are of importance to the SPA species. The habitat surveys for the proposed development site indicate the presence of a mosaic of habitat types and land uses less likely to provide suitable foraging for geese and swans. Although some flight activity was recorded over the site for greylag geese (2 flights – April), the bird surveys (EIAR Appendix 9.2) recorded no foraging geese or swans within 500 m of the proposed development site or commuting from known roosts to forage on the proposed development site. The lochan over 1 km to the SE offers supporting habitat for whooper swans, however, the distance should ensure that birds using this waterbody throughout the non-breeding season should be undisturbed by construction activity.

NatureScot note that the foraging goose surveys conducted for the proposed Spittal – Loch Buidhe – Beauly 400 kV Overhead Line, note that the closest foraging geese were recorded as being approximately 3 km east of the proposed development. The lochan approx. 1.1km to the southeast was surveyed for winter geese, no activity was recorded. Some flight activity was recorded for whooper swans using this waterbody in the September.

Identified mitigation:

- The applicant proposes mitigation within the EIAR to avoid the potential for disturbance to Greenland white-fronted geese, greylag geese and whooper swans at the proposed development during the wintering period (October – March). The Applicant has proposed that an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will be present for

all construction activities during the winter period. If geese or swans are recorded during check surveys, the ECoW will implement additional mitigation measures to ensure the works do not disturb the geese or swans. This measure could be incorporated into the bird species protection plan.

- Although the Applicant has identified this additional mitigation as being required to conclude no adverse effect on site integrity, NatureScot advise that no adverse effect on site integrity could be concluded without the addition of this mitigation. This mitigation is precautionary and welcomed but not essential in our view to avoid an adverse effect on site integrity.

Cumulative effects:

- There is potential for cumulative effects on the SPA species, particularly from projects that involve work close to the SPA waterbodies and where construction schedules will overlap. It is however likely that these projects would also implement measures, both in terms of design and embedded mitigation with the option for similar additional mitigation, as presented by the Applicant above, to avoid any cumulative effects.

Overall, it is considered that the development neither in isolation nor cumulatively with other development would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA. Whilst the applicant has identified mitigation, NatureScot consider that although it is a welcomed approach it is not strictly necessary to avoid an adverse effect on the SPAs integrity. Nevertheless, the mitigation proposed by the applicant will be secured by way of planning condition requiring a Bird Species Protection Plan.

The Highland Council (**23.10.2025**)

PLAN
SCALE 1:50000

GENERAL NOTES:

1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETERS. DO NOT SCALE
2. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH DRAWING BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0010 AND 0011.
3. THE SITE IS LOCATED AT APPROXIMATE OS GRID REFERENCE ND 159 568

LEGEND:

PROPOSED RED LINE BOUNDARY

REV	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED	DATE
P06	SK	AGF	TCC	19/11/24
UPDATED FOR PLANNING				
P05	SK	AGF	TCC	15/11/24
UPDATED FOR PLANNING				
P04	TS	AGF	TCC	18/10/24
UPDATED FOR COMMENTS				
P03	SK	AGF	RP	29/07/24
UPDATED FOR COMMENTS				
P02	AGF	AGF	TCC	17/05/24
FOR PHASE 2B PLANNING				
P01	JS	AGF	TCC	16/04/24

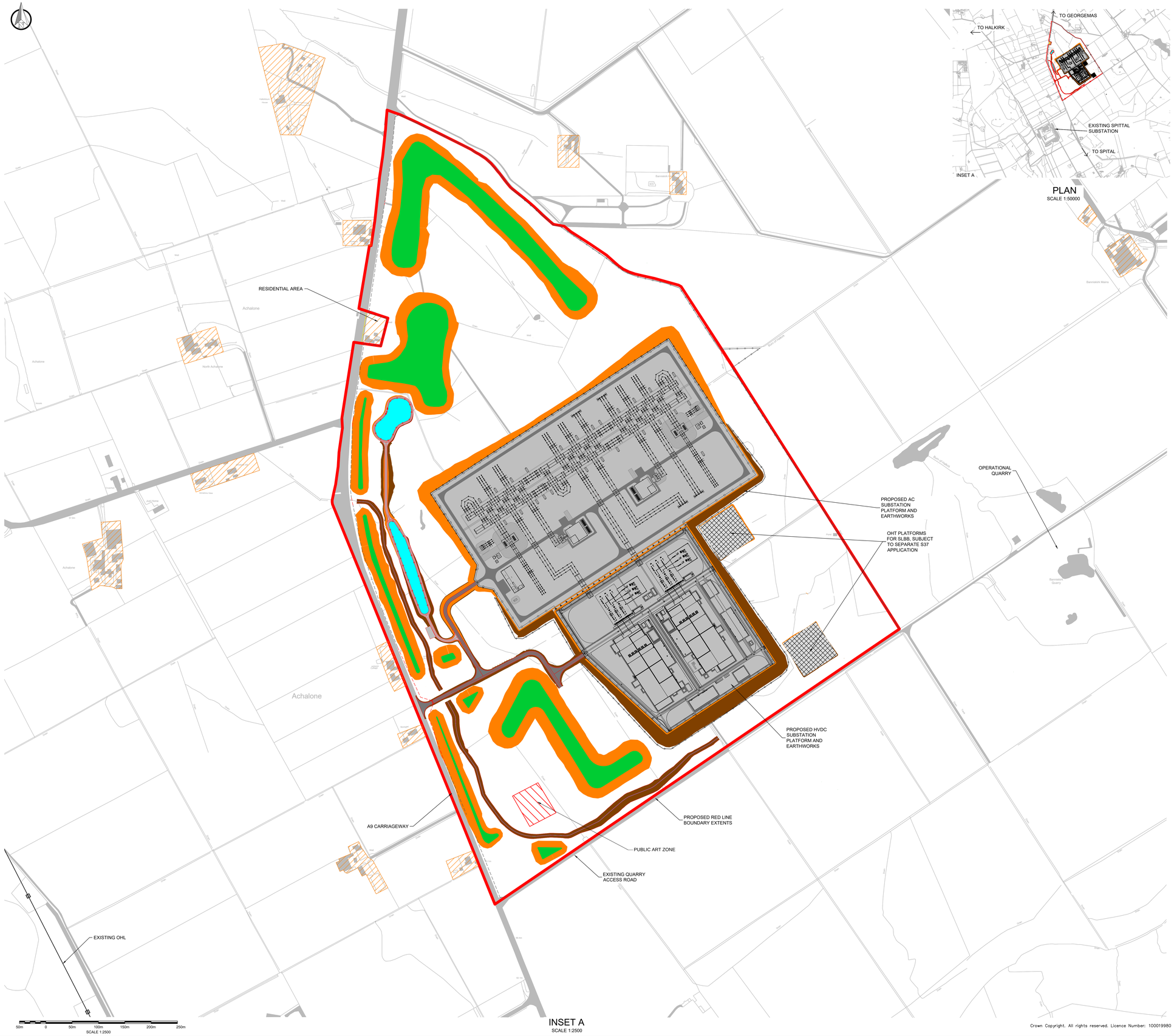
MURPHY
WORLD-CLASS INFRASTRUCTURE

J. MURPHY & SONS LTD
HAWKS GREEN LANE, CANNOCK WS11 7LH

Tony Gee
TONY GEE AND PARTNERS LLP
4TH FLOOR, ARTHUR HOUSE, MANCHESTER M1 3FH

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN ELECTRICITY NETWORK
1 WATERLOO ST, GLASGOW G2 6AY

Project:	BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Scheme:	
Site:	LT407 BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Circuit:	COMMON
Revision: P06	Dwg Title: EXISTING SITE LOCATION PLAN
Suitability: S5	
Scale @ A1: VARIOUS	Dwg No: BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-XX-PLN-C-0004
Sheets: 1 OF 1	Purpose of Issue: ISSUED FOR PLANNING
Internal Proj.Ref: -	Client Dwg Number: -



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LEGEND:

- PROPOSED RED LINE BOUNDARY
- RESIDENTIAL AREA
- BUNDED LANDSCAPED AREA
- PROPOSED SUBSTATION PLATFORM
- PROPOSED EARTHWORKS FILL
- PROPOSED EARTHWORKS CUT
- DETENTION BASIN
- WATERCOURSE DIVERSION

ISSUED FOR PLANNING

REV	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED	DATE
P01	TS	AGF	TCC	03/09/25

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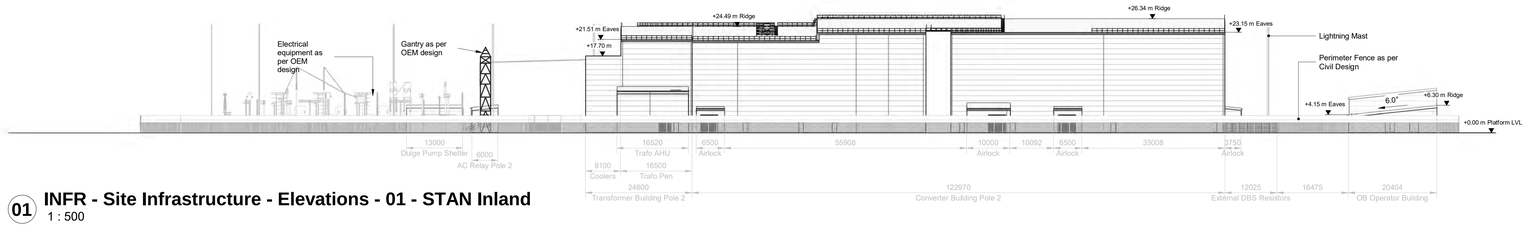
1 WATERLOO ST, GLASGOW G2 6AY

Project:	BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Scheme:	
Site:	LT407 BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Circuit:	COMMON
Revision:	P01
Suitability:	S5
Dwg Title:	PROPOSED SITE PLAN
Scale @ A1:	1:2500
Dwg No:	BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-XX-PLN-C-0007
Sheets:	1 OF 1
Purpose of Issue:	ISSUED FOR PLANNING
Internal Proj.Ref:	-
Client Dwg Number:	-



01 INFR - Site Infrastructure - Elevations - 01 - STAN Inland

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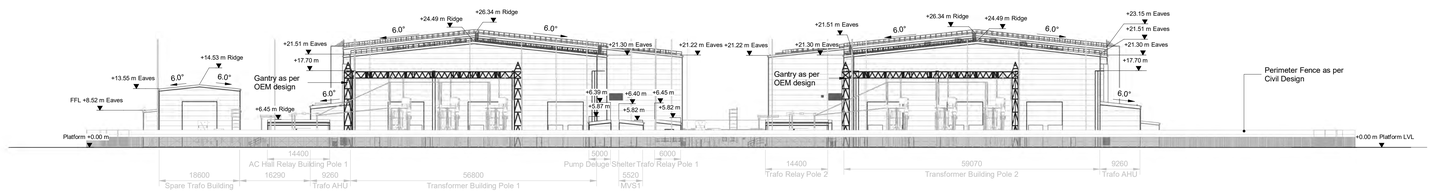

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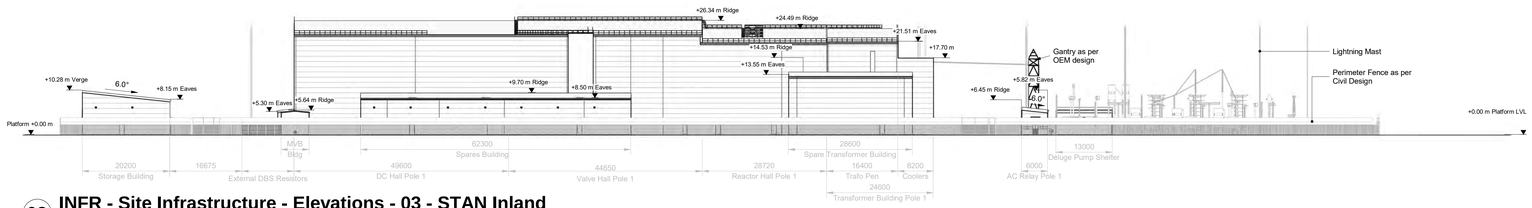

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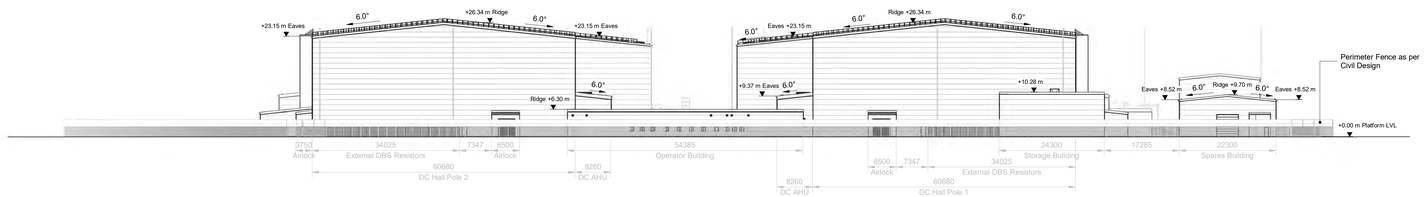

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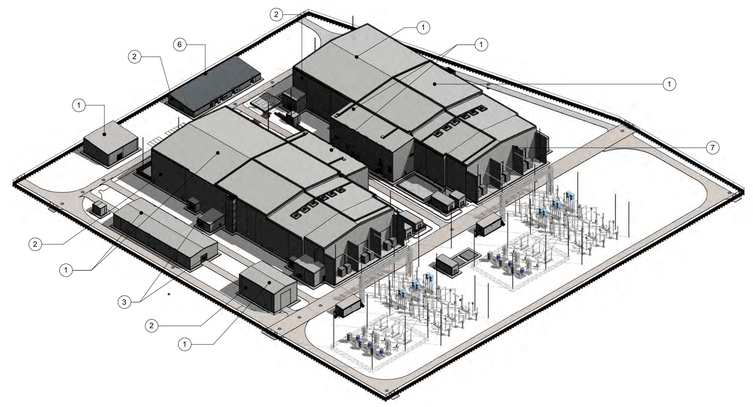
1 : 500



INFR - Site Infrastructure - 3D Site View - STAN Inland

Materials Key

1	Trapezoidal Insulated Metal Roof Cladding Panel - RAL as per Design Statement
2	Horizontally Laid Flat Insulated Metal Wall Cladding Panel - RAL as per Design Statement
3	Metal Door - RAL as per Design Statement
5	Aluminium PPC Coated Square Section Rain Water Down Pipe (to have anti-climb features) - RAL as per Design Statement
6	Single Ply Membrane on Flat Insulated Metal Panel - RAL as per Design Statement
7	RC Concrete Wall

Note: Materials will be as described above. The elevations on this drawing are shown in black and white. For a visual representation of colours please refer to ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-RPT-A-0200 Design Statement - Inland

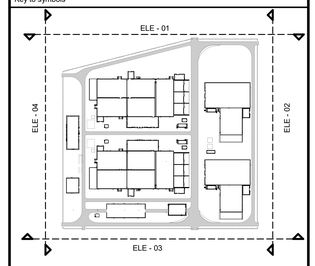
1:500 0 25m 50m

11/10/2024 16:52:00 Autodesk Docs://100120036 - ASTI-ECD/ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-M-A-0001.rvt

Notes

1. Do not scale from this drawing.
2. All dimensions are in millimetres unless otherwise stated.
3. All levels are in meters and relate to AOD.
4. This drawing is part of RIBA Stage 3 Spatial Coordination.
5. Any drawing errors or discrepancies should be brought to the attention of Mott MacDonald.
6. The designs shown are subject to detailed site survey, investigations, the CDM Regulations and the comments and/ or approval of various relevant Local Authority Officers, Statutory Undertakers, etc.
7. This drawing is to be used for the purposes of assisting with design development and is not to be used for construction.
8. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant documents and drawings, including those from other disciplines.
9. No unauthorised use, disclosure, storage or copying.

Key to symbols



Reference drawings

Drawing to be read in association with:
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-LAY-A-0002 STAN Inland Proposed Site Layout - Ground Floor
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-LAY-A-0012 STAN Inland Proposed Site Layout - Roof
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-ELE-A-0022 STAN Inland Proposed Site Layout - Elevations
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-ELE-A-0032 STAN Inland Proposed Site Layout - Sections

Third Party Information

Date Received	Company	Drg Reference / Revision
02/02/2024	HE	Bannisktk - Federated Model.nwd
08/02/2024	HE	t_INL9215445_en Site Layout - Spiltal.pdf

Rev	Date	Drawn	Description	Ch'k'd	App'd
P04	15/10/2024	SK	ISSUED FOR PLANNING	VC	AF
P03	31/07/2024	MF	ISSUED FOR DAR	VC	AF
P02	29/03/2024	NW	RIBA 2 ISSUE UPDATED	VC	AF
P01	15/03/2024	NW	RIBA 2 ISSUE	VC	AF

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Glasgow, G2 5LP
United Kingdom
F +44 (0)141 221 2048
W www.mottmac.com

Status: FOR PLANNING SUBMISSION

Site Name: STAN Inland

Title: ASTI-ECD

Site Infrastructure
Proposed Site Layout - Elevations

Drawn	N.Wyganowska	NW	Designed	M.Fleming	MF
Eng Check	V.Chavdarova	VC	Approved	A.Farish	AF

MMD Project Number: 100120036
ISO Project Code: ASTIDC
Security:

MMD Drawing Number: ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-ELE-A-0022

Scale	Format	Sheet	Revision
1 : 500	A0	01 of 01	P04

N

KEY

- SITE BOUNDARY
- PROPOSED TRACK
- REALIGNED WATER COURSE
- EXISTING TREES, WOODLAND, HEDGEROWS AND VEGETATION
- PROPOSED NATIVE SPECIES LOW MAINTENANCE MEADOW MIX
  Low Maintenance Wildflower and Grasses Seed Mix (or similar approved)
- SUDS PONDS AND BANKS OF REALIGNED WATER COURSE
  Wet Wildflower Meadow Seed Mix (or similar approved)
- PROPOSED NATIVE SPECIES WOODLAND AND SCRUB MIX
  Planted with transplants 60-80 cm high using locally native species including rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), willow (*Salix caprea*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and bird cherry (*Prunus padus*)
- EARTHWORK - FILL
  Seeded with Low Maintenance Wildflower and Grasses Seed Mix (or similar approved)
- EARTHWORK - CUT
  Seeded with Low Maintenance Wildflower and Grasses Seed Mix (or similar approved) where feasible and not where exposed rock.
- PROPOSED MOUNDS/BUNDS
  Seeded with Low maintenance Wildflower and Grasses Seed Mix where not planted with trees/scrub (or similar approved)

NOTES: All planting to be protected from deer incursion/attack by deer-proof fencing with access gates for maintenance.

Banniskirk House

Burn of Halkirk

SuDS

SuDS

SuDS

OHL TOWER PLATFORM (SUBJECT TO SEPARATE PLANNING APPLICATION)

Achalone Croft

Achlone Cottage

Mossgiel

Well

Track

Drain

Pond

Fence

Wall

0 20 40 60 80 100 120 140 160 180 200m

SCALE 1:2000

REVISION SCHEDULE

Rev	Date	Description
A	02.09.24	Revised following client's comments (WM)
B	04.09.25	Updated to comply with the latest layout and bunding plan (WM)

NOTES:

1. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION.
2. ALL DIMENSIONS , CHANGES, LEVELS AND COORDINATES ARE IN METERS UNLESS DEFINED OTHERWISE.
3. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PROJECT HEALTH & SAFETY FILE FOR ANY IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL RISKS.
4.

STATUS: **FOR PLANNING**

BASE:

GRID REFERENCE: ND 159568

PROJECT: Banniskirk Substation

TITLE: Landscape Mitigation Plan

CLIENT: SSE

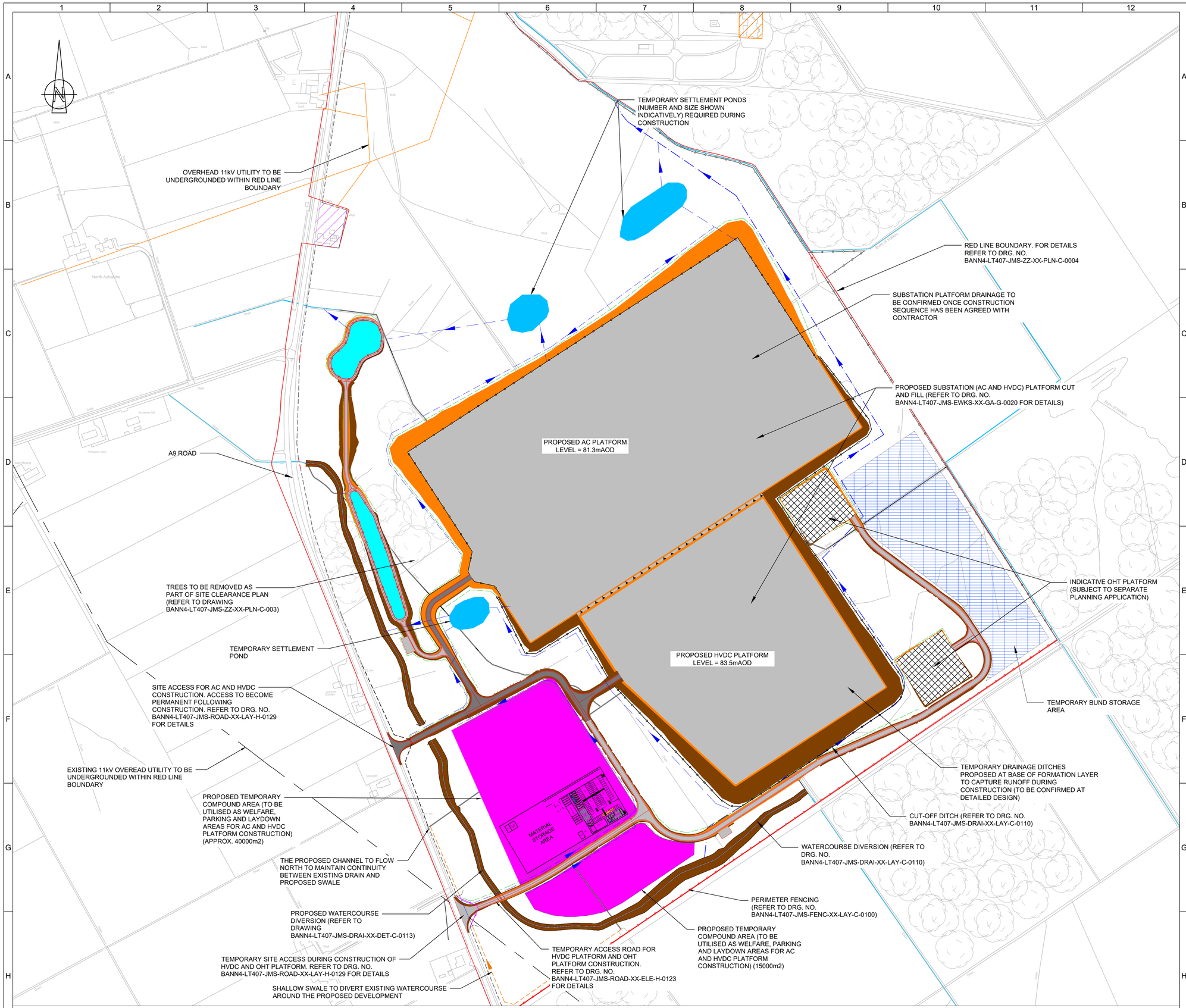
DATE: 28.08.24 SCALE: 1:2000@A1

DRAWN: WM DRAWING NO.: 0697221-DR-LAN-101

CHECKED: JF REVISION: B

ERM
Environmental Resources Management
2nd Floor Exchequer Court
33 St Mary Axe, London
United Kingdom, EC3A 8AA

Tel: +44 (0)20 3206 5200
https://www.erm.com/



PLAN

SCALE 1:2500

GENERAL NOTES:

1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN METERS. DO NOT SCALE.
2. THIS DRAWINGS IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH DRAWINGS BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-XX-PLN-C-0001 AND BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0010
3. THE PLAN SHOWN ON THIS DRAWING DETAILS THE CONSTRUCTION STAGE PRIOR TO SUBSTATION BUILDING, STRUCTURES AND DRAINAGE INSTALLATION.
4. REFER TO DRG. NO. BANN4-LT407-JMS-SERV-XX-PLN-C-0005 FOR UTILITY SERVICE PLAN
5. FOR EARTHWORK BUNDING REFER TO DRG. NO. BANN4-LT407-JMS-EWKS-XX-GA-G-0024
7. PROPOSED HV CABLE BETWEEN EXISTING AND PROPOSED AC SUBSTATIONS NOT SHOWN AS SUBJECT TO SEPARATE PLANNING APPLICATION.

LEGEND:

- RED LINE BOUNDARY
- DETENTION BASIN
- TEMPORARY SETTLEMENT BASIN
- PROPOSED SUBSTATION PLATFORM
- PROPOSED EARTHWORKS FILL
- PROPOSED EARTHWORKS CUT
- TEMPORARY COMPOUND AREA
- TEMPORARY BUND STORAGE AREA
- RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY
- RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY
- CUT-OFF DITCH (TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT)
- TEMPORARY DRAINAGE DITCHES
- SHALLOW SWALE
- TEMPORARY SLIT FENCING
- EXISTING 11kV OVERHEAD UTILITY (LOCATED SOUTH OF PROPOSED SUBSTATION)
- EXISTING 11kV OVERHEAD UTILITY (LOCATED NORTH OF PROPOSED SUBSTATION)

REV	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED	DATE
-	-	-	-	-
UPDATED FOR PLANNING				
P05	SK	AGF	TCC	15/11/24
UPDATED FOR COMMENTS				
P04	OJ	AC	TCC	20/09/24
UPDATED FOR COMMENTS				
P03	SK	AGF	RP	07/08/24
UPDATED FOR COMMENTS				
P02	AGF	AGF	TCC	20/05/24
FOR PHASE 2B PLANNING				
P01	TS	AC	TCC	17/04/24

MURPHY
WORLD-CLASS INFRASTRUCTURE
J. MURPHY & SONS LTD
HAWKS GREEN LANE, CANNOCK WS11 7LH

Tony Gee
TONY GEE AND PARTNERS LLP
4TH FLOOR, ARTHUR HOUSE, MANCHESTER M1 3FH

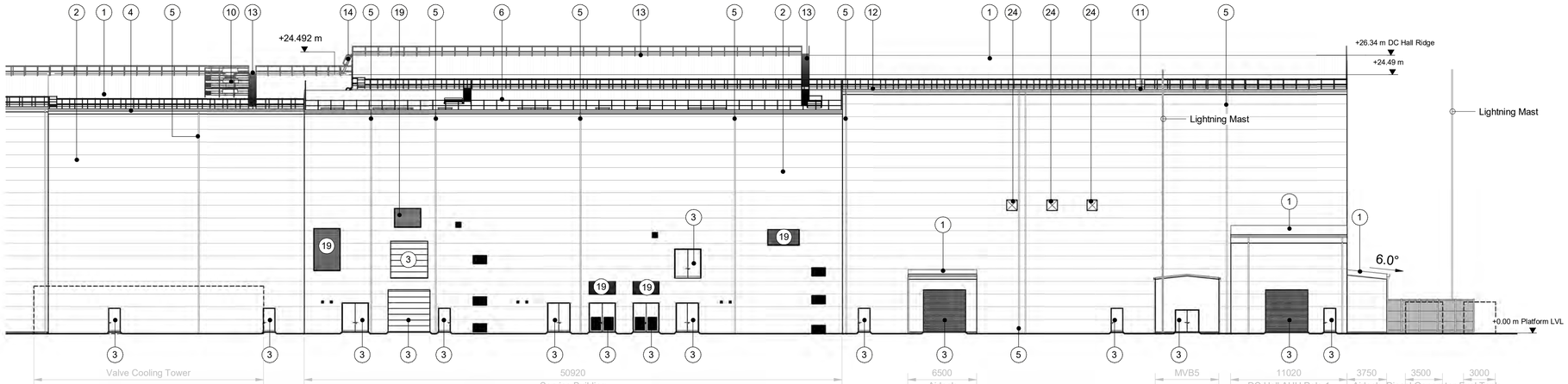
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN ELECTRICITY NETWORK
1 WATERLOO ST, GLASGOW G2 6AY

Project:	BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Scheme:	
Site:	LT407 BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Circuit:	COMMON
Revision:	P05
Dwg Title:	GENERAL ARRANGEMENT SITE PLAN - TEMPORARY WORKS
Suitability:	S5
Scale @ A0:	AS SHOWN
Dwg No:	BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0012
Sheets:	1 OF 1
Purpose of Issue:	ISSUED FOR PLANNING
Internal Proj.Ref:	M123015
Client Dwg Number:	-

Elevation Key

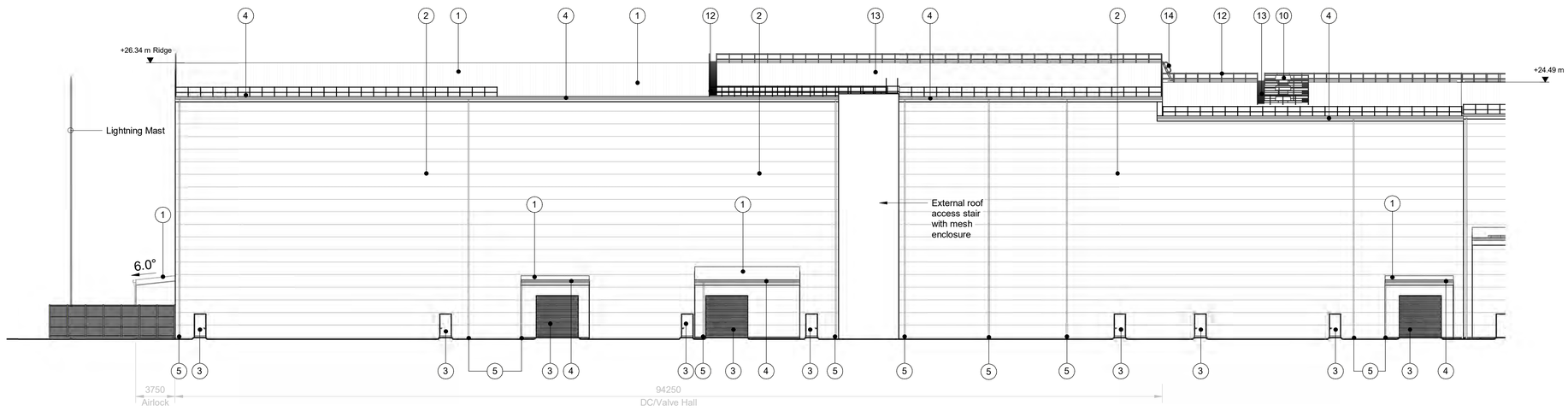
1	Trapezoidal Insulated Metal Roof Cladding Panel - RAL as per Design Statement
2	Horizontally Laid Flat Insulated Metal Wall Cladding Panel - RAL as per Design Statement
3	Metal Door - RAL as per Design Statement
4	Aluminium PPC Coated Box Section Gutter - RAL as per Design Statement
5	Aluminium PPC Coated Square Section Rain Water Down Pipe (to have anti-climb features) - RAL as per Design Statement
6	Single Ply Membrane on Flat Insulated Metal Panel - RAL 7012 Lead Grey
10	High Level Ventilation Cowls
11	Cage Ladder Roof Access (with lid to bottom of cage to prevent unauthorised access) - Galvanised steel finish
12	Edge Protection Handrail, Midrail and Base Rail - Galvanised steel finish
13	Rooftop Walkway with Handrails, Midrails and Toe Boards to Both Sides - Galvanised steel finish
14	Companionway Ladder - Galvanised steel finish
19	Metal Louvre - RAL as per Design Statement
24	Equipment Bushing

Note: Materials will be as described above. The elevations on this drawing are shown in black and white. For a visual representation of colours please refer to ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-RPT-A-0200 Design Statement - Inland



01 CB1 - Converter Building Pole 1 - Elevation 01

1 : 250



03 CB1 - Converter Building Pole 1 - Elevation 03

1 : 250

1:250 0 12.5m 25m

Notes

1. Do not scale from this drawing.
2. All dimensions are in millimetres unless otherwise stated.
3. All levels are in meters and relate to AOD.
4. This drawing is part of RIBA Stage 3 Spatial Coordination.
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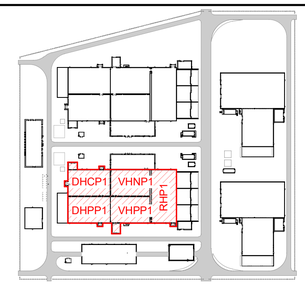
9. No unauthorised use, disclosure, storage or copying.

Key to symbols



Reference drawings

Drawing to be read in association with:

ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-GA-A-1004	STAN Common Ground Floor Layout
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-GA-A-1005	STAN Common Roof Plan Layout
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-GA-A-1202	STAN Common DC Hall - AHU Enclosure
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-GA-A-1405	STAN Common Fire Strategy Layout Plan
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-2104	STAN Common Building Elevations
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-2105	STAN Common Building Elevations
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-2201	STAN Common Internal Elevations
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-2202	STAN Common Internal Elevations
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-2203	STAN Common Internal Elevations
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-2204	STAN Common Internal Elevations
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-3002	STAN Common Long & Cross Building Sections
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-3003	STAN Common Long & Cross Building Sections
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-3102	STAN Common Strip Sections
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-3103	STAN Common Strip Sections
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-3604	STAN Common Circulation - External Roof Access Stair
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-GA-A-4603	STAN Common Finishes Plan
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-GA-A-4701	STAN Common Cladding/Wall Types Plan
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-SCH-A-5103	STAN Common Door Schedule
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-SCH-A-5104	STAN Common Door Schedule
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-SCH-A-5202	STAN Common Window/ Louvre/ Openings Schedule
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-SCH-A-5302	STAN Common Finishes Schedule

Third Party Information

Date Received	Company	Drg Reference / Revision
02/02/2024	HE	Longside - Federated Model.nwd
08/02/2024	HE	1JNL9215449_en Site Layout - Peterhead.pdf

Rev	Date	Drawn	Description	Ch'k'd	App'd
P03	15/10/2024	SK	ISSUED FOR PLANNING	VC	AF
P02	29/03/2024	NW	RIBA 2 ISSUE UPDATED	VC	AF
P01	15/03/2024	NW	RIBA 2 ISSUE	VC	AF

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Glasgow, G2 5LP
United Kingdom
F +44 (0)141 221 2048
W www.mottmac.com

Status: FOR PLANNING SUBMISSION

Site Name: STAN Common

Title: ASTI-ECD

Converter Building Pole 1
Building Elevations

Drawn	N.Wyganowska	NW	Designed	M.Fleming	MF
Eng Check	V.Chavdarova	VC	Approved	A.Farish	AF

MMD Project Number	ISO Project Code	Security
100120036	ASTIDC	

MMD Drawing Number: ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-2104

Scale	Format	Sheet	Revision
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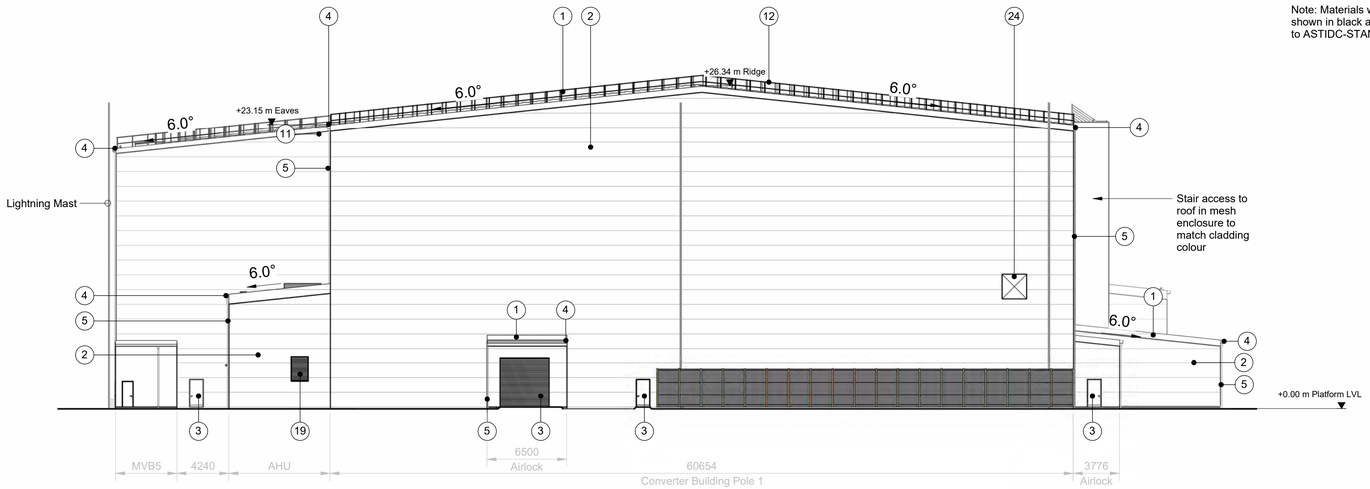
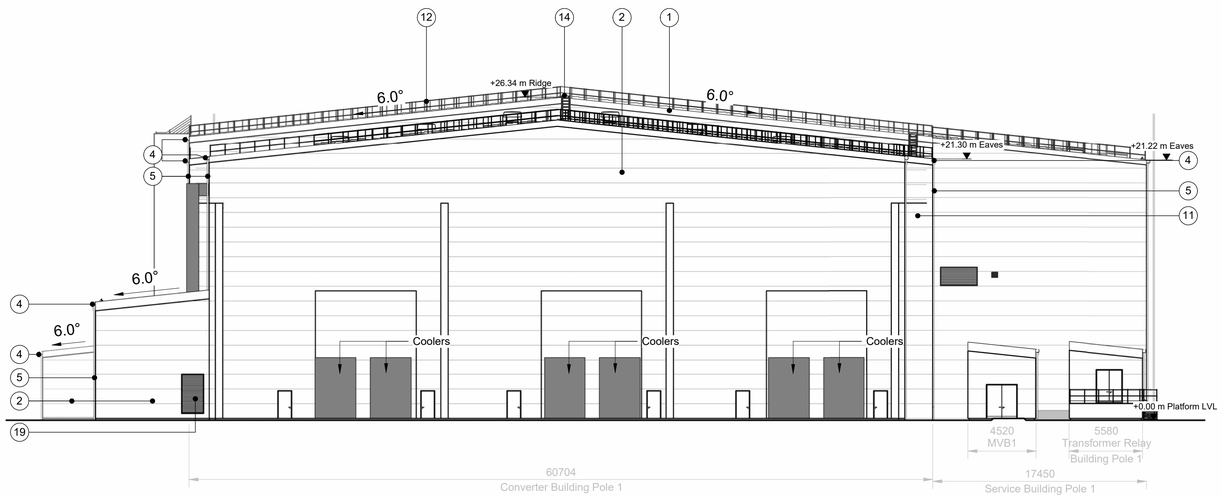


04 CB1 - Converter Building Pole 1 - Elevation 04

1 : 250



02 CB1 - Converter Building Pole 1 - Elevation 02

1 : 250

Elevation Key

1	Trapezoidal Insulated Metal Roof Cladding Panel - RAL as per Design Statement
2	Horizontally Laid Flat Insulated Metal Wall Cladding Panel - RAL as per Design Statement
4	Aluminium PPC Coated Box Section Gutter - RAL as per Design Statement
5	Aluminium PPC Coated Square Section Rain Water Down Pipe (to have anti-climb features) - RAL as per Design Statement
10	High Level Ventilation Cowls
11	Cage Ladder Roof Access (with lid to bottom of cage to prevent unauthorised access) - Galvanised steel finish
12	Edge Protection Handrail, Midrail and Base Rail - Galvanised steel finish
14	Companionway Ladder - Galvanised steel finish
19	Metal Louvre - RAL as per Design Statement
24	Equipment Bushing

Note: Materials will be as described above. The elevations on this drawing are shown in black and white. For a visual representation of colours please refer to ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-RPT-A-0200 Design Statement - Inland

Notes

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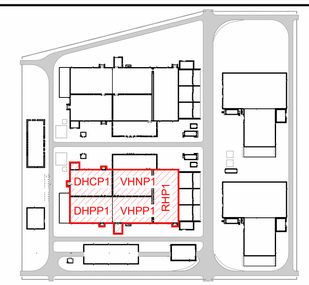
Key to symbols



Reference drawings

Drawing to be read in association with:

ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-GA-A-1004	STAN Common Ground Floor Layout
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-GA-A-1005	STAN Common Roof Plan Layout
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ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-GA-A-1405	STAN Common Fire Strategy Layout Plan
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ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-2105	STAN Common Building Elevations
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-2201	STAN Common Internal Elevations
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-2202	STAN Common Internal Elevations
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-2203	STAN Common Internal Elevations
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-2204	STAN Common Internal Elevations
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-3002	STAN Common Long & Cross Building Sections
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-3003	STAN Common Long & Cross Building Sections
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-3102	STAN Common Strip Sections
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-3103	STAN Common Strip Sections
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-3604	STAN Common Circulation - External Roof Access Stair
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-GA-A-4603	STAN Common Finishes Plan
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-GA-A-4701	STAN Common Cladding/Wall Types Plan
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-SCH-A-5103	STAN Common Door Schedule
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-SCH-A-5104	STAN Common Door Schedule
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-SCH-A-5202	STAN Common Window/ Louvre/ Openings Schedule
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-SCH-A-5302	STAN Common Finishes Schedule

Third Party Information

Date Received	Company	Drg Reference / Revision
02/02/2024	HE	Longside - Federated Model.nwd
08/02/2024	HE	1JNL9215449_en Site Layout - Peterhead.pdf

Rev	Date	Drawn	Description	Ch'k'd	App'd
P03	15/10/2024	SK	ISSUED FOR PLANNING	VC	AF
P02	29/03/2024	NW	RIBA 2 ISSUE UPDATED	VC	AF
P01	15/03/2024	NW	RIBA 2 ISSUE	VC	AF

MOTT MACDONALD

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Glasgow, G2 5LP
United Kingdom

F +44 (0)141 221 2048
W www.mottmac.com

Status: FOR PLANNING SUBMISSION

Site Name: STAN Common

Title: ASTI-ECD

Converter Building Pole 1
Building Elevations

Drawn	N.Wyganowska	NW	Designed	M.Fleming	MF
Eng Check	V.Chavdarova	VC	Approved	A.Farish	AF

MMD Project Number	ISO Project Code	Security
100120036	ASTIDC	

MMD Drawing Number: ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-CB1-ELE-A-2105

Scale	Format	Sheet	Revision
1:250	A1	01 of 01	P03

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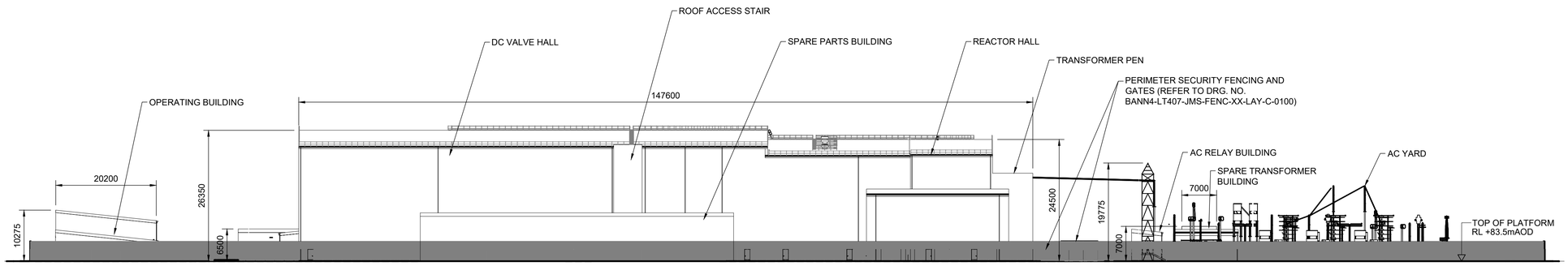
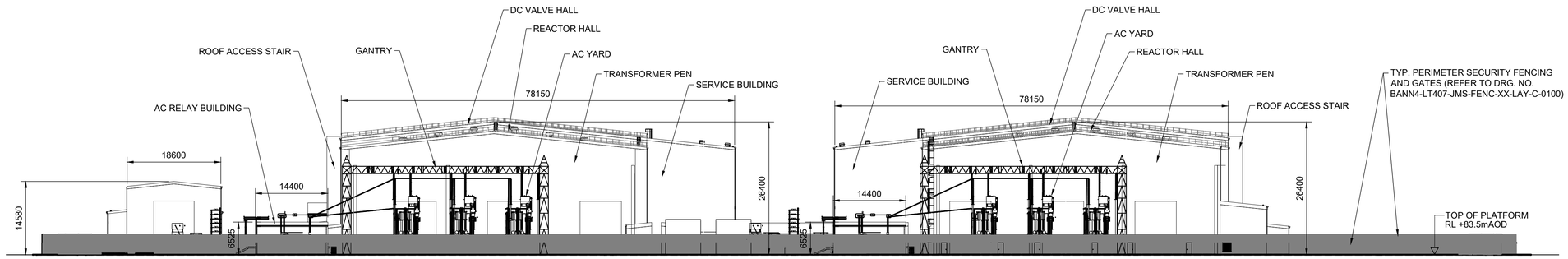


SECTION C - C

REF. DRG. NO. BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0010
SCALE 1:500



SECTION D - D

REF. DRG. NO. BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0010
SCALE 1:500

10m 0 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m
SCALE 1:500

GENERAL NOTES:

1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN METERS. DO NOT SCALE.
2. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH DRAWINGS BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0010
3. REFER TO DRG. NO. BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0011 FOR AC SUBSTATION SECTIONS AND ELEVATIONS

REV	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED	DATE
-	-	-	-	-
-				
-	-	-	-	-
ISSUED FOR PLANNING				
P04	TS	AGF	TCC	24/09/24
UPDATED FOR COMMENTS				
P03	TS	AGF	RP	13/08/24
UPDATED FOR PLANNING				
P02	AGF	AGF	RP	29/07/24
FOR PHASE 2B PLANNING				
P01	AW	AGF	TCC	24/05/24

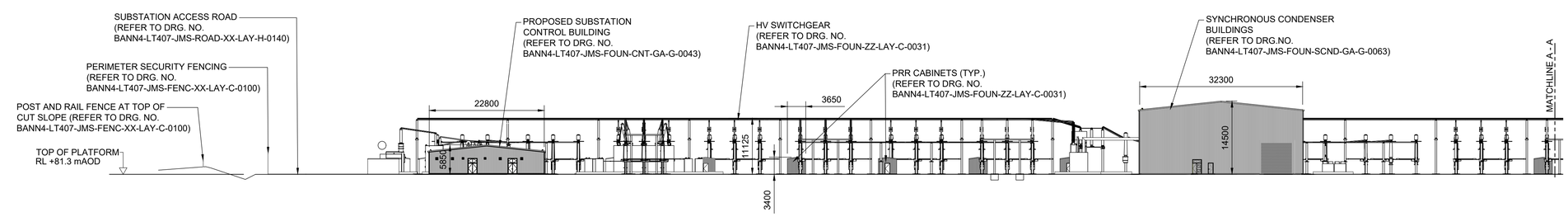
MURPHY
WORLD-CLASS INFRASTRUCTURE

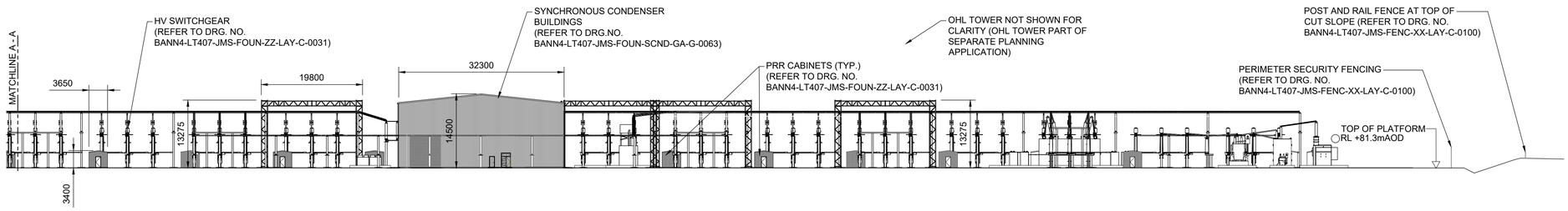
J. MURPHY & SONS LTD
HAWKS GREEN LANE, CANNOCK WS11 7LH

Tony Gee
TONY GEE AND PARTNERS LLP
4TH FLOOR, ARTHUR HOUSE, MANCHESTER M1 3FH

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN ELECTRICITY NETWORK
1 WATERLOO ST, GLASGOW G2 6AY

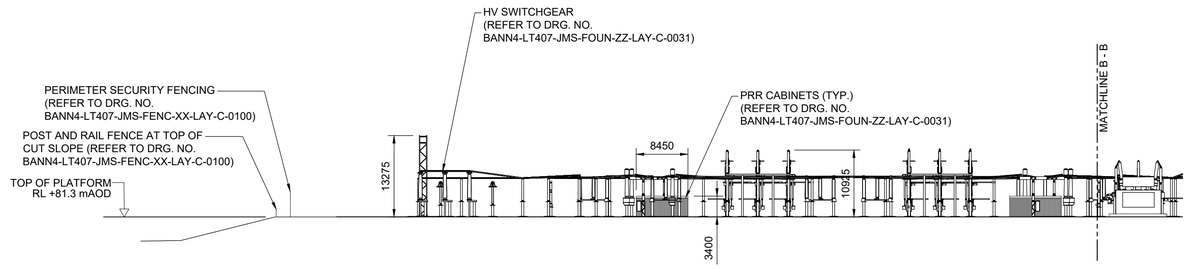
Project:	BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Scheme:	
Site:	LT407 BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Circuit:	COMMON
Revision:	P04
Suitability:	S5
Scale @ A1:	AS SHOWN
Sheets:	1 OF 1
Internal Proj.Ref:	M123015
Dwg Title:	HVDC SUBSTATION SECTIONS AND ELEVATIONS -
Dwg No:	BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-ELE-C-0160
Purpose of Issue:	ISSUED FOR PLANNING
Client Dwg Number:	-

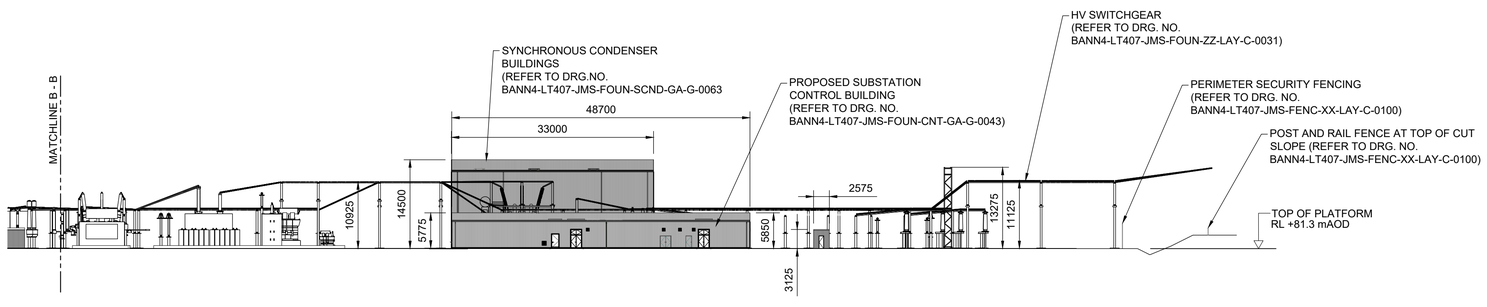




SECTION A - A

REF. DRG. NO. BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-0010
SCALE 1:500





SECTION B - B

REF. DRG. NO. BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-0010
SCALE 1:500

10m 0 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m
SCALE 1:500

GENERAL NOTES:

1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN METERS. DO NOT SCALE.
2. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH DRAWINGS BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0010
3. REFER TO DRG. NO. BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-ELE-C-0160 FOR HVDC SUBSTATION SECTIONS AND ELEVATIONS

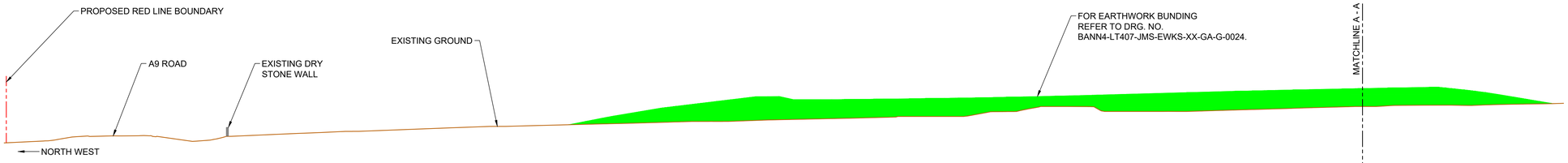
REV	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED	DATE
UPDATED FOR PLANNING				
P07	TS	AGF	TCC	29/10/24
UPDATED FOR PLANNING				
P06	SK	AGF	TCC	03/10/24
UPDATED FOR PLANNING				
P05	TS	AHC	TCC	24/09/24
UPDATED FOR COMMENTS				
P04	TS	AGF	RP	13/08/24
UPDATED FOR COMMENTS				
P03	TS	AGF	RP	09/08/24
UPDATED FOR COMMENTS				
P02	AGF	AGF	TCC	24/05/24
FOR PHASE 2B PLANNING				
P01	TS	AC	TCC	17/04/24

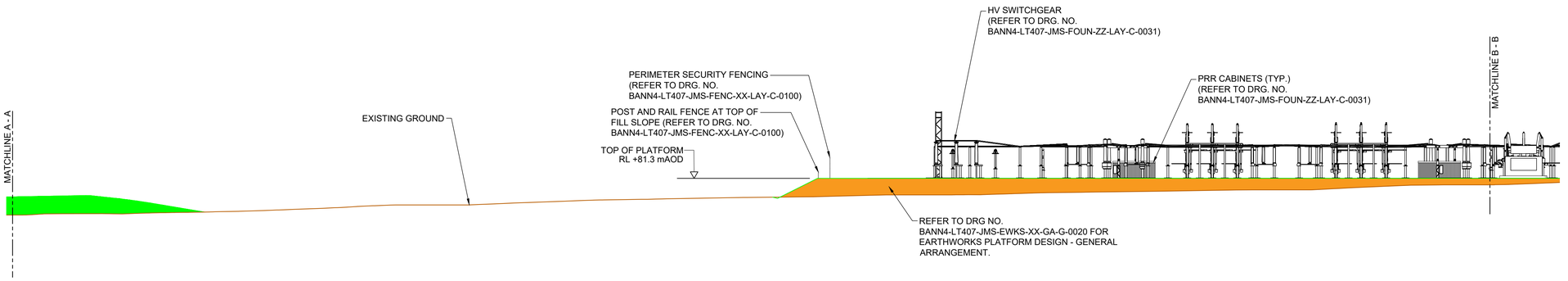
J. MURPHY & SONS LTD
HAWKS GREEN LANE, CANNOCK WS11 7LH

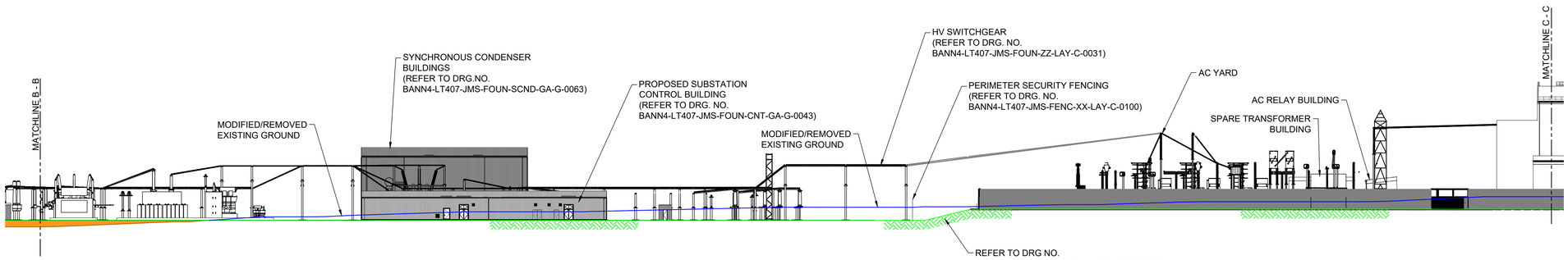
TONY GEE AND PARTNERS LLP
4TH FLOOR, ARTHUR HOUSE, MANCHESTER M1 3FH

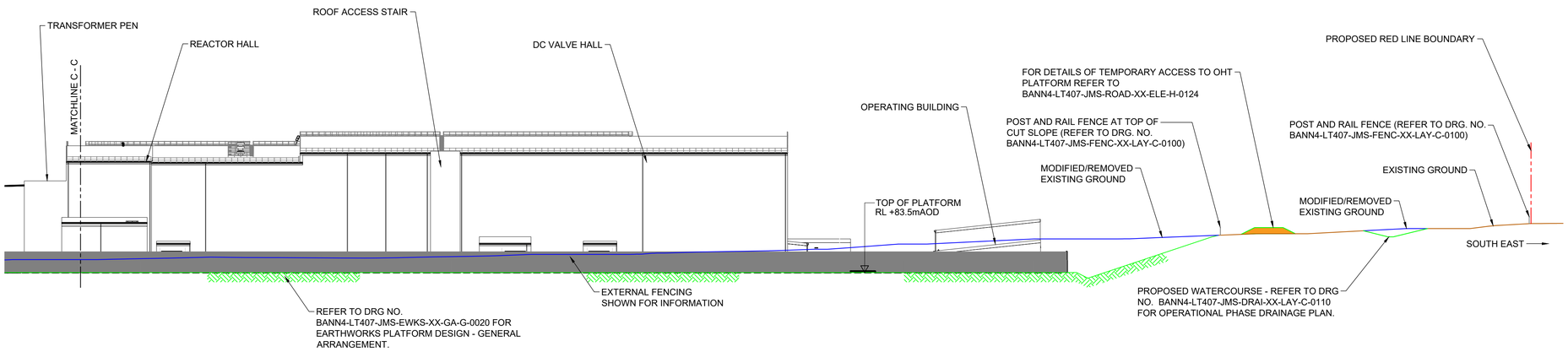
SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN ELECTRICITY NETWORK
1 WATERLOO ST, GLASGOW G2 6AY

Project:	BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Scheme:	
Site:	LT407 BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Circuit:	COMMON
Revision:	P07
Dwg Title:	PROPOSED SITE PLAN - AC SUBSTATION PERMANENT WORKS SECTIONS & ELEVATIONS
Suitability:	S5
Scale @ A1:	AS SHOWN
Dwg No:	BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0011
Sheets:	1 OF 1
Purpose of Issue:	ISSUED FOR PLANNING
Internal Proj.Ref:	M123015
Client Dwg Number:	-









SECTION X - X

REF. DRG. NO. BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-0010

SCALE 1:500

10m 0 10m 20m 30m 40m 50m

SCALE 1:500

GENERAL NOTES:

1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN METERS. DO NOT SCALE.
2. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH DRAWINGS BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0010

LEGEND:

- RED LINE BOUNDARY
- EXISTING GROUND
- MODIFIED/REMOVED EXISTING GROUND
- PROPOSED EARTHWORKS FILL
- BUNDED FILL (LANDSCAPED AREA)

REV	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED	DATE
-	-	-	-	-
-				
ISSUED FOR PLANNING				
P01	TS	AHC	TCC	15/11/24

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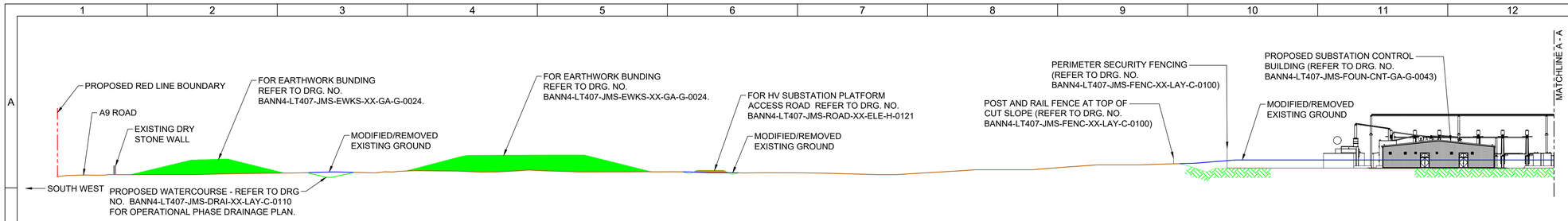
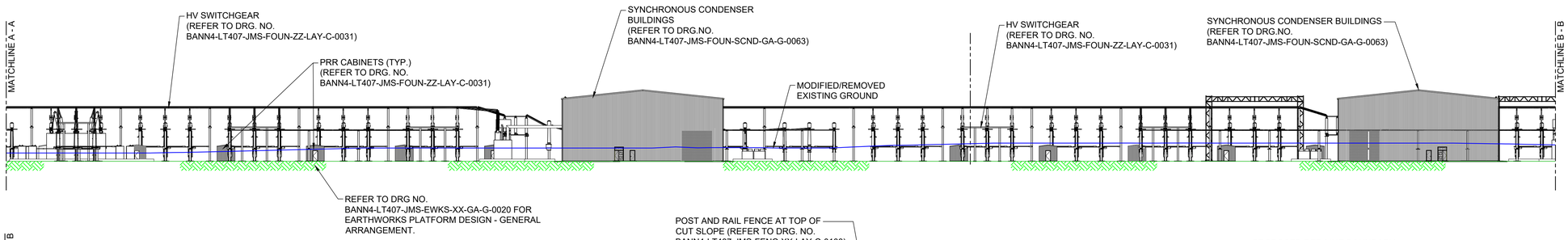
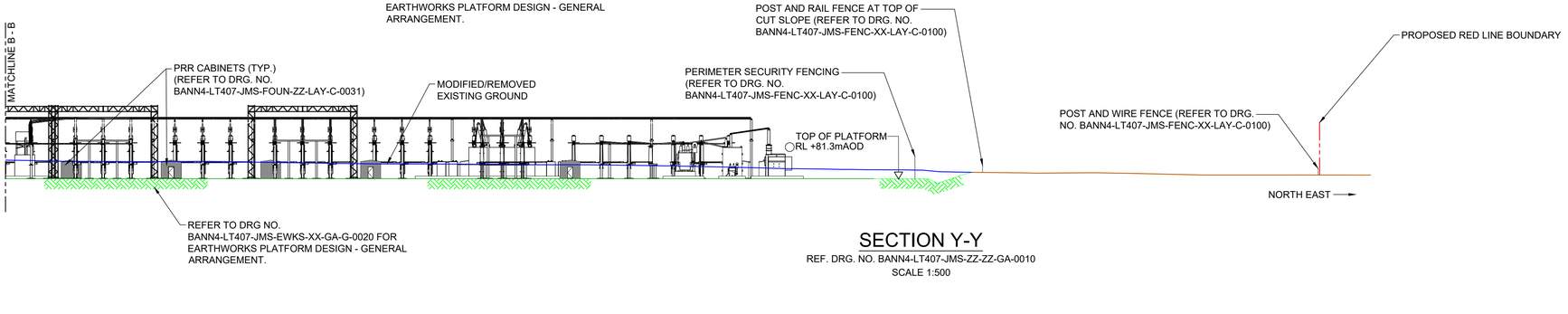
TONY GEE AND PARTNERS LLP
4TH FLOOR, ARTHUR HOUSE, MANCHESTER M1 3FH

SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN ELECTRICITY NETWORK
1 WATERLOO ST, GLASGOW G2 6AY

Project:	BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Scheme:	
Site:	LT407 BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Circuit:	COMMON
Revision: P01	Dwg Title: PROPOSED SITE PLAN - AC SUBSTATION PERMANENT WORKS LONG SECTION X-X
Suitability: S5	
Scale @ A1: AS SHOWN	Dwg No: BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0013
Sheets: 1 OF 1	Purpose of Issue: ISSUED FOR PLANNING
Internal Proj.Ref: M123015	Client Dwg Number: -

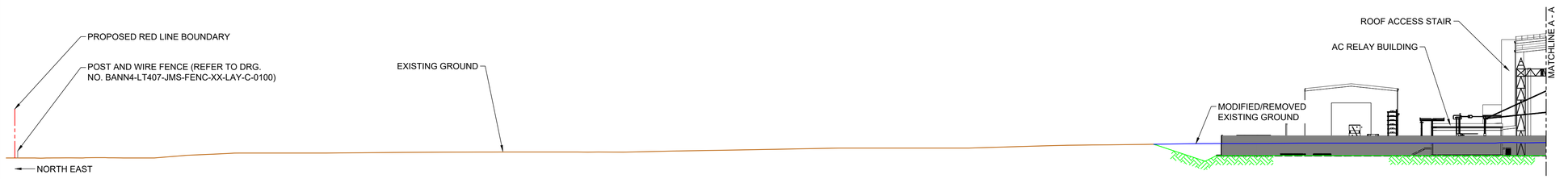


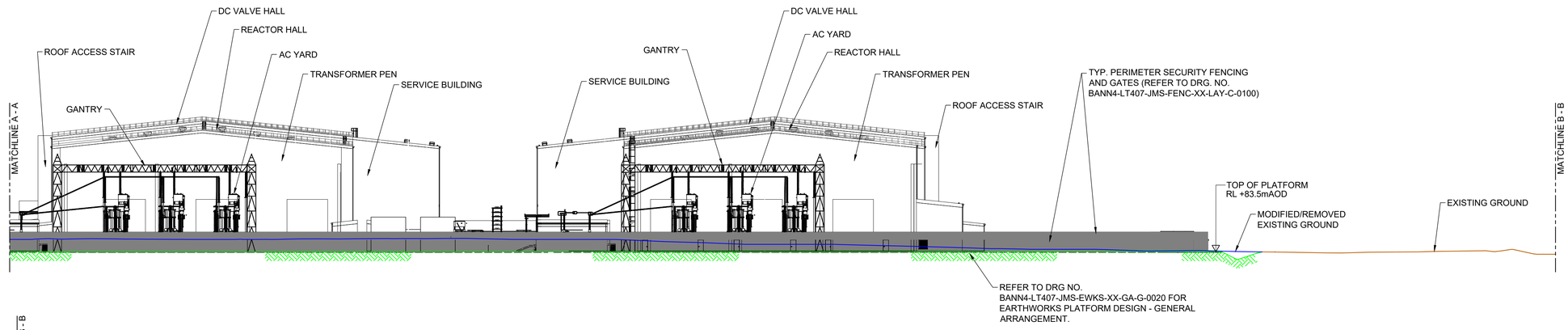


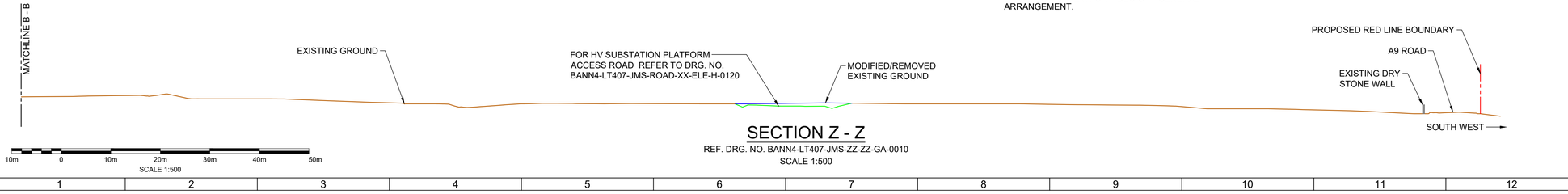


SECTION Y-Y

REF. DRG. NO. BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-0010
SCALE 1:500







SECTION Z - Z

REF. DRG. NO. BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-0010
SCALE 1:500

GENERAL NOTES:

1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN METERS. DO NOT SCALE.
2. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH DRAWINGS BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0010

LEGEND:

- RED LINE BOUNDARY
- EXISTING GROUND
- MODIFIED/REMOVED EXISTING GROUND
- PROPOSED NEW GROUND GROUND
- BUNDED FILL (LANDSCAPED AREA)
- PROPOSED EARTHWORKS FILL

REV	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED	DATE
-	-	-	-	-
ISSUED FOR PLANNING				
P01	TS	AHC	TCC	15/11/24

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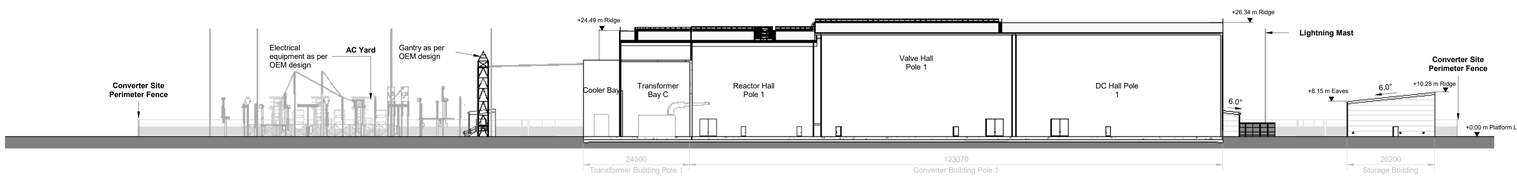
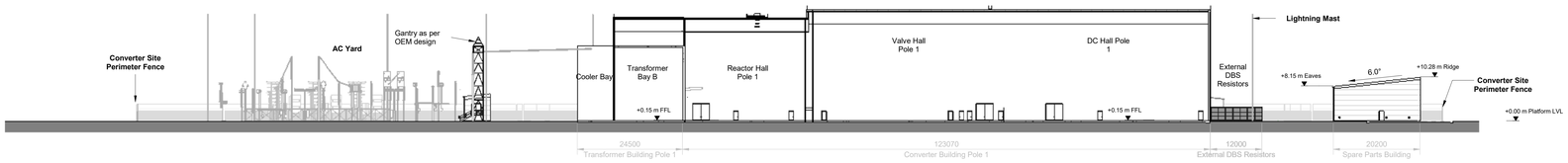
TONY GEE AND PARTNERS LLP
4TH FLOOR, ARTHUR HOUSE, MANCHESTER M1 3FH
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN ELECTRICITY NETWORK
1 WATERLOO ST, GLASGOW G2 6AY

Project:	BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Scheme:	
Site:	LT407 BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Circuit:	COMMON
Revision: P01	Dwg Title: PROPOSED SITE PLAN - AC SUBSTATION PERMANENT WORKS CROSS SECTIONS Y-Y AND Z-Z
Suitability: S5	
Scale @ A1: AS SHOWN	Dwg No: BANN4-LT407-JMS-ZZ-ZZ-GA-C-0014
Sheets: 1 OF 1	Purpose of Issue: ISSUED FOR PLANNING
Internal Proj.Ref: M123015	Client Dwg Number: -



01 INFR - Site Infrastructure - Site Sections 01 - STAN Inland

1 : 500



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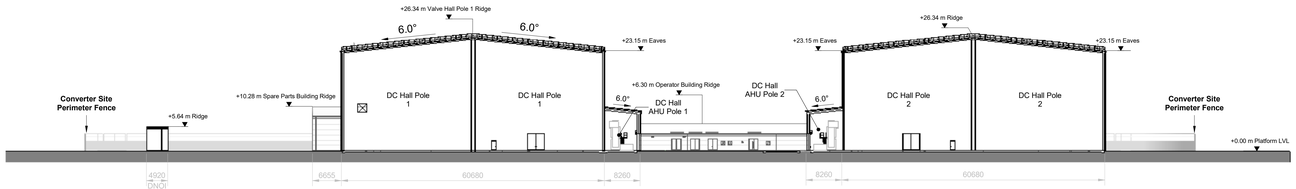

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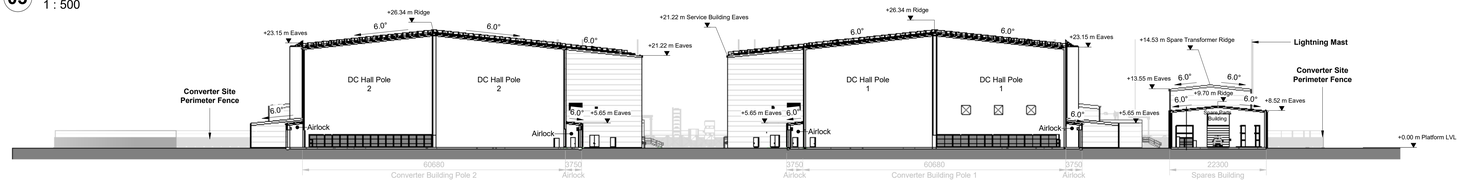

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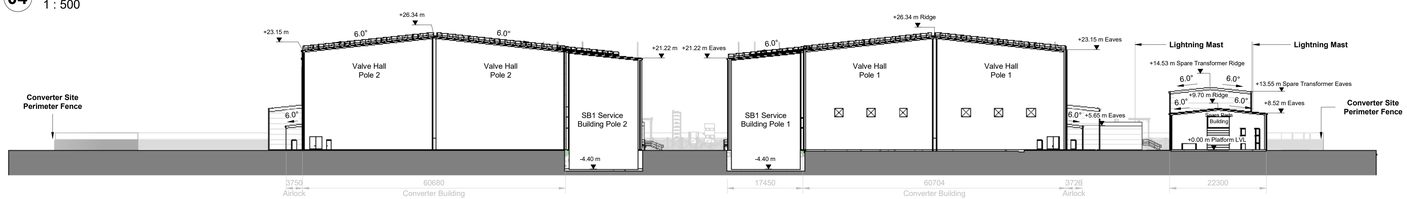
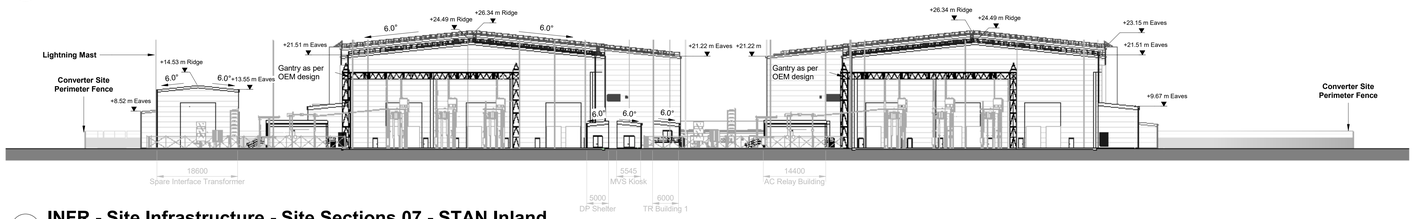


05 INFR - Site Infrastructure - Site Sections 05 - STAN Inland

1 : 500

06 INFR - Site Infrastructure - Site Sections 06 - STAN Inland

1 : 500



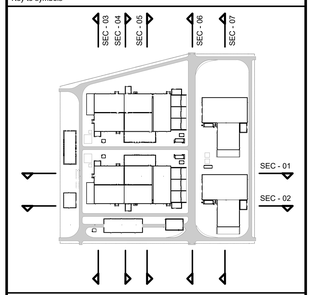
07 INFR - Site Infrastructure - Site Sections 07 - STAN Inland

1 : 500

Notes

1. Do not scale from this drawing.
2. All dimensions are in millimetres unless otherwise stated.
3. All levels are in metres and relate to AOD.
4. This drawing is part of RIBA Stage 3 Spatial Coordination.
5. Any drawing errors or discrepancies should be brought to the attention of Mott MacDonald.
6. The designs shown are subject to detailed site survey, investigations, the CDM Regulations and the comments and/ or approval of various relevant Local Authority Officers, Statutory Undertakers, etc.
7. This drawing is to be used for the purposes of assisting with design development and is not to be used for construction.
8. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant documents and drawings, including those from other disciplines.
9. No unauthorised use, disclosure, storage or copying.

Key to symbols



Reference drawings

Drawing to be read in association with:
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-LAY-A-0002 STAN Inland Proposed Site Layout - Ground Floor
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-LAY-A-0012 STAN Inland Proposed Site Layout - Roof
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-ELE-A-0022 STAN Inland Proposed Site Layout - Elevations
ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-ELE-A-0032 STAN Inland Proposed Site Layout - Sections

Third Party Information

Date Received	Company	Drg Reference / Revision
02/02/2024	HE	Banniskirk - Federated Model.nwd
08/02/2024	HE	1JNL9215445_en Site Layout - Spittal.pdf

Rev	Date	Drawn	Description	Ch'k'd	App'd
P04	15/10/2024	SK	ISSUED FOR PLANNING	VC	AF
P03	31/07/2024	MF	ISSUED FOR DAR	VC	AF
P02	29/03/2024	NW	RIBA 2 ISSUE UPDATED	VC	AF
P01	15/03/2024	NW	RIBA 2 ISSUE	VC	AF

MOTT MACDONALD
St Vincent Plaza
319 St Vincent St
Glasgow, G2 5LP
United Kingdom
F +44 (0)141 221 2048
W www.mottmac.com

Status: FOR PLANNING SUBMISSION

Site Name: STAN Inland

Title: ASTI-ECD

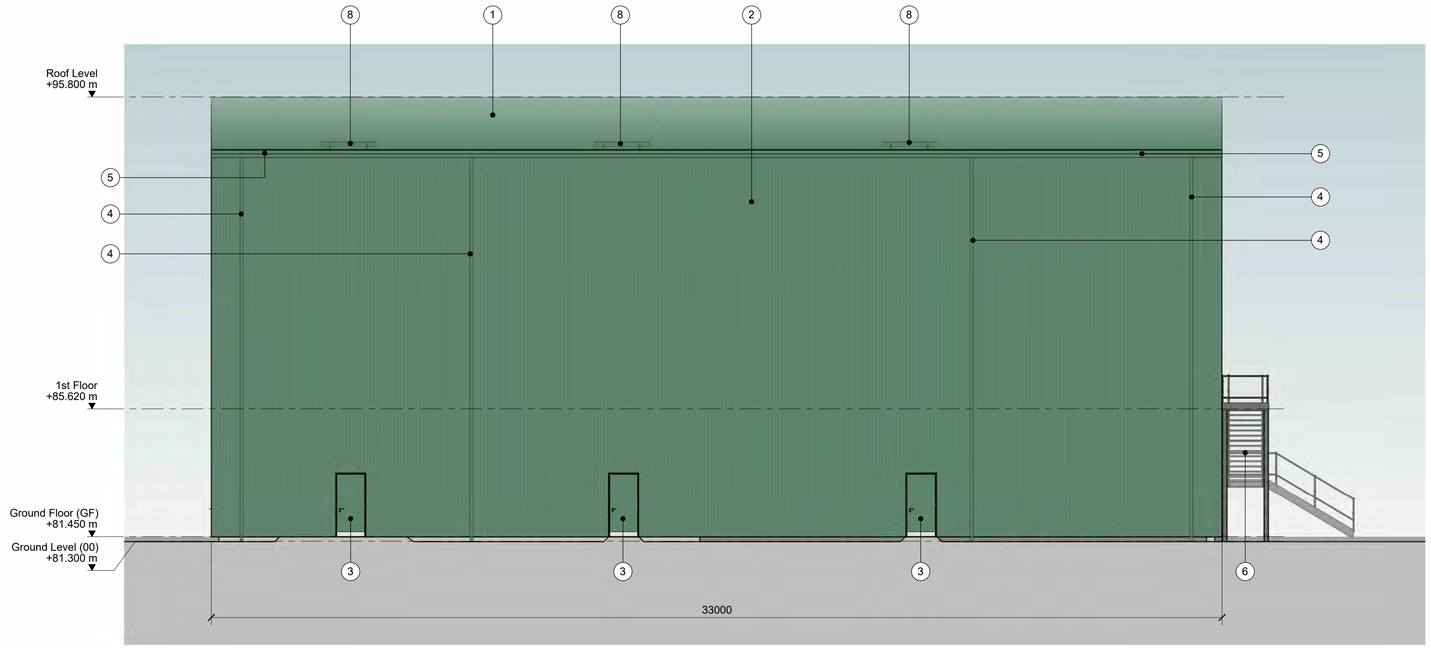
Site Infrastructure
Proposed Site Layout - Sections

Drawn	N.Wyganowska	NW	Designed	M.Fleming	MF
Eng Check	V.Chavdarova	VC	Approved	A.Farish	AF

MMD Project Number: 100120036
ISO Project Code: ASTIDC
Security:

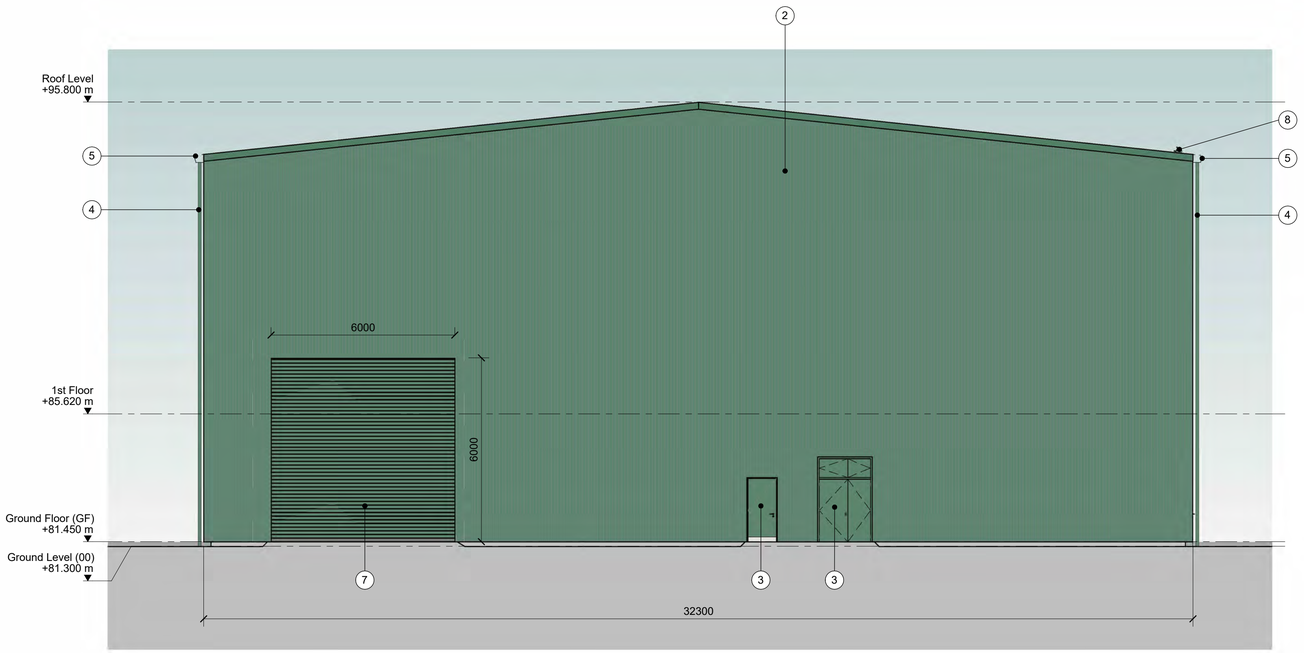
MMD Drawing Number: ASTIDC-STAN-MMD-BLDG-INFR-ELE-A-0032

Scale	Format	Sheet	Revision
1 : 500	A0	01 of 01	P04



Synchronous Condenser - Elevation 1

1 : 100



Synchronous Condenser - Elevation 2

1 : 100

MATERIALS KEY:

1. INSULATED METAL ROOF CLADDING PANEL - COLOUR: JUNIPER GREEN RAL 160 20 10
2. VERTICALLY LAID, INSULATED METAL WALL CLADDING PANEL - COLOUR: JUNIPER GREEN RAL 160 20 10
3. METAL DOOR - COLOUR: JUNIPER GREEN RAL 160 20 10
4. ALUMINIUM PPC COATED SQUARE SECTION RAIN WATER DOWN PIPE (TO HAVE ANTI-CLIMB FEATURES) - COLOUR: JUNIPER GREEN RAL 160 20 10
5. ALUMINIUM PPC COATED BOX SECTION GUTTER - COLOUR: JUNIPER GREEN RAL 160 20 10
6. EXTERNAL METAL ACCESS/ ESCAPE STAIR
7. LARGE FORMAT ROLLER SHUTTER - COLOUR: JUNIPER GREEN RAL 160 20 10
8. SNOW GUARD - COLOUR: JUNIPER GREEN RAL 160 20 10

NOTE: MATERIALS WILL BE AS DESCRIBED ABOVE. VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF MATERIALS MAY DIFFER SLIGHTLY ON PDF AND PRINT COPIES OF DRAWINGS

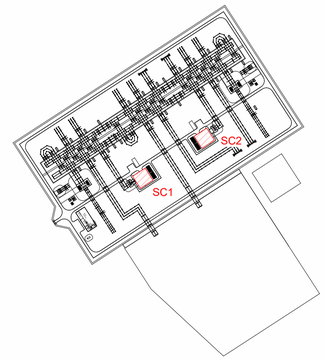
(Plan Layout is for Eastern Synchronous Condenser building only - the building on the Western side of the site is mirrored)

GENERAL NOTES

THIS DRAWING HAS BEEN PRODUCED BY MOTT MACDONALD, WORKING AS A SUBCONTRACTOR TO TONY GEE.

1. DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING.
2. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETRES UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.
3. REFER TO DRAWING BANN4-LT407-JMS-FOUN-SCND-GA-C-0063 FOR GENERAL NOTES
4. ALL LEVELS ARE IN METERS AND RELATE TO AOD.
5. ANY DRAWING ERRORS OR DISCREPANCIES SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF MOTT MACDONALD.
6. THE DESIGNS SHOWN ARE SUBJECT TO DETAILED SITE SURVEY, INVESTIGATIONS, THE CDM REGULATIONS AND THE COMMENTS AND/ OR APPROVAL OF VARIOUS RELEVANT LOCAL AUTHORITY OFFICERS, STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS, ETC.
7. ANY AREAS SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY AND HAVE BEEN MEASURED OFF PRELIMINARY DRAWINGS AS THE LIKELY MEASURED AREAS OF THE CURRENT DESIGN. THESE MAY BE AFFECTED BY FUTURE DESIGN DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION TOLERANCES.
8. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE USED FOR THE PURPOSES OF ASSISTING WITH DESIGN DEVELOPMENT AND IS NOT TO BE USED FOR CONSTRUCTION.
9. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTS AND DRAWINGS, INCLUDING THOSE FROM OTHER DISCIPLINES.
10. NO UNAUTHORISED USE, DISCLOSURE, STORAGE OR COPYING.

KEY PLAN



REV	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED	DATE
-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-
- UPDATED FOR PLANNING				
P04	AM	VC	AF	29/10/2024
- UPDATED FOR COMMENTS				
P03	DP	VC	AF	27/09/2024
- UPDATED FOR COMMENTS				
P02	TD	DR	AF	23/08/2024
- FOR PHASE 2C PLANNING				
P01	TD	DR	AF	17/05/2024

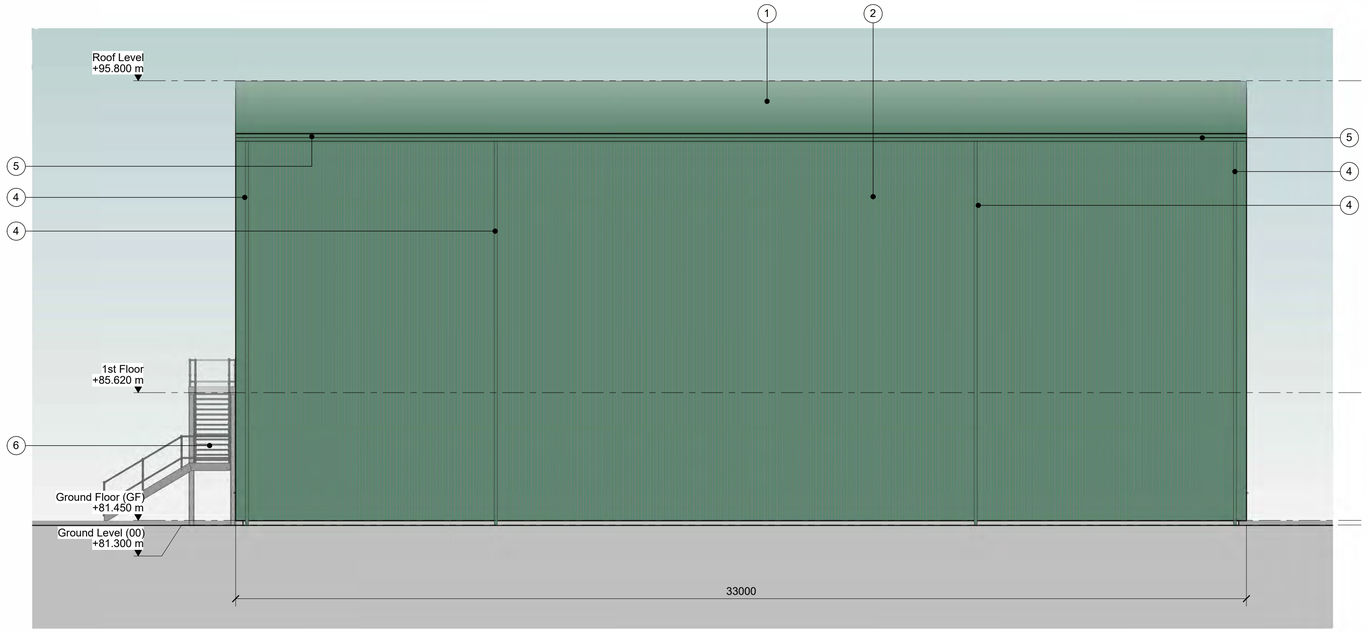
0 5 1:100 10m

J. MURPHY & SONS LTD
HAWKS GREEN LANE, CANNOCK WS11 7LH

TONY GEE AND PARTNERS LLP
4TH FLOOR, ARTHUR HOUSE, MANCHESTER M1 3FH

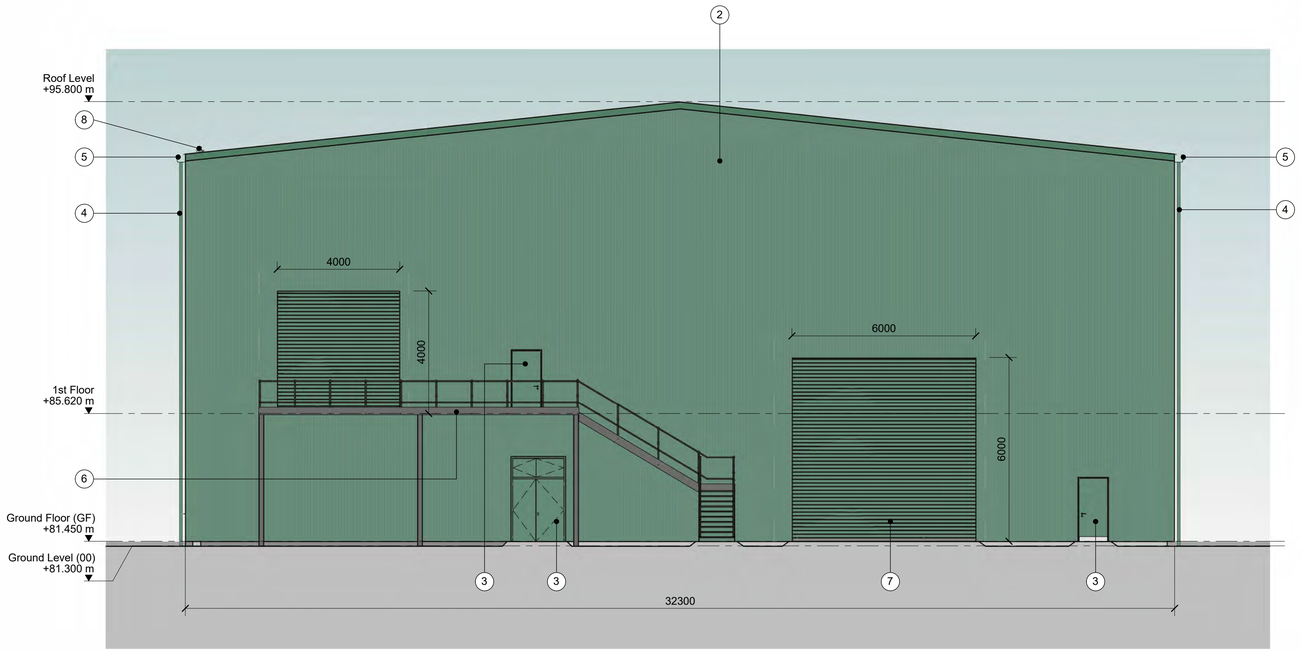
SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN ELECTRICITY NETWORK
1 WATERLOO ST, GLASGOW G2 6AY

Project:	BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Scheme:	
Site:	LT407 BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Circuit:	COMMON
Revision: P04	Dwg Title: SYNCHRONOUS CONDENSER BUILDING ELEVATION ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS
Suitability: S5	
Scale @ A1: As indicated	Dwg No.: BANN4-LT407-JMS-BLDG-SCND-ELE-A-0066
Sheets: 1 OF 2	Purpose of Issue: ISSUED FOR PLANNING
Internal Proj.Ref: M123015	Client Dwg Number: -



Synchronous Condenser - Elevation 3

1 : 100



Synchronous Condenser - Elevation 4

1 : 100

(Plan Layout is for Eastern Synchronous Condenser building only - the building on the Western side of the site is mirrored)

MATERIALS KEY:

① INSULATED METAL ROOF CLADDING PANEL - COLOUR: JUNIPER GREEN RAL 160 20 10
② VERTICALLY LAID, INSULATED METAL WALL CLADDING PANEL - COLOUR: JUNIPER GREEN RAL 160 20 10
③ METAL DOOR - COLOUR: JUNIPER GREEN RAL 160 20 10
④ ALUMINIUM PPC COATED SQUARE SECTION RAIN WATER DOWN PIPE (TO HAVE ANTI-CLIMB FEATURES) - COLOUR: JUNIPER GREEN RAL 160 20 10
⑤ ALUMINIUM PPC COATED BOX SECTION GUTTER - COLOUR: JUNIPER GREEN RAL 160 20 10
⑥ EXTERNAL METAL ACCESS/ ESCAPE STAIR
⑦ LARGE FORMAT ROLLER SHUTTER - COLOUR: JUNIPER GREEN RAL 160 20 10
⑧ SNOW GUARD - COLOUR: JUNIPER GREEN RAL 160 20 10

NOTE: MATERIALS WILL BE AS DESCRIBED ABOVE. VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF MATERIALS MAY DIFFER SLIGHTLY ON PDF AND PRINT COPIES OF DRAWINGS

GENERAL NOTES

THIS DRAWING HAS BEEN PRODUCED BY MOTT MACDONALD, WORKING AS A SUBCONTRACTOR TO TONY GEE.

1. DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING.
2. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETRES UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.
3. REFER TO DRAWING BANN4-LT407-JMS-FOUN-SCND-GA-C-0063 FOR GENERAL NOTES
4. ALL LEVELS ARE IN METERS AND RELATE TO AOD.
5. ANY DRAWING ERRORS OR DISCREPANCIES SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF MOTT MACDONALD.
6. THE DESIGNS SHOWN ARE SUBJECT TO DETAILED SITE SURVEY, INVESTIGATIONS, THE CDM REGULATIONS AND THE COMMENTS AND/ OR APPROVAL OF VARIOUS RELEVANT LOCAL AUTHORITY OFFICERS, STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS, ETC.
7. ANY AREAS SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY AND HAVE BEEN MEASURED OFF PRELIMINARY DRAWINGS AS THE LIKELY MEASURED AREAS OF THE CURRENT DESIGN. THESE MAY BE AFFECTED BY FUTURE DESIGN DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION TOLERANCES.
8. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE USED FOR THE PURPOSES OF ASSISTING WITH DESIGN DEVELOPMENT AND IS NOT TO BE USED FOR CONSTRUCTION.
9. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTS AND DRAWINGS, INCLUDING THOSE FROM OTHER DISCIPLINES.
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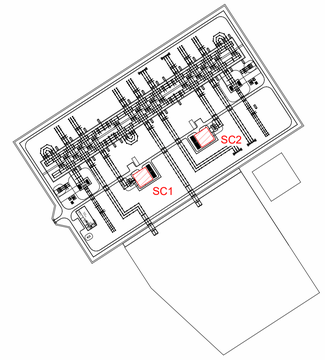
KEY PLAN



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REV	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED	DATE
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-	-	-	-	-
- UPDATED FOR PLANNING				
P04	AM	VC	AF	29/10/2024
- UPDATED FOR PLANNING				
P03	DP	VC	AF	27/09/2024
- UPDATED FOR COMMENTS				
P02	TD	DR	AF	23/08/2024
- FOR PHASE 2C PLANNING				
P01	TD	DR	AF	17/05/2024

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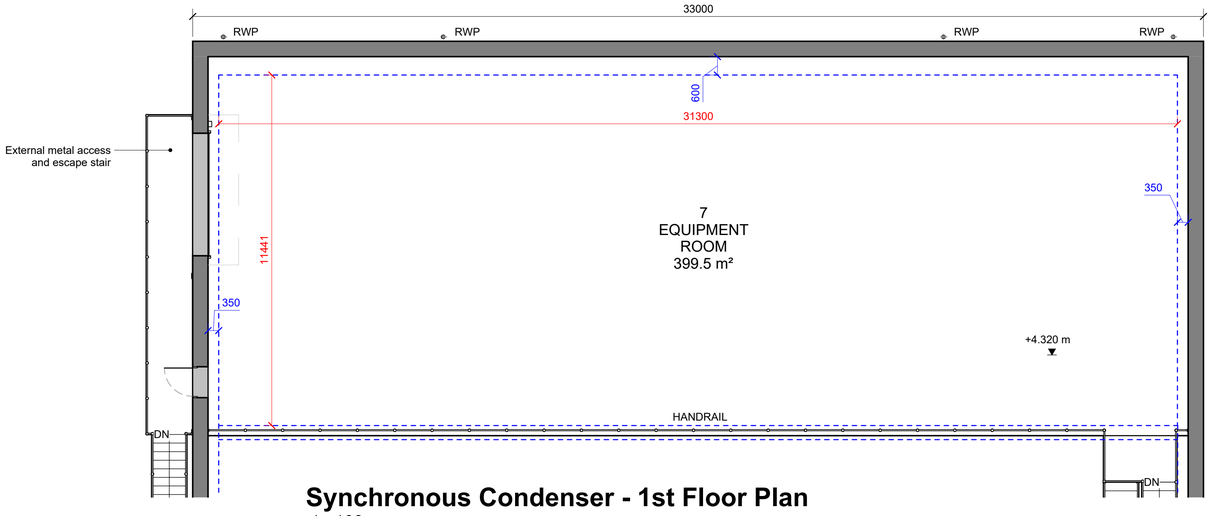
MURPHY
WORLD-CLASS INFRASTRUCTURE

J. MURPHY & SONS LTD
HAWKS GREEN LANE, CANNOCK WS11 7LH

Tony Gee
TONY GEE AND PARTNERS LLP
4TH FLOOR, ARTHUR HOUSE, MANCHESTER M1 3FH

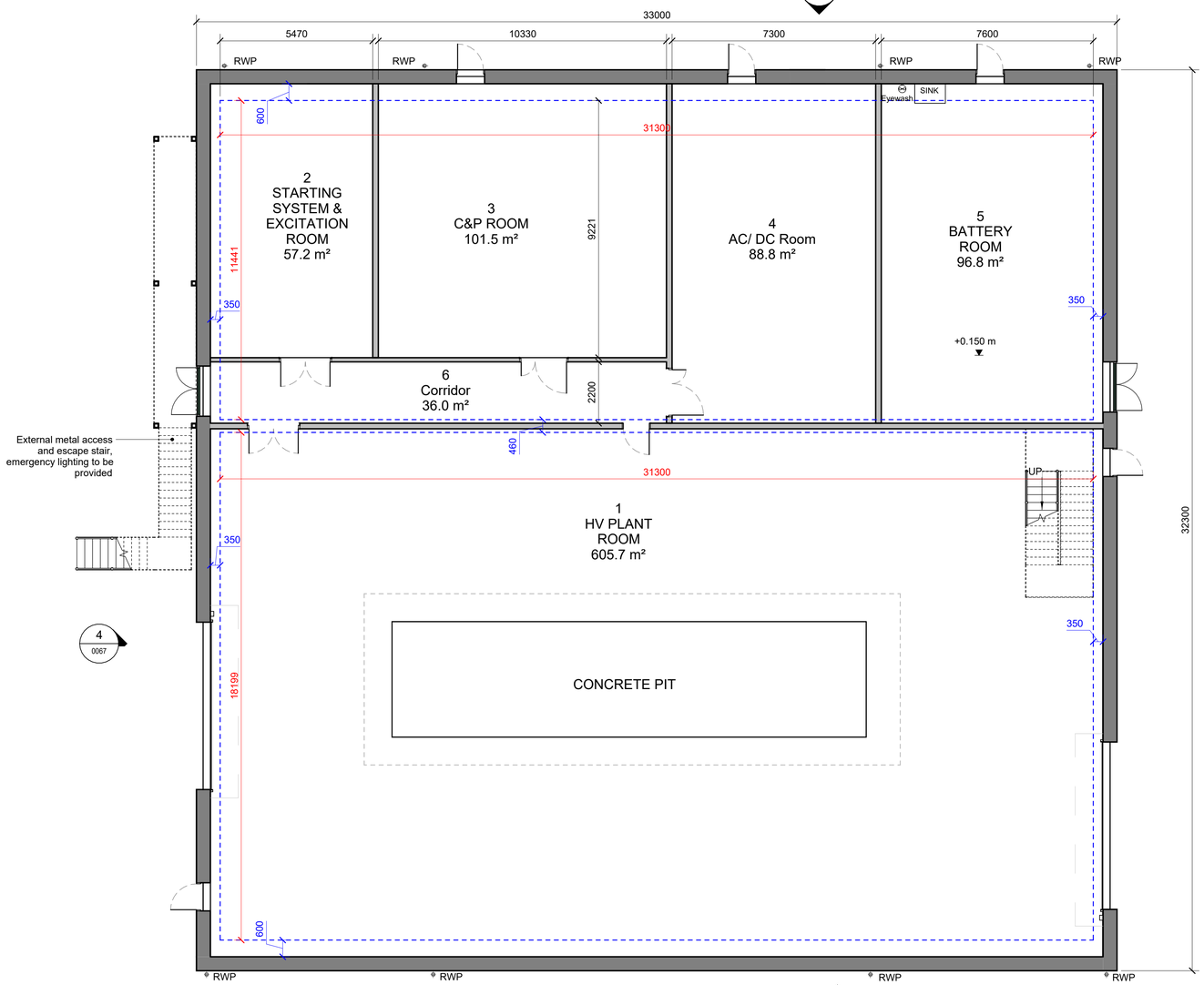
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks
SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN ELECTRICITY NETWORK
1 WATERLOO ST, GLASGOW G2 6AY

Project:	BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Scheme:	
Site:	LT407 BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Circuit:	COMMON
Revision: P04 / Suitability: S5	Dwg Title: SYNCHRONOUS CONDENSER BUILDING ELEVATIONS ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS
Scale @ A1: As indicated	Dwg No: BANN4-LT407-JMS-BLDG-SCND-ELE-A-0067
Sheets: 2 OF 2	Purpose of Issue: ISSUED FOR PLANNING
Internal Proj.Ref: M123015	Client Dwg Number: -



Synchronous Condenser - 1st Floor Plan

1 : 100



Synchronous Condenser Ground Floor Plan

1 : 100

3
0067

(Plan Layout is for Eastern Synchronous Condenser building only - the building on the Western side of the site is mirrored)

GENERAL NOTES

THIS DRAWING HAS BEEN PRODUCED BY MOTT MACDONALD, WORKING AS A SUBCONTRACTOR TO TONY GEE.

1. DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING.
2. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETRES UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.
3. REFER TO DRAWING BANN4-LT407-JMS-FOUN-SCND-GA-C-0063 FOR GENERAL NOTES
4. ALL LEVELS ARE IN METERS AND RELATE TO AOD.
5. ANY DRAWING ERRORS OR DISCREPANCIES SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF MOTT MACDONALD.
6. THE DESIGNS SHOWN ARE SUBJECT TO DETAILED SITE SURVEY, INVESTIGATIONS, THE CDM REGULATIONS AND THE COMMENTS AND/ OR APPROVAL OF VARIOUS RELEVANT LOCAL AUTHORITY OFFICERS, STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS, ETC.
7. ANY AREAS SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY AND HAVE BEEN MEASURED OFF PRELIMINARY DRAWINGS AS THE LIKELY MEASURED AREAS OF THE CURRENT DESIGN. THESE MAY BE AFFECTED BY FUTURE DESIGN DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION TOLERANCES.
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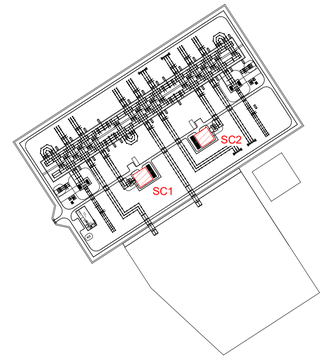
2100 STRUCTURAL ZONE

2100 EQUIPMENT ZONE

KEY PLAN



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P03	AM	VC	AF	29/10/2024
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P01	TD	DR	AF	17/05/2024

0 5 1:100 10m

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4TH FLOOR, ARTHUR HOUSE, MANCHESTER M1 3FH

SCOTTISH AND SOUTHERN ELECTRICITY NETWORK
1 WATERLOO ST, GLASGOW G2 6AY

Project:	BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Scheme:	
Site:	LT407 BANNISKIRK 400kV SUBSTATION
Circuit:	COMMON
Revision: P03	Dwg Title: SYNCHRONOUS CONDENSER FLOOR PLANS ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS
Suitability: S5	
Scale @ A1: As indicated	Dwg No.: BANN4-LT407-JMS-BLDG-SCND-LAY-A-0064
Sheets: 1 OF 1	Purpose of Issue: ISSUED FOR PLANNING
Internal Proj.Ref: M123015	Client Dwg Number: -