

Agenda Item	6.1
Report No	PLS/17/26

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: South Planning Applications Committee
Date: 1 April 2026
Report Title: 25/01135/S36: Fearna PSH Ltd.
Land 4390M NW Of Kingie Lodge, Invergarry
Report By: Area Planning Manager – South

Purpose/Executive Summary

Description: Fearna Pumped Storage Hydro Scheme - Construction and operation of a pumped storage hydroelectric scheme with a generating capacity of up to 1,800MW, storage capacity up to 36GWhr, comprising waterway system, powerhouse, switchyard, access and ancillary infrastructure and works

Ward: 11 - Caol and Mallaig

Development category: National Development (Section 36 Application)

Reason referred to Committee: Section 36 Application

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 applicable material considerations.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Council **RAISE AN OBJECTION** to the proposal as set out in section 11 of the report.

1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 1.1 The Highland Council has been consulted by the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU) on an application made under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 for the construction and permanent operation of the Fearna Pumped Storage Hydro (PSH) Scheme and its associated infrastructure. The application seeks consent for a nationally significant long-duration electricity storage project with an installed generation capacity of up to 1,800MW and a storage capacity of approximately 36GWh, equating to around 20 hours of continuous generation at full output.
- 1.2 The proposed development would operate by transferring water between a lower reservoir, the existing Loch Quoich, and a newly enlarged upper reservoir at Loch Fearna, with the natural water level raised through the construction of 2 new rockfill dams, Fearna Dam and the Coire Dubh Dam. The two reservoirs would be connected by an extensive underground waterway system, including 2 high-pressure headrace tunnels, access tunnel, and 6 tailrace tunnels delivering water to and from a new underground powerhouse constructed within a former quarry on the northern shore of Loch Quoich.
- 1.3 Operation would involve alternating between pumping mode, when surplus electricity is used to pump water to the upper reservoir for storage, and generating mode, when water is released downhill through reversible pump-turbines to produce electricity for export to the transmission grid. The development also includes new and upgraded access tracks, most notably the Southern Access Route (SAR), temporary construction compounds, and areas of habitat compensation and enhancement, including peatland restoration and native woodland planting.
- 1.4 Key elements of the development, as described and assessed within the proposals and the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) include:
- Loch Fearna upper reservoir, created by constructing the Fearna Dam and Coire Dubh Dam, enabling water storage of approximately 40Mm³ with a drawdown between 540m and 600m AOD.
 - Loch Quoich lower reservoir, an existing hydropower storage reservoir reused without modification as the scheme's lower basin.
 - A comprehensive underground waterway system, including 2 high-pressure headrace tunnels, an access tunnel and 6 tailrace tunnels linking the upper reservoir to the underground powerhouse.
 - A recessed powerhouse constructed partly within a disused quarry beside Loch Quoich, together with an adjacent switchyard and associated electrical infrastructure.
 - A new Southern Access Route (SAR) incorporating a new junction from the A87 and a new bridge over the River Garry, providing dedicated construction and abnormal-load access.
 - Approximately 2.3km of the C1144 public road upgraded and extensive new access tracks, including:
 - New/upgraded tracks from the SAR to the site, approximately 24km of upgrade works to the existing forestry road, including 5.3km of new tracks including the C1144 offline access route.
 - New tracks to the powerhouse and to the upper reservoir, approximately

5.5km (including the crossing of the Fearna and Coire Dubh Dams.

- Existing forestry tracks upgraded.
- Construction and operational footpath diversions, including a permanent rerouting of the Gleouraich/Spidean Mialach Munro path around the new upper reservoir.
- Multiple site compounds, including:
 - A major site compound and worker accommodation camp (SC1) for 500 staff adjacent to the SAR.
 - Primary compounds at the powerhouse (SC2) and upper reservoir (SC3).
 - Several secondary compounds along the SAR and bridge works.
- At least 5 borrow pits, including major rock-source borrow pits within the upper reservoir inundation area (BP1, BP2, BP3) and several smaller pits along the SAR corridor.
- 3 new large bridges, 14 new smaller watercourse crossings, and upgrades to 33 existing watercourse crossings including over the River Garry, River Kingie, and Gearr Garry.
- Extensive landscaping and earthworks, including the formation of bunds, benches, reinstatement of cut slopes, and re-profiling of temporary access routes.
- A substantial programme of tree planting of at least 460ha, peatland restoration of at least 891ha, aquatic habitat improvements, removal of invasive species, deer fencing and other management measures.
- Peatland restoration extending to at least 891ha;
- Native woodland restoration and planting increased extending to at least 460ha;
- Deer management measures across a 12,000ha area, reduction in deer density in Glengarry Forest from 5 to 2 deer per km² and approximately 23km of deer exclusion fencing;
- Aquatic habitat improvements across River Kingie, Gearr Garry and River Garry;
- A deer enclosure area (Appendix 8.6) extending to approximately 1,500ha which would be fenced off to provide areas of regeneration and encourage the restoration of native woodland;
- Invasive non-native species control through the removal of approximately 100ha of rhododendron, removal of exotic conifers within Caledonian pine restoration areas and invasive animal species.

- 1.5 Due to the installed capacity, this proposal falls under the provisions of the Electricity Act 1989 and is classed as National Development by National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4).
- 1.6 A grid connection comprising a transmission line will be required to connect the proposed development via the new switchyard adjacent to the powerhouse to the national electricity grid. For regulatory reasons, this will be subject to a separate consenting process with Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission as the applicant. As is common for renewable energy projects, the form of connection, routing and any associated infrastructure requirements are yet to be confirmed by SSEN Transmission. The proposed grid connection infrastructure (routes, towers/cables, substations etc.) is not part of this application and is not assessed in the EIAR. The relevance of that omission to the assessment of the proposed application is addressed later in this report, between paragraphs 3.15 to 3.17.

- 1.7 No specific micro-siting allowance has been proposed by the applicant around the Fearn Dam and Coire Dubh Dam to accommodate unknown ground conditions. The final detailed design of the Fearn Dam, Coire Dubh Dam, upper reservoir, powerhouse, switching station, SAR and other new tracks, compounds, worker facilities, tracks, paths, watercourse crossings, borrow pits, landscaping, earthworks, ancillary equipment, fencing etc. are also expected to be agreed with the Planning Authority, by condition should the application be granted consent, at the time of project procurement, should the application be granted consent. This would allow for some flexibility on the approved design details given manufacturers regularly update the specification of equipment and designs that are available, thereby necessitating the need for some flexibility, albeit, such refinement would require to remain within the parameters of the description of development applied for and the Environmental Impact Assessment undertaken.
- 1.8 Whilst public consultation for Section 36 applications is not mandatory, the applicant held two rounds of public exhibitions as part of the Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) process (24/05191/PAN). Views of the local community were sought at this early stage with public consultation events held on 6 December 2023 and 10 December 2023 at Glengarry Community Hall, Invergarry. Event notifications were advertised in the Oban Times (incorporating the Lochaber Times). In addition, an email notification was sent via the local community email distribution list which includes all residents in the Glen, and flyers were posted on the Notice Board at Glen Garry Community Hall with further flyers given to residents for local distribution. A Pre-application Consultation Report accompanied the application that set out how public consultation has informed the submitted proposal. In addition, the applicant has attended a number of Community Council meetings and other events:
- Glengarry Community Council meetings on 1 September 2025 and 2 March 2026 - the applicant provided updates on the proposed development and answered questions.
 - Glengarry Community Liaison Group meetings on 30 September and 16 December 2025 - the applicant met with stakeholders and other developers.
 - The applicant notified Glengarry Community Council when the application was submitted on 2 March 2025 and was forwarded via the local email distribution list.
- 1.9 Although separate to the Fearn Pumped Storage Hydro Scheme application, SSEN ran its own public consultation event regarding the associated grid connection on 14 May 2025 at Glengarry Community Hall, Invergarry.
- 1.10 The applicant made use of the Council's Pre-Application Advice Service for Major Developments in May 2023 (23/01810/PREMAJ). The capacity at that point was 900MW, half the proposed 1,800MW which currently forms part of the detailed application. The major pre-application response summarised the key issues noting that pumped storage hydroelectric schemes are national developments, identified in National Planning Framework 4, therefore, the need for such projects is established. Highland Council is supportive of renewable energy developments and its supporting infrastructure where it can be appropriately sited and designed to not be significantly detrimental overall, either individually or cumulatively with other developments. However, it was noted that the site is challenging with key concerns raised which included:

- Landscape and visual impacts upon the Kinloch Hourn-Knoydart-Morar Wild Land Area, Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel Special Landscape Area, West Inverness-shire Lochs Special Protection Area and Site of Special Scientific Interest. This is both for the project in isolation and any cumulative schemes. It was noted that the future application was to be accompanied by suitable visualisations covering the construction phase along with various phases after completion to consider the worst-case scenario. A mitigation strategy was required with regards to design, materials, landscaping and ongoing maintenance.
- Phasing of development with plans showing exploratory works, enabling works and final construction works.
- Impact on peat and carbon rich soils.
- Impact on ecology.
- Disturbance and displacement of black throated divers and common scoter within the SPA.
- Biodiversity enhancement measures.
- Impact on the C1144 Kinloch Hourn Road and the capability of the route to accommodate the predicted vehicle movements, including HGVs and AILs, for this project alongside the potential cumulative impact of other schemes.
- Potential impact on public access during preparatory works, construction works and once the scheme is operational was to be assessed as part of the submission of an Outdoor Access Plan or Access Management Plan.
- Flood Risk Assessment, Drainage Impact Assessment with impacts on Ground Water Dependant Terrestrial Ecosystems considered.
- Private water supply mitigation measures.
- Address pollution and amenity impacts.
- External lighting.

1.11 The application is supported by an EIAR, the contents of which has been informed through an EIA Scoping exercise. The EIA Scoping Report was submitted with a request for an EIA Scoping Opinion to the Energy Consents Unit on 23 February 2024. A Scoping Opinion was issued on 17 July 2024. The EIAR contains chapters covering: an introduction to the proposed development; consideration of alternatives; assessment methodology; planning and policy context; hydrology and water management; landscape and visual; terrestrial ecology; forestry; ornithology; aquatic ecology; geology, soils and water; land use; recreation; transport and access; noise and vibration; socio-economic and tourism; cultural heritage; and mitigation schedule. The application is also accompanied by a Planning Statement and the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report.

1.12 Additional information and associated documents were submitted on 3 December 2025 which supplemented the original EIAR. The details provided do not materially change the overall conclusions presented in the EIAR. These included the removal of the 2 inlet structures in the upper reservoir which will be submerged below water; Removal of the spillway channel and access bridge from the Fearn dam; Amended underground tunnel

system; Revisions to the temporary works along the C1144 public road; Provision of a landform screening bund; Additional habitat enhancement measures.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The proposed development is located at the western end of Glen Garry, centred around Loch Quoich on the lower ground and Loch Fearnna at the higher elevation, approximately 25km west of Invergarry. The red line site boundary extends to cover 1,344ha and spans several landholdings including the West Glenquoich Estate, East Glenquoich Estate, the Kingie Estate and areas of commercial forestry within the Glen Garry Forest, owned by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS). These landholdings support a mix of existing activities, including deer stalking, outdoor recreation, and commercial forestry, along with established hydroelectric generation, with the site also lying adjacent to SSE's existing Quoich hydro scheme which has been operational since 1955.
- 2.2 The wider extended site comprises a predominantly upland landscape characterised by blanket mire, wet heath, dry heath, flush habitats, riparian woodland, bracken, and areas of acid grassland, together with smaller pockets of scrub and native woodland. Limited woodland exists within the main development footprint, though areas of native and riparian woodland are present along watercourses and within the Glen Garry and Kingie forest blocks adjacent to the proposed access routes.
- 2.3 The proposed development utilises Loch Quoich, the largest operational storage reservoir in the UK by capacity capable of holding 55Mm³ of water, as the lower reservoir located within the lower valley. Loch Quoich occupies a long, linear glacial valley, framed by steep mountain slopes rising sharply from the loch's edge. These include the prominent peaks of Gleouraich, Spidean Mialach, and Gairich, which form a dramatic visual enclosure. The landscape is remote, rugged, and mountainous, forming part of the Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber Landscape Character Type (LCT).
- 2.4 The loch lies within the Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel Special Landscape Area (SLA), valued for its wildness, dramatic topography, and remoteness. However, the baseline character around Loch Quoich is already influenced by human intervention due to the existing hydro infrastructure, single-track C1144 public road running along the northern shore and the existing Skye overhead transmission line awaiting upgrade adjacent to the road.
- 2.5 Loch Quoich is a large, heavily modified hydroelectric reservoir situated at the western end of Glen Garry. The reservoir operates across a 26m vertical range, resulting in a highly dynamic waterline with visible drawdown zones along much of the shoreline. Drawdown scarring is a prominent existing feature and reflects the loch's role as an operational hydro reservoir. The loch is retained by dam structures at both its east and west ends, forming an artificially enlarged and deepened waterbody.
- 2.6 The narrow C1144 public road provides access towards Kinloch Hourn passing Loch Quoich. The loch is also used for estate management and occasional recreational boating, with an existing slipway located near the powerhouse site. Hillwalkers regularly view the loch from surrounding Munros, particularly Gleouraich, Spidean Mialach, and Gairich, from which the linear form and fluctuating shoreline of the reservoir are key visual characteristics

- 2.7 The proposed development includes the construction of 2 new substantial rockfill dams, Fearna Dam and Coire Dubh Dam, to create the upper reservoir and enclose the natural bowl surrounding Loch Fearna. Loch Fearna is presently a small, natural upland corrie loch situated high in the mountains to the north of Loch Quoich. It lies within an elevated, bowl-shaped landform enclosed by the steep, rocky slopes and ridgelines of Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach, forming a remote and rugged landscape at the head of its small catchment. The surrounding area comprises steep, rocky mountain slopes, deep corries, and upland terrain that contribute to the broader character of the Interlocking Sweeping Peaks landscape.
- 2.8 The landscape context in the area of the proposed upper works is one of notable remoteness. The upland corrie is accessed only by rough hill paths and forms part of a mountain environment popular with walkers ascending Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach. The character is defined by a strong sense of wildness, limited human intervention, and pronounced natural landforms, including steep rocky slopes, high corrie rims, and hidden upland bowls. From elevated viewpoints, Loch Fearna reads as a small, natural waterbody set within a dramatic mountainous setting, visually contained by the surrounding landform and largely screened from the lower glen.
- 2.9 Loch Fearna currently drains naturally via the Allt Fearna into Loch Quoich discharging through narrow burn channels before entering the lower reservoir. There is no existing dam or engineered water control structure at Loch Fearna.
- 2.10 Vegetation in the corrie and the surrounding high ground comprises upland blanket mire, wet and dry heath, flushes along with areas of exposed rock and scree in and around hill summits.
- 2.11 The site is located in a remote and sparsely populated upland area, with very few residential properties in the surrounding locale. No residential properties lie in close proximity to the proposed powerhouse, dams or construction areas, and there are no dwellings within 2km of the proposed development. In all directions, residential dwellings are limited to small, widely dispersed clusters of houses aligned primarily along the C1144 road and the southern and eastern shores of Loch Garry
- 2.12 The closest residential properties are those at Kingie, located approximately 4km to the east of the proposed development adjacent to the C1144 road. A further small cluster of properties at Poulary and Aultnaslat lies to the east/southeast, beyond Kingie, followed by dispersed dwellings at Tomdoun and Inchlaggan, which are set back progressively further east set back from the northern shoreline of Glen Garry. Additional scattered residential buildings are located on the south side of Loch Garry, including Torr na Carraidh and Halcyon Manor and the more isolated properties of Garrygualach and Greenfield, all of which lie at distances of several kilometres from the proposed works.
- 2.13 The largest grouping of properties lies on the western outskirts of Invergarry within 25km from the proposed development, situated to the east/south-east of the site, where housing, a caravan park and hotel accommodation form the nearest settlement cluster, although still separated from the development by extensive forestry and landform.
- 2.14 The key recreational interests in the area surrounding the proposed Fearna pumped storage hydro scheme include hillwalking, mountaineering, rock climbing, long-distance

walking, mountain biking/cycling, running/fell running, swimming, canoeing/kayaking, fishing, horse riding, camping, informal recreation and estate-based outdoor pursuits, supported by a network of established paths, mountain routes and hill tracks in the wider surrounding area around Loch Quoich and Glen Garry. The landscape surrounding the development is particularly valued for access to high-level mountain terrain, with several Munros and Corbetts forming highly popular walking routes. Notably, the mountains of Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach, accessed from the C1144 road, form a well-used circular upland walking route, while Gairich, on the south side of Loch Quoich, provides another popular ascent with expansive views across the loch. The C1144 itself offers scenic recreational driving or cycling alongside access to remote starting points for these mountain routes. Multiple Scottish Hill Tracks that connect Glen Garry, Glen Loyne, Glen Shiel, Glen Kingie and Loch Arkaig pass through the study area including Scottish Hill Track 257a linking Glen Garry to Glen Shiel, Scottish Hill Track 247 from Strathan (Loch Arkaig) to Tomdoun (Glen Garry) and Scottish Hill Track 249a/249b following the northwestern shore of Loch Quoich toward Inverie. Core Paths in the wider surrounding area including LO11.01 (Glenfinnan Estate Road), LO11.05 (Black Bridge to Mandally Road), LO11.08 (Whitebridge trails) and the long distance Cape Wrath Trail. The hill tracks noted link a number of popular Corbett and Munro summits in the wider area including Gleouraich, Spidean Mialach, Gairich, Sgùrr Mòr and Sgùrr an Fhuarain amongst others.

Environmental Designations, Habitats and Ornithology

- 2.15 The site does not form part of any statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation. Designated sites for ecology and ornithology within 10km of the site include:

Designation	Distance to Site Boundary (Approximate)	Qualifying Interests
Garry Falls SSS1	0.45km west	Woodland and bryophytes
South Laggan Fen SSSI	4.85km east	Fen and wetland habitats
West Inverness-shire Lochs SSSI	5km northeast and 5.5km east/southeast	Black-throated diver, common scoter
West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA	5km northeast and 5.5km east/southeast	Black-throated diver, common scoter

- 2.16 There are various portions of trees recorded as ancient woodland in the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) which is classified as Ancient (of semi-natural origin) set back between approximately 50m and up to 5km from the red line site boundary such as Allt Fearna Gorge, Glen Garry Forest, Loch Quoich Native Woodland and Glen Kingie Forest. Additionally, there are also areas of non-statutory woodland with Caledonian Pinewood Inventory within the SAR route.

- 2.17 Terrestrial site surveys detected evidence of protected species including mammals such as: otter, pine marten and red squirrel, reptiles such as: slow worm, adder and common lizard, amphibians such as: common toad, invertebrates such as: azure hawk and northern emerald dragonflies and small pearl-bordered fritillary and large heath butterflies. Aquatic site surveys detected evidence of Arctic charr, brown trout and European eel in Loch Quoich and connected watercourses. No fish were present in Loch Fearn. The site and surrounds have been surveyed for breeding birds and transient birds with breeding protected species detected such as: black grouse, common sandpiper, common scoter, dipper, goldeneye, ptarmigan, ringed plover and snipe, with additional protected species (Greenshank, Red-throated Diver and Wood Sandpiper) recorded in the wider breeding area. Transient or passage protected detected such as: golden eagle, white-tailed eagle, osprey, merlin, whooper swan, curlew, cuckoo, skylark, lapwing, house martin, mistle thrush, redwing, fieldfare, spotted flycatcher, tree pipit, whinchat, wood warbler amongst others.
- 2.18 Ground Water Dependant Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE) are present within the site. Surveys identified M6 (acid flush/acidic sedge–bog moss flush), M10 (alkaline (base-rich) flush/rich fen flush), M29 (soakaway/wet runnel community/seepage line mire) and W4c (wet birch woodland/swampy birch–Molinia woodland) as highly groundwater-dependent habitats, and M15 (wet heath/cross-leaved heath wet heath) and parts of M25 (purple moor-grass mire/Molinia mire/wet grassy mire) as moderately groundwater-dependent, occurring across the proposed upper reservoir, lower works and the SAR.
- 2.19 The principal soil types recorded at the site include deep blanket peat, peaty gleys and peaty podzols, shallow mineral soils over glacial till and localised alluvial soils. Deep blanket peat is the dominant soil, supporting extensive bog, mire, and wet heath communities found across the upper reservoir and on large parts of the upland moorland. Peaty gleys and peaty podzols are found on slopes and flush transitions. Shallow mineral soils over glacial till are found around the lower works including the proposed powerhouse and switchyard, sited in a disused quarry where mineral substrates and glacial deposits occur, and along parts of the SAR and forestry tracks. Localised alluvial soils are found along the River Garry, Gearr Garry and associated riparian corridors. None of the peat found across the site is Class 1 with only small portions of Class 2 peatlands found across the wider area with both defined as nationally important carbon rich soils.

Landscape Designations, Wild Land and Landscape Character

- 2.20 The proposed development is located within nationally important WLA 18: Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar, which extends across the upland corrie surrounding Loch Fearn, including the locations of the proposed Fearn Dam, Coire Dubh Dam and much of the upper reservoir area. The powerhouse and lower control works sit just outside the WLA boundary along the eastern shoreline of Loch Quoich. The Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA is a regional landscape designation which encompasses the majority of the site, including Loch Quoich, the proposed powerhouse, and the upper-level works at Loch Fearn.

Designated Landscape	Approximate distance and direction from the proposed development
National Scenic Area (NSA)	
Knoydart	6.5km to the west
Kintail	9km to the northwest
Glen Affric	9km to the northeast
Wild Land Areas (WLA)	
18: Kinlochhourn – Knoydart – Morar	Within the site boundary
24: Central Highland	9km to the northeast
Special Landscape Area (SLA)	
Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel	Within the site boundary

- 2.21 The red line site boundary extends across 4 Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within the study area. The majority of the proposed development, including the upper reservoir at Loch Fearn, Fearn Dam and Coire Dubh Dam, the upper control works, and the powerhouse and lower works at Loch Quoich, lies within LCT 239: Interlocking Sweeping Peaks - Lochaber defined by a large-scale mountainous landscape characterised by steep corries, sweeping ridge lines and dramatic peaks.
- 2.22 To the south and west, parts of the development, primarily sections of the upper reservoir access track, higher-level construction areas and areas receiving indirect effects, extend into LCT 238: Rugged Massif – Lochaber, defined by rugged upland slopes, rocky summits and exposed terrain. The lower-lying moorland and valley floor areas forming the approach to the site from Glen Garry, including portions of the Southern Access Route (SAR) and wider construction footprint, lie within LCT 237: Rocky Moorland – Lochaber, a landscape characterised by open moorland, scattered rock outcrops, lochans and broad upland plateaux. Additionally, a small part of the SAR corridor on the lower slopes of Glen Garry lies within LCT 235: Broad Forested Strath which is defined as comprising a mixture of commercial plantation, native woodland pockets and forested glen floors through which the upgraded access route will pass.

Built Heritage

- 2.23 The proposed development would be situated within an area containing no recorded historic environment assets. Within the wider landscape, several nationally important cultural heritage sites exist such as Quoich Dam (Category B Listed Building), Tomdoun Church (Category C Listed Building) and Scheduled Monuments in the broader Lochaber–Knoydart region, but none lie within or adjacent to the proposed development, and there is no intervisibility between these assets and the proposed development. During site surveys, no designated or non-designated archaeological sites were

identified within the red line site boundary and the potential for previously unknown archaeological remains to survive within the development area is assessed as very low.

Hydrology

- 2.24 The proposed development is located wholly within the Loch Quoich surface water catchment, with all inflows and outflows remaining within the existing hydrological system. Loch Quoich, which would form the lower reservoir, lies immediately adjacent to the development footprint at the eastern end of the loch, while Loch Fearna and Coire Dubh, located approximately 1km upstream of Loch Quoich, form the natural bowl for the proposed upper reservoir. The site is drained by several small upland watercourses, principally the Allt Fearna and the unnamed tributary within Coire Dubh, both of which flow directly to Loch Quoich.
- 2.25 SEPA flood mapping confirms that the development site is not at risk of flooding from external sources, owing to the elevated location of the upper reservoir and the heavily managed hydrology of Loch Quoich. Flood extents within the catchment are limited to localised areas close to watercourse banks and the shoreline of Loch Quoich, reflecting the existing hydro-modified regime. The proposed development would operate fully within the current Loch Quoich operational range and no out-of-catchment transfers or additional flood risk are predicted.
- 2.26 Surface water flood extents largely coincide with existing watercourses, forestry drainage lines and loch margins along the SAR with no significant accumulations identified elsewhere within the site.

Cumulative Development

- 2.27 The EIAR assessed details of operational, consented/under construction and in planning projects that were either within the 10km study area, are visible from or have potential combined visibility with the Fearna scheme. These include Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme, Coire Glas Grid Connection Overhead Line (OHL), Skye Reinforcement Project OHL and Quoich Tee OHL Replacement. The EIAR also assessed Beinn Bheag Wind Farm which was in Scoping at the time of submission but has since been withdrawn, therefore, it is no longer included in the cumulative assessment.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

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| 3.1 | 06.02.2025 | 24/05191/PAN: Loch Fearna pumped storage hydro scheme - construction and operation of a pumped storage hydro scheme at Glen Garry with a generating capacity of 2000MW | Reported to South Planning Applications Committee |
| 3.2 | 17.07.2024 | 24/01204/SCOP: Request for scoping opinion for proposed section 36 application for Fearna Pumped Storage Hydro Project | Scoping Response Issued |
| 3.3 | 07.06.2023 | 23/01810/PREMAJ The proposed development is a pumped storage hydro | PREMAJ Response Pack Issued |

project with a capacity of up to 900MW
named Fearn PSH

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Advertised: Section 36 Application and EIA Development

Date advertised:

- The Herald – 21 March 2025
- Lochaber Times – 20 and 27 March 2025
- Edinburgh Gazette – 21 March 2025

Additional information date advertised:

- Lochaber Times – 4 December 2025
- Edinburgh Gazette – 5 December 2025

Representation deadline - 19 January 2026

Representations Received by The Highland Council: 1 representation (1 duplicate objection also submitted to Energy Consents Unit)

Representations Received by The Energy Consents Unit: 12 representations (all objections)

4.2 Material considerations raised in objections are summarised as follows:

- Not in accordance with the Development Plan;
- Lack of national strategy regarding pumped storage hydro development;
- Landscape and visual impact;
- Impact on landscape and natural heritage designations;
- Varying water levels and drawdown scars;
- Impact on habitat, species and ecology;
- Lack of adequate assessment with regards to habitat, species and ecology;
- Impact on peat;
- Impact on tourism;
- Impact on roads;
- Traffic and road safety;
- Noise;
- Impact on recreational access including hills tracks;
- Impact of the worker camp on habitat, species and ecology;
- Lack of detail regarding the worker camp.
- The substation/grid connection should be part of the application.

4.3 Non-Material considerations raised:

- Overprovision of renewable energy in Highland;

4.4 All letters of representation received by the Council are available for inspection via the Council's eplanning portal which can be accessed through the internet <https://www.highland.gov.uk/planning/view-comment-planning-applications>. Those

representations received by the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit can be accessed via <https://www.energyconsents.scot/>. It should be noted that some representations have been submitted to both The Highland Council and Energy Consents Unit.

5. CONSULTATIONS

Consultations undertaken by The Highland Council

- 5.1 **Glengarry Community Council (Host) object** to the application. Their specific concerns regarding this project relate to a lack of compliance with NPF4 policies and local Development Plan policy; Transport and road safety risks, particularly on the A82 and A86 given the significant volumes of construction vehicles along with landslip risk on the C1144 near the Cuiach Dam; Lack of detail regarding worker accommodation; Detrimental landscape and Wild Land impacts; Detrimental ecological impacts; Detrimental impact on Glen Garry Forest; Detrimental impact on ornithology; Downstream water management impacts on the Garry catchment; Lack of assessment on the adjacent Garry Falls SSSI; Lack of carbon cost accounting; and the proposed development would have a limited local socio-economic benefit.
- 5.2 They submitted further comments regarding the additional information provided confirming they maintain their objection, noting the additional information only reinforces their initial concerns raised. They consider the scheme still fails to comply with NPF4 policies and local Development Plan requirements, with its limited and unproven benefits far outweighed by environmental and community harms.
- 5.3 Glengarry Community Council notes more generally that they have aligned with the Convention of Community Councils opposing what they consider the industrialisation of the Highlands seeking a Planning Inquiry Commission to examine the full cumulative impacts of major energy, storage and transmission projects rather than continuing with a fragmented, "salami-sliced" approach. The group has called for a pause on all major applications until a clear national energy policy and economic impact assessment are in place, given the pressure on communities and the risk of depopulation in areas where tourism is key to the local economy.
- 5.4 **Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge & Achnacarry Community Council object** to the application. Their specific concerns regarding this project relate to a lack of compliance with NPF4 policies and local Development Plan policy; Transport and road safety risks, particularly on the A82 and A86 which they consider substandard and unsuitable for the significant volumes of construction vehicles; Air quality and public health impacts associated with this increased construction traffic; Detrimental landscape and Wild Land impacts; Cumulative construction impacts, including noise, dust, artificial lighting, visual intrusion along with prolonged disruption from potentially 3 major construction sites for nation scale projects operating concurrently within a small geographic area; and the proposed development would have a limited local socio-economic benefit.
- 5.5 Along with the concerns noted the Community Council also made reference more generally to the cumulative impacts of multiple, large, pumped storage schemes being progressed in the wider area; The lack of strategic consideration by decision makers of

cumulative effects on communities, infrastructure and the environment; and the perceived influence of national agencies and developers on the assessment process.

- 5.6 **Other Community Councils** – the following community councils in the wider surrounding area were consulted as they may be impacted by the routing to the site but did not respond to the consultation:
- Dores and Essich
 - Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston
 - Glenurquhart
 - Inverness West
 - Kiltarlity
 - Stratherrick and Foyers
 - Strathglass
 - Strathnairn
- 5.7 **Access Officer** does not object to the application, subject to a condition requiring a finalised Outdoor Access Management Plan.
- 5.8 **Community Wealth Building Team** do not object to the application noting they would contact the applicant directly regarding Highland Council's Social Value Charter.
- 5.9 **Development Plans Team** do not object to the application. The Development Plans Team noted the proposed development could be considered broadly in conformity with the approved Development Plan only if an independent, quantitative demonstration of need for additional pumped-storage capacity in Highland is provided. As with other pumped storage hydro schemes within Highland currently pending consideration, there is no independent confirmation (from NESO or OFGEM for example) of a specific quantitative need for more PSH in Highland. The current excess of wind farm generated power in Highland should be resolved within the next few years, potentially 2031 but this is dependent on current grid infrastructure work programmes staying on target, when its export to areas of higher demand within Scotland and the wider UK network should have been facilitated via grid improvements. The Development Plans Team noted that current excess electricity can also be utilised in alternative ways such as via battery energy storage and conversion to other energy products such as hydrogen and "green" ammonia.
- 5.10 In terms of policy assessment, The Development Plans Team makes reference to their advice in the 23/01810/PREMAJ response pack which is the key reference point. They note that the applicant accepts that there will be significant effects upon the Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA during construction and localised significant effects on the SLA during operation. The WLA Assessment concludes that the longer-term significant effects associated with the operation of the proposal would be localised in relation to the WLA.
- 5.11 They submitted further comments regarding the additional information provided noting the design changes and further mitigation measures associated with the proposed development. They generally welcomed the redesigned dam structure that removes previously separate upper-control works from view from WLA 18, removal of the spillway and access bridge from the Fearn Dam, expanded native woodland and peatland restoration and targeted ecological enhancements for common scoter and

black-throated diver. Whilst the Development Plans Team noted these changes would reduce residual environmental and visual impacts in comparison to the initial proposed development they reverted to their initial concern as to whether there is a need for additional pumped-storage capacity in Highland and for that to be appropriately demonstrated.

- 5.12 They conclude that the acceptability of the proposed development ultimately depends on planning judgment, specifically whether the reduced, but still present, landscape and visual impacts should outweigh national policy support for renewable energy, and on whether consultees agree the revised mitigation is adequate.
- 5.13 **Ecology Officer** does not object to the application, subject to conditions requiring a Habitat Management Plan, Species Protection Plans, Bird Protection Plan, fence-marking for black grouse, independent Environmental Clerk of Works, detailed CEMP covering pollution control, water management, drainage, protected species measures and construction methods and a Water Quality and Fish Monitoring Plan covering pre-construction, during-construction, GIS data shapefiles and post-construction phases of development. The Ecology Officer welcomes the proposed biodiversity enhancements, including peatland restoration, woodland creation/restoration, rhododendron control, deer management, and artificial nesting/feeding structures. They are satisfied the scheme can meet NPF4 Policy 3 Biodiversity with the wider enhancement package, subject to additional peatland restoration to meet NatureScot's 1:11 ratio which has since been confirmed through the submission of the package of additional information which substantially increased mitigation and restoration measures beyond the minimum expected requirements.
- 5.14 **Environmental Health** do not object to the application, subject to conditions requiring controls on construction noise, operational noise, construction working hours, and the submission and approval of a Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (CNVMP), Blasting Method Statement, Dust Mitigation Scheme and an updated Private Water Supplies (PWS) Risk Assessment.
- 5.15 The proposed development is set in a rural area and therefore operational noise is not expected to be audible at sensitive receptors given the separation distances from properties, land topography and the majority of plant and other noise sources being underground. Operational noise conditions are however still recommended as a precaution with a fixed 25dB (A) external rating level. Likewise, construction noise at the site itself does not raise any concern albeit the new and/or upgraded access tracks are proposed closer to noise sensitive receptors, particularly the houses at Luiblea and Torgulbin. The worst predicted noise levels are 67dB (A) during road access works with elevated noise levels during other phases of construction. As works on the access progress away from the houses, noise will reduce, however, there will be noise from traffic for the duration of the construction period. The applicant has submitted a Draft Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (CNVMP) which confirms that the best practicable means will be employed to minimise the impact of construction noise and various mitigation measures proposed.
- 5.16 In terms of construction working hours Environmental Health recommend that activities which are audible at any noise sensitive receptor are limited between 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and between 8am to 6pm on Saturdays (with a requirement for a reduced 45dB LAeq 1 hour between 1pm to 6pm on Saturdays as opposed to 45dB

LAeq 1 hour for the rest of the time period noted). They recommend no works on Sundays that would be audible at any noise sensitive receptor. However, it is acknowledged that for a proposed development of this scale there is merit in allowing some works to be carried on outwith normal working hours if it is likely to significantly reduce the overall length of the construction period, and the impact on residents can be kept to a minimum. Working hours can therefore be controlled through the Construction Environmental Management Plan should the application be granted consent. Vibration limits will also apply and can also be controlled by condition if required.

- 5.17 The applicant's Private Water Supply (PWS) risk assessment identified 2 potentially affected supplies, 1 of which is unlikely to be significantly impacted, with monitoring required and the other will require marking, structural analysis, and protection during the SAR works. An updated assessment would be required prior to construction and could be secured by condition should the application be granted consent.
- 5.18 **Flood Risk Management Team** do not object to the application, subject to conditions regarding further consultation on "stop generating/curtailment level", final watercourse crossing design, and SUDS to manage surface water run-off for all new hardstanding and accesses. They are content that there are no sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the site therefore there will not be any direct impact on flood risk to others. The Flood Risk Management Team notes that appropriate mitigation will be in place, including operational controls to ensure the scheme only generates when Loch Quoich is within defined water-level thresholds, with generation ceasing during high-level conditions. The EIAR Hydrology and Water Management chapter, along with other related supporting information submitted, confirms that the scheme will not increase downstream flood risk and is expected to reduce spillway operation frequency at the existing Loch Quoich dam. They are satisfied that no sensitive receptors lie within the area with no direct increase in flood risk to others anticipated. All new and upgraded watercourse crossings must be designed to pass the 1 in 200-year plus climate change flood event without impeding flows and any land-raising within floodplains should be avoided unless supported by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment.
- 5.19 **Forestry Officer** does not object to the application, subject to conditions requiring a detailed Compensatory Planting Plan, Tree Survey, Tree Constraints Plan, Tree Protection Plan, Arboricultural Method Statement and long-term maintenance requirements. They note the proposed development will affect a mixture of productive conifer woodland, native birch and Scots pine woodland, areas recorded in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, including sections of Ancient Semi-Natural Origin and Caledonian Pinewood. The Forestry Officer confirms that the proposal will result in the loss of 6.98ha of ancient/PAWS woodland and 18.81ha of productive conifer, with some additional crown-lifting required for abnormal loads. Whilst acknowledging that designated Ancient Woodland is irreplaceable, they considered the applicant's initial proposed mitigation and compensatory planting of at least 100ha of new native woodland, along with 18.81ha of productive conifer, to be acceptable, provided it is clearly distinguished from wider biodiversity enhancements. Additional mitigation measures, which substantially increase native woodland restoration and plating to cover a total of 460ha, along with deer-proof enclosures, riparian improvements, rhododendron removal and of non-native conifers in Caledonian Pinewood areas taken away are welcomed.

- 5.20 **Historic Environment Team – Conservation** do not object to the application and provided no further comments for this application.
- 5.21 **Historic Environment Team – Archaeology** do not object to the application. They note that cultural heritage has been scoped out of the EIA. They agree the potential for impacts to unrecorded features is low and no programme of archaeological work or areas of watching briefs are proposed. However, good practice measures are recommended, and these should include a protocol in the event of the discovery of previously unrecorded assets and the inclusion of cultural heritage issues within the CEMP.
- 5.22 **Landscape Architect** raised significant concerns with the application. The Highland Council sought independent professional landscape advice from Ironside Farrar for this application. Whilst they note the applicant has provided a structured LVIA broadly aligned with accepted practice, key elements of the assessment understate both the scale and extent of significant landscape and visual effects.
- 5.23 The applicant's conclusion that the most pronounced effects concentrate around the upper reservoir, dams and surrounding mountain slopes is accepted, Ironside Farrar finds that the magnitude and significance of these effects, particularly during operation, have been undervalued. In contrast to the LVIA, they consider that the reservoir and dams would remain a highly intrusive and incongruous feature, particularly visible from multiple mountain summits and upland recreational routes, extending well beyond the immediate surround area overlooking the corrie into the upper reservoir.
- 5.24 The assessment of the Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA is considered incomplete, with 3 Special Qualities judged to be significantly affected rather than 2, with the resulting effects assessed as sufficient to harm the integrity of the SLA. For the Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA, they note that NatureScot has identified significant adverse effects on perceived wildness, albeit they are not objecting subject to enhanced mitigation.
- 5.25 Although the LVIA concludes that longer-term visual effects would diminish, particularly at Year 15 of operation, Ironside Farrar highlight that significant visual effects would remain for hillwalkers on the 3 key mountain routes, including Gairich, Spidean Mialach and Gleouraich, as well as for users of the C1144 public road during both construction and operation. Additionally, they consider that the reliance on route-based assessments, without dedicated viewpoint assessments, has diluted the identification of significant impacts. Some submitted visualisations are considered to under-represent visibility of both construction activity and operational change, particularly at higher elevations. Whilst the proposed design refinements in the Additional Information submitted, such as removal of the intake towers and additional woodland planting, would provide minor improvements, these do not materially change the magnitude or significance of effects.
- 5.26 Overall, whilst it is generally agreed that the landscape and visual impacts are properly identified, Ironside Farrar concludes that the severity, extent and long-term nature of several significant adverse effects have been understated, particularly regarding the upper reservoir along with the dams, mountain receptors and designated landscapes.
- 5.27 **Transport Planning Team object** to the application. They raised concerns regarding the design of the upgraded section of the C1144 public road and feasibility of the works

proposed as the route is not considered suitable for the scale or nature of the proposed improvements, given its geography and current condition. The road would require extensive upgrades, likely resulting in significant disruption for residents and road users over an extended period. The prolonged construction period for the proposed development, currently estimated by the applicant at around 7 years, would impose an unreasonable level of disruption on the local community. As a result, Transport Planning anticipates heightened road safety issues, including vehicle-to-vehicle conflicts and risks to non-motorised users.

- 5.28 Whilst Transport Planning acknowledge ongoing discussion has resulted in some improvements in the applicant's work programme and design review, they remain of the view that there are no realistic alternatives in the current submission that would mitigate the fundamental concerns raised. As such, it concludes that the proposed development, in its present form, cannot be supported and that the above issues must be addressed before the Transport Planning Team could consider withdrawing its objection.

Consultations Undertaken by the Energy Consents Unit

- 5.29 **British Horse Society** do not object to the application. They note that safe off-road riding routes are essential for the wellbeing of horses and riders, who have the same access rights as other non-motorised users under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. Equestrian needs should therefore be included when planning renewable energy projects to avoid future access conflicts and to ensure opportunities to enhance outdoor access for all.
- 5.30 They welcome the applicant's draft Outdoor Access Management Plan but note that it currently omits equestrians. Given that forestry tracks and long-distance routes are often used by riders, the final plan should explicitly address equestrian access. Proposed path upgrades are also supported, but surfaces must be suitable for horses, avoiding sharp, loose stone and ensuring consolidated whin dust finishes. Infrastructure that obstructs access, such as grids or locked gates without side gates, should be avoided.
- 5.31 Off-road access is particularly important because horses and riders are vulnerable road users, with most riding accidents occurring on minor roads. Therefore, the Construction Traffic Management Plan must set out clear measures to protect all vulnerable road users, including equestrians, and inform construction drivers accordingly.
- 5.32 **British Telecom** do not object to the application. The application should not cause interference to BT's current and planned radio network.
- 5.33 **Buglife object** to the application. They raised concerns regarding inadequate survey and assessment for terrestrial or aquatic invertebrates which they consider leaves the impact assessment incomplete and unsupported. They note the walkover survey indicates notable or protected invertebrate species may be present, yet required targeted surveys, other than for dragonflies, have not been undertaken. Buglife consider this omission is significant given the scale of habitat loss and change that will be associated with the proposed development.
- 5.34 They also note that aquatic invertebrate data is insufficient with only a single sample taken from Loch Fearn despite 1km of shoreline being subject to inundation and drawdown which they feel undermines the reliability of the conclusions reached

regarding impact. Buglife supports proposed sediment augmentation on the River Garry as a positive step to restore lost habitat and benefit aquatic invertebrates, however, they note that the source of gravel is not specified, and potential environmental impacts of gravel extraction must be addressed.

- 5.35 **Historic Environment Scotland** have no objection or further comments.
- 5.36 **Ministry of Defence - Defence Infrastructure Organisation** do not object to the application subject to conditions requiring details of aviation lighting, aviation charting and safety management and aviation charting post-construction. The development lies within a designated low-flying Tactical Training Area where military aircraft may operate at heights down to 33m. The MOD note the proposed structures, particularly the upper reservoir dams and any construction equipment over 15.2m, could potentially create physical obstructions to low-flying aircraft.
- 5.37 **Mountaineering Scotland** object to the application. They raised significant concerns regarding the proposed development on the grounds that it would irreversibly damage wild land and scenic quality, introduce highly visible industrial infrastructure into a remote mountain landscape, and undermine key mountaineering and tourism experiences through noise, traffic and visual intrusion. They also highlight cumulative industrialisation, significant ecological and peatland impacts, and argue that pumped-storage schemes should be located in less sensitive areas to avoid harming nationally important mountain environments.
- 5.38 **National Air Traffic Control Services** do not object to the application. The proposed development does not conflict with their safeguarding criteria.
- 5.39 **NatureScot** object to the application as the proposed development is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA and SSSI, particularly with regards to common scoter and black-throated diver. Key issues that raised particular concern included the permanent loss of Loch Fearn as a supporting habitat for common scoter, disturbance, water quality risks, and changes to prey availability. Supporting information provided by the applicant does not demonstrate that there will be no adverse effect on site integrity of the SPA and no viable mitigation exists for the loss of Loch Fearn. Therefore, derogation would be required if Scottish Ministers wish to grant consent for the planning application. Additional mitigation is needed for other impact pathways (such as Bird Protection Plan, Helicopter Method Statement, finalised Construction Environmental Management Document and Biodiversity Enhancement Plan) by condition if Scottish Ministers are minded to grant consent. The impacts on the West Inverness-shire Lochs SSSI mirror those on the SPA.
- 5.40 Additionally, NatureScot initially objected due to significant adverse effects on the qualities of Kinloch Hourn - Knoydart - Morar Wild Land Area 18, in particular, Wild Land Quality 1 (naturalness, ruggedness, awe) and they considered that these effects could not be mitigated through design. Following further discussion with the applicant they have enhanced biodiversity net gain measures including significant additional peat restoration, tree planting and habitat renewal. Whilst NatureScot concede the proposed development would still cause significant adverse effects on WLQ 1, fundamentally altering the naturalness, ruggedness, and sense of awe across the eastern limb of the WLA, they note the substantial betterment provided and they consider the biodiversity net gain and will offset the detrimental impacts of the proposed development. A fully

developed Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan, including full details of the major peatland and habitat restoration measures could be controlled by condition should the application be granted consent. As noted in the additional information submitted by the applicant, NatureScot expect at least 891ha of peatland restoration should be delivered with deer management improvements essential for success given the significant losses of upland heath and blanket bog.

- 5.41 No significant adverse impacts are anticipated for the Quoich Spillway SSSI or Garry Falls SSSI.
- 5.42 Restoration and enhancement measures outwith the red line site boundary could be secured by way of legal agreement. The mitigation measures would be required to be overseen by a Landscape Clerk of Works (LCoW) and Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) which could be controlled by condition should the applicant be granted consent.
- 5.43 **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds object** to the application. They do not believe the impacts of the proposed development have been properly assessed and considers that insufficient survey work has been undertaken. They consider the proposed development would adversely impact common scoter and black-throated diver and it cannot be demonstrated that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA.
- 5.44 In addition to their concerns regarding the detrimental impact on the SPA, RSPB object due to the potential population-level impacts on red-throated diver and wood sandpiper from disturbance and displacement during construction and operation. Although, the proposed design changes may reduce some visual impacts, they are not considered sufficient to avoid disturbance risks.
- 5.45 RSPB also highlights concerns regarding impacts on wider countryside birds, including Schedule 1 and Annex I species, which they consider have been underestimated due to inadequate survey and assessment. Invertebrate survey and assessment are inadequate and impacts on important habitats and peat, including priority Caledonian Pine Forest, have been underestimated.
- 5.46 **Scottish Environment Protection Agency** do not object to the application, subject to conditions requiring details of site enabling works, Construction and Environmental Management Plan, Geotechnical Clerk of Works, finalised Peat Management Plan (PMP); borrow pit scheme of works, and a Mass Balance Strategy Plan for tunnel excavated rock. SEPA also provides advisory notes regarding waste regulation, particularly that excavated peat is considered waste unless reused on-site in its natural state and refers the applicant to SEPA's regulatory guidance.
- 5.47 A Controlled Activities Regulation (CAR) application will be required for the hydropower element of the proposed development, and they welcome a twin-tracking approach alongside this application. Fisheries, third party water users, protected species and habitats within the bed and banks of the water features and inundation area are all fully assessed as part of the CAR determination process with that application pending consideration.

- 5.48 It is estimated that approximately 10.1Mm³ of spoil will be generated and that all the material can be used in site reinstatement. Full details regarding the volume and manner of material handling, use and storage will be required.
- 5.49 Although 65.86ha of blanket bog peatland will be permanently lost with 18.36ha temporarily lost as part of the construction of the proposed development, the applicant has tried to minimise peat disruption wherever possible with the scheme generally avoiding the deepest peat. The PMP (Volume 4 Appendix 12.2) indicates that all the disturbed carbon rich soil can be used in site reinstatement.
- 5.50 **Scottish Water** do not object to the application. A review of their records indicates that the proposed development is located within the Loch Quoich catchment, part of the wider Loch Ness drinking water catchment and designated as a Drinking Water Protected Area (DWPA), which supplies the Invermoriston Water Resource Zone (WRZ). Additionally, they note that Loch Ness supplies Invermoriston Water Treatment Works (WTW) and it is essential that water quality and water quantity in the area is protected. They note abstraction for nearby WTWs (Inchlaggan and Invergarry) will not be impacted by the proposed development. Scottish Water need to ensure mitigation measures are implemented to reduce any risks that could affect their public drinking water supplies, especially given that there are a number of other national scale renewable energy projects at various stages in the planning process in this catchment. Scottish Water will review the site-specific risks and mitigation measures proposed at the more detailed design stages should the application be granted consent, to determine the most appropriate protocol and procedure within the Loch Quoich catchment to protect water quality and quantity.
- 5.51 **Transport Scotland** do not object to the application subject to conditions requiring the route for any abnormal loads on the trunk road network, accommodation measures for abnormal loads including the removal of street furniture, junction widening and traffic management, any additional signing or temporary traffic control measures and the submission of Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). Additionally, Transport Scotland request various advisory notes setting out their requirements relating to works within the trunk road boundary should the application be granted consent.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY/OTHER POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Appendix 2 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 considerations which are relevant to the assessment of the application.

7. PLANNING APPRAISAL

- 7.1 Should Ministers approve the development, it will receive deemed planning permission under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). Although not a planning application, the Council processes Section 36 applications in a similar manner given that planning permission may be deemed to be granted.

7.2 Schedule 9 of The Electricity Act 1989 contains considerations in relation to the impact of proposals on amenity and fisheries. These considerations mean the developer is required to:

- have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings, and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and
- reasonably mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects.

7.3 It should be noted that for applications under the Electricity Act 1989 that the Development Plan is just one of a number of considerations, and therefore Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 which requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, is not engaged. That said, the application is still required 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

7.4 The key considerations in this case are:

- a) Compliance with the Development Plan / Other Planning Policy
- b) Energy and Economic Benefits
- c) Community Benefit
- d) Siting, Design Materials and Layout Evolution
- e) Design, Landscape and Visual Impacts (including on Wild Land Areas)
- f) Construction
- g) Construction Infrastructure
- h) Noise and Vibration Roads
- i) Transport and Access
- j) Wider Recreational Access
- k) Hydrology and Water Environment
- l) Water, Flood Risk, Drainage and Peat
- m) Natural Heritage and Protected Species (Including Ornithology)
- n) Aquatic/Terrestrial Ecology
- o) Habitat Loss
- p) Biodiversity Enhancement
- q) Forestry
- r) Built and Cultural Heritage
- s) Other Material Considerations

Development Plan / Other Planning Policy

- 7.5 The Development Plan comprises National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), the adopted Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP), the adopted West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (WestPlan), and all statutorily adopted supplementary guidance, including Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance. Appendix 3 of this report provides an assessment of compliance with the Development Plan / Other Planning Policy.
- 7.6 NPF4 outlines 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.
- 7.7 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 2 – Pumped Hydro Storage and 3 - Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure.
- 7.8 In summary, the principle of pumped hydro storage development is well established in national policy, with the proposed development being of national importance for the delivery of the national Spatial Strategy. NPF4 considers that pumped hydro storage development will play a significant role in balancing and optimising electricity generation and maintaining the operability of the electricity system as part of the transition to net zero. It is further necessitated with the move towards a decarbonised system with much more renewable generation, the output from which is defined by weather conditions. This is also reflected within other material policy considerations, with Government policy giving significant weight to the importance of achieving net zero through the deployment of renewable energy development at pace. Government legislation and policy maintain the commitment to attaining net zero by 2045. When determining renewable energy proposals, the ability to meet these targets therefore demands substantial weight when undertaking the planning balance exercise.
- 7.9 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. Whilst the strong policy support referenced above is noted this is caveated subject to consideration as to whether the proposed development's avoidance and minimisation of impacts is sufficient. This aim is not new and will clearly require a balancing exercise to be undertaken, which is reflected throughout NPF4. At the regional level, HwLDP also offers support for renewable development proposals where they are located, sited and designed such as they will not be significantly detrimental overall, individually or cumulatively with other developments. A more detailed analysis of relevant policy and guidance is provided in Appendix 3.

Energy and Economic Benefit

- 7.10 The Council continues to respond positively to the Scottish Government's renewable energy agenda. Whilst there has been a focus on onshore wind energy in Highland over

the last few years, large scale pumped hydro storage schemes are becoming a viable complementary renewable energy source alongside on and offshore wind energy. The Highland region offers significant opportunities for pumped hydro storage development given the requirement for an upper and lower reservoir to successfully generate electricity. Onshore wind energy developments in Highland accounts for around 30% of the national installed onshore wind energy capacity and the opportunities for pumped hydro storage development can further diversify and help balance demands on the transmission network.

- 7.11 Notwithstanding any impacts that this proposal may have upon the landscape resource, amenity and heritage of the area, the development could be seen to be compatible in principle with Scottish Government policy and guidance, making a substantial contribution to meeting the Government, UK and European energy targets, with the development having the potential to generate up to 1800MW with storage capacity up to 36GWh.
- 7.12 Appendix 12.3 Carbon Calculator includes an assessment which assumes that to facilitate the proposed annual power generation, surplus energy generated from renewable and low carbon sources is used to pump water from Loch Cuiach to Loch Fearn and to “prime” the Pumped Storage Hydro (PSH) scheme. The large amount of energy stored by the proposed development means that it will both store significant amounts of surplus wind energy, which would otherwise be lost, and displace conventional gas generation reducing emissions. The proposed development therefore has the potential to rapidly supply clean electricity to the national grid powering over 1.5 million UK households (according to Ofgem calculation with the scheme generation approximately 5,000,000,000KWh, from market analysis predictions, with average consumption 3,323KWh) and saving over 0.93 million tonnes of CO₂ annually.
- 7.13 Pumped hydro storage development provides an important mechanism for the reduction of carbon dioxide (CO₂), and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions into the atmosphere by reducing the consumption of fossil fuel generated mains electricity. However, during their manufacture, construction and decommissioning, renewable developments can result in the emissions of Green House Gas (GHG), particularly where natural carbon stores, such as peat, are present and potentially impacted by the development, often termed “carbon balance”. The EIAR assesses the GHG emissions and uses carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) where equivalence means having the same warming effect as CO₂ over 100 years.
- 7.14 The calculated GHG losses associated with the proposed development, based on the Carbon Calculator Tool and project-specific construction requirements, are approximately 1,744,562 tCO₂e. The volume of materials (rock, sand and gravel) generated during the construction phase has been estimated at 10.5Mm³. To calculate the GHG losses associated with the extraction and use of this material, an element not included within the Carbon Calculator Tool, the UK Government GHG emissions factors for aggregate use have been applied. The calculated GHG losses associated with the use of this 10.5Mm³ of excavated material amount to approximately 206,550 tCO₂e. When both construction-related emissions and aggregate-related emissions are combined, the total estimated GHG loss attributable to the proposed development is 1,951,112 tCO₂e.

- 7.15 The net emissions of GHG (tCO₂e) which would be avoided annually by utilising the Fearnha PSH scheme for power generation, rather than relying on the UK Grid Mix, are calculated at approximately 931,500 tCO₂e per year. This calculation is based on annual generation of 4,500GWh and a grid-mix emission factor of 0.207 tCO₂/MWh.
- 7.16 Given the significant scale and generation capacity of the proposed development, the resulting carbon payback period is approximately 2.1 years, after which the PSH scheme would deliver sustained net carbon benefits for the remainder of its operational life.
- 7.17 The proposed development anticipates a construction period of approximately 7 years and with proper maintenance would remain operational indefinitely. There are likely to be adverse effects caused by construction traffic and disruption, particularly during the construction phase when abnormal loads are being delivered to site. However, such projects can also offer investment and opportunities to the local, Highland, and Scottish economy, including businesses ranging across the construction, haulage, electrical and service sectors.
- 7.18 EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 17 Socioeconomics and Tourism provides an assessment of these matters. The capital cost (Capex) of the project is reported to be over £2 billion, representing a major infrastructure investment.
- 7.19 During construction, the applicant's evaluation of the socio-economic impact and operation was assessed as having beneficial effects for the regional Highland economy. It will create new temporary jobs through the construction programme, and a high proportion of the economic and employment impacts would come from the tunnelling works and the powerhouse and lower control works, which require extensive excavation and support work.
- 7.20 During construction an average of around 500 people are anticipated to be onsite, potentially even more at peak construction periods. A total of 2,924 construction related person years of employment (PYE) are predicted with a GVA effect of £222.4 million at the Scottish level. This equates to 1,491 PYE predicted with a GVA effect of £92.2 million at the Highland level.
- 7.21 Once fully operational, the proposed development will create 48 new full-time jobs, with a GVA effect of £2.5 million per year within the Highland economy. These figures include multiplier effects. These jobs include operational, engineering, maintenance and administrative roles with the applicant expecting these to be filled locally or by workers relocating to the area.
- 7.22 Additionally, the applicant considers the construction, and operational effects will bring significant GVA impacts, as well as wider additional impacts, including perception benefits, salary benefits, exchequer benefits, local supply chain opportunities and positive pre-development impacts. The assessment concludes that the development will produce significant beneficial effects during construction and minor beneficial effects during operation, with major beneficial cumulative effects when combined with other large-scale renewable projects across the Highlands.
- 7.23 The applicant considers that surveys of the public and business attitudes to green energy developments provide no clear evidence that the presence of an investment in an area has a negative impact on local tourism. Tourists using local routes and tourist

attractions may have a particular sensitivity to visual effects, however, access to tourist facilities will be largely unaffected by this proposal. The applicant suggests that the tourism sector would likely benefit from expenditure by workers during the construction and development phases, and to a lesser extent during the operation and maintenance phases given the relative lack of visits required once the site is functioning. Whilst some temporary disruption during construction may affect local accommodation providers, the applicant notes that construction worker expenditure may increase off-peak income and help local businesses mitigate seasonal variation. Therefore, the applicant has assessed residual effects on tourism are assessed as negligible.

- 7.24 Highland is experiencing significant construction activity of renewable energy development and the associated electricity transmission infrastructure. The approval of the proposed development would have a positive economic impact, particularly during the construction period, although this would thereafter curtail at operational stage. Representations have raised the economic impact that renewable related energy development may have on tourism more generally. These adverse impacts are most likely to be most acute during construction which is temporary in nature and can be managed through environmental mitigation measures as specified elsewhere in this report and can be secured by condition. Additionally, some representations note that jobs required at the operational stage will decrease significantly. Whilst this is correct, 48 permanent full-time jobs is a considerable number given the relatively rural nature of this part of the Highlands.
- 7.25 Scenery and the natural environment within Highland are important factors for many visitors when choosing the area as a holiday destination. A number of representations considered the proposed development would have a significantly detrimental impact on visitors to the area. Any detrimental impact of the proposed development on tourism, whether visually, environmentally or economically, should be identified and considered in full. Whilst development associated with renewable energy development more generally may not stop people from visiting the area for the first time to take part in walking, mountaineering or other recreational activities and tourist attractions, it has the potential to discourage repeat visits.
- 7.26 Whilst this is noted, there may also be indirect effects that are not considered by the analysis provided. For example, there are tourist accommodation businesses along the C1144, Invergarry and in the wider surrounding area that could experience adverse impacts through loss of their traditional customers on account of construction impacts. However, there is the potential for such businesses to adapt to assist with the expected influx of workers associated with the proposed development and wider project, even with the contained on-site workers accommodation taken into account. The positive economic impact of other renewable energy projects in the wider area is well known by many local businesses (B and B's, hotels, property lettings, restaurants, cafes, shops) who have benefited from major construction works.
- 7.27 NPF4 Policy 11 c) offers support to schemes where community socio-economic benefits are maximised, with NPF4 Policy 25 enabling support to be given to schemes which contribute towards a local or regional wealth building strategy or have an element of community ownership. With no community ownership being proposed, the proposal cannot be given any additional support under NPF4 Policy 25. A condition could however be imposed to require a Local Employment Scheme for the construction of the

development which refers to the provisions set out within the socio-economic assessment contained within the EIAR should the application be granted consent.

Community Benefit

- 7.28 NPF4 Policy 11, in particular paragraph c), notes that development proposals should 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. Additionally, NPF4 Policy 25 provides support for development that is consistent with local economic priorities and where they contribute to local and/or regional community wealth building strategies.
- 7.29 Highland Council published the Social Value Charter for Renewables Investment in June 2024. The strategy provides a framework that sets out how the Council will utilise different activities to maximise the impact of investment in local areas and support more local ownership of assets and wealth. The nine-point plan articulates the expectations of the Highland area for any renewables and green energy developments in the region.
- 7.30 The applicant makes reference to community benefit in EIAR Volume 1, Chapter 17 Socioeconomics and Tourism, however, the exact monetary value of the community benefit package is not specified, only noting it would be a “multi-million pound” fund during both the construction and operational phase. Given community benefit is voluntary in nature, it is not deemed a material planning consideration and is separate to the planning process. Nevertheless, the Planning Officer has directed the applicant to the Council’s Community Support and Engagement Officer and the Council’s Economy and Regeneration Team who liaise directly with applicants on this matter.

Siting, Design Materials and Layout Evolution

- 7.31 EIAR Volume 2 Chapter 3 Site Selection and Alternatives describes the strategic site selection process for the proposed development. This process included the assessment of multiple technically feasible, economically viable and environmentally acceptable options, following the applicant’s internal site-selection guidance and an iterative multi-stage assessment (Strategic Options - Initial Screening - Detailed Appraisal). The applicant highlights multiple operational and environmental factors involved in the evolution of the proposed development.
- 7.32 At the strategic stage, alternative options for reservoir pairing and system configuration were considered, including a range of location options for PSH infrastructure across the wider area. These alternatives were screened out primarily because they could not deliver the required storage volume, did not meet engineering or environmental constraints or involved significantly greater infrastructure requirements. The EIAR confirms that the selected Loch Fearnna – Loch Quoich configuration offers the greatest feasible energy storage potential, utilises an existing lower reservoir, and minimises the need for additional above-ground infrastructure.
- 7.33 The design of the proposed development has followed a constraints-led approach, embedding mitigation into the design from the outset. Key environmental and technical constraints integrated into early design iterations include landscape and visual sensitivity, peat and soil stability, hydrology and watercourse protection, woodland and forestry impacts, habitat and species sensitivities, land use considerations, and

geotechnical/topographical constraints. These constraints are carried throughout design evolution as detailed across Chapters 2 The Proposed Development, 4 Site Selection and Alternatives and Design Evolution, and 19 Mitigation Schedule of the EIAR.

- 7.34 There have been various refinements since the pre-application (23/01810/PREMAJ) and EIA Scoping (24/01204/SCOP) which include increases in installed generating capacity up to 1,800MW, refinement of upper reservoir storage design, alteration and relocation of access tracks, compounds and infrastructure to avoid sensitive peatland and ecological features, informed by site surveys and the development of an extensive programme of habitat compensation and biodiversity enhancement, including peatland restoration, riparian woodland planting, native woodland expansion and invasive species removal.
- 7.35 The additional information and associated documents submitted made a number of further changes to the scheme which include the removal of the visible upper control works structures, removal of the spillway channel and access bridge from the Fearna Dam, amended underground tunnel system, revisions to the temporary works along the C1144 public road, provision of a landform screening bund and increased habitat enhancement measures.
- 7.36 The upper reservoir will be created by constructing the Fearna Dam and Coire Dubh Dam, forming a controlled storage range between approximately 540m AOD and 600m AOD, providing approximately 40Mm³ of storage. The dams are rockfill embankments, constructed using material sourced from 3 borrow pits located within the reservoir inundation footprint (BP1, BP and BP3) and will be submerged below the minimum drawdown level thereby reducing landscape impacts and haul distances. Dam faces are at approximately 1:1.5 gradient. These dams will be substantial structures with a height extending to a maximum of approximately 65m from ground level for Fearna Dam and 85m from ground level for Coire Dubh Dam. Given the topography of the ground that the dams will be constructed on, the height of the dam face will vary across their entire length. The downstream face is made up of rockfill, and the upstream face includes an impermeable core or membrane of either concrete or asphalt. The applicant notes that concrete is the preferred material (as shown on the visualisations submitted) however this is dependent on the contractor's working method with scope to choose with both providing a watertight barrier. An access will be provided across the crest for maintenance entry.
- 7.37 Both dams are designed to follow the same construction principles as the existing Quoich Dam. Their design incorporates material recovered directly from within the upper reservoir inundation footprint, ensuring that the majority of rockfill is site-won, reducing transport requirements and minimising landscape disturbance. The applicant considers that the long, curved alignments of the dams are positioned to sit below surrounding mountain horizons, which they feel reduces their visual prominence in views from higher ground.
- 7.38 The upstream concrete impermeable face finish will weather naturally over time, becoming darker and less reflective as it is stained by peaty runoff from the surrounding catchments into the inundated Loch Fearna. The downstream exposed rockfill face finish will weather in a similar way eventually supporting the growth of lichens and mosses

longer term. The applicant considers this will reduce the contrast to a certain extent between the new engineered slopes and the rugged mountain surroundings.

- 7.39 Both dams incorporate stone-clad parapet walls along their crest to provide safe access for operational vehicles and pedestrians. The use of locally sourced stone for parapets, valve house structures and ancillary elements is intended to maintain a consistent architectural character with existing hydro infrastructure in the area, including the existing Loch Quoich hydro scheme. Valve houses located at the toe of each dam are also proposed to be clad in stone, ensuring visual integration and maintaining a coherent material palette across the above-ground operational structures.
- 7.40 The applicant considers the wider design strategy seeks to integrate each dam into the landform through curved plan geometry and the reduction of overtly engineered edges. They contend the curvature helps soften the appearance of both dams when viewed from lower elevations and ties the structures more closely into the natural topography of the surrounding corrie basins. They feel that this approach is landscape-led, with an emphasis on simplicity, clean lines and the avoidance of unnecessary metalwork or features that could introduce human scale or clutter into views.
- 7.41 During construction, Loch Fearna must be temporarily lowered to allow foundation and tunnelling works. Water is to be diverted or pumped to the Allt Fearna with catchment flows separated from construction runoff to manage siltation. Following amendments to the upper reservoir the screens and isolation gates for the headrace tunnels will be submerged and not require any associated infrastructure.
- 7.42 Loch Quoich serves as the lower reservoir using the existing hydroelectric storage system, requiring no modification to the existing dams. Up to 6 inlet/outlet structures are located below low-water level at the powerhouse frontage, gated for maintenance and screened to protect fish and any other species from entering the structures. The water conveyance system between the upper and lower reservoirs consists of 2 headrace tunnels approximately 9m in diameter which drop vertically below the upper control works before travelling towards the powerhouse. Each headrace tunnel splits into three branches, feeding the 6 powerhouse shafts with the 6 tailrace tunnels connecting each turbine shaft to the lower reservoir. An access tunnel system will be constructed from the former quarry adjacent to the powerhouse. All tunnels are to be lined with concrete and steel where required for structural integrity and hydraulic pressures.
- 7.43 The powerhouse is located within the reconfigured former quarry, used for the construction of Loch Quoich Dam in the 1950s, set back from the northeastern shore of Loch Quoich, at approximately 205m AOD with the quarry floor to be raised using site-won rock. The 6 vertical shafts are located approximately 90m below ground, each housing a reversible 300MW pump-turbine. The powerhouse building measures approximately 400m by 42m with a height of 15. The building will also contain an overhead crane for installing and removing major components, offices, stores, welfare facilities and transformer bays located within the superstructure.
- 7.44 The building form is driven by the linear arrangement of the 6 turbine shafts, resulting in a long, low hall aligned parallel to the loch and the quarry wall. The building will be recessed, enclosed by the backdrop of the former quarry with the applicant noting that the design methodology was led by a desire to reduce visual prominence and ensure cohesion with the established hydro infrastructure. The primary external materials

consist of gabion walling constructed from site-won rock, sourced from the excavations for the tunnels and powerhouse footprint, reflecting the existing rocky shoreline and quarry geology. Concrete elements will also be required for structural stability, particularly in areas backfilled against the hillside, this material will be produced using site-won aggregate and tunnel spoil, reducing the need for imported material and lowering embodied carbon. The building roof is proposed as an undulating grass/sedum rooftop, again, intended to integrate the structure into the surrounding hillside by matching the tones and textures of existing vegetation. The grass/sedum roof also delivers environmental benefits, including rainwater attenuation, improved thermal performance and enhanced biodiversity. Additional earthworks and native planting seek to embed further mitigation measures longer term. An indoor electrical switchyard measures approximately 70m by 20m with a height of 15m, located at the northern end of the powerhouse. A new slipway east of the powerhouse will be installed to improve boat access for maintenance during operation. Along the shoreline, a system of vegetated rock armour is proposed to protect the infrastructure whilst maintaining a natural appearance. The armour uses excavated rock, with gaps infilled using peat and turves to encourage vegetation establishment and visual assimilation over time.

- 7.45 Construction access will be from the A87 Trunk Road via the SAR, largely following existing forest tracks to the southeast of the proposed development, passing to the south of Loch Garry, and widened or upgraded where required, including new bridges over the River Garry, Kingie and Gearr Garry. The C1144 will be upgraded along approximately 2.3km to enable two-way HGV access between the SAR and upper reservoir track. The SAR upgrade to the existing Forest Road will cover approximately 24km, with 5.3km of new track (including C1144 offline access route) and 5.5km of new tracks to the upper reservoir. There will be several borrow pits adjacent to the SAR route. Additionally, the C1144 will require widening for a stretch of 400m with a new 250m access track required for the proposed powerhouse. Post-construction, track widths are to be reduced to minimise visual and ecological footprint of the proposed development.
- 7.46 During the construction of the upper reservoir, it will be necessary to undertake temporary flow diversion measures to allow safe formation of the Fearná and Coire Dubh dams. These diversion measures are not required once construction works are complete.

Design, Landscape and Visual Impacts (including on Wild Land Areas)

- 7.47 The applicant has presented a number of submissions to illustrate the design, landscape and visual impact of the development both singularly and cumulatively with existing development in the wider surrounding area at various stages in the planning process. In this regard the applicant has tabled design iterations following input from pre-planning considerations, maps highlighting the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTVs) (Figures 7.1a, 7.1b and 7.1c), 10 visualisation locations across a 10km study area (Volume 3a and Volume 3b), representative wirelines with 2 visualisation locations showing maximum and minimum drawdown levels (VL3 – Gleouraich Summit, and VL4 – Spidean Mialach Summit), assessment against Landscape Character Types, Wild Land Area and Special Landscape Area. EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 7 Landscape and Visual is supplemented by EIAR Volume 4:
- Appendix 7.1 – Technical Methodologies for Visual Representation, outlining ZTV production parameters, visibility modelling and visualisation standards;

- Appendix 7.2 – Visual Assessment Tables, including receptor-specific impact evaluations and a sequential assessment for the Gleouraich–Spidean Mialach mountain route;
- Appendix 7.3 – Assessment of Landscape Character Types, presenting detailed evaluations and significance ratings for each relevant LCT;
- Appendix 7.4 – Wild Land Area 18 Assessment, including the analysis of Wild Land Qualities and effects on perceived naturalness, remoteness and ruggedness;
- Appendix 7.5 – Assessment of Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA; and

Appendix 7.5.1 – WLA Locational Assessment and Special Landscape Area analysis, supporting the conclusions reached in the main LVIA chapter.

- 7.48 Given the rural location and set back from surrounding properties, the visual impact on residents and settlements is relatively contained. The extent of the visual impact on road users and other receptors travelling along the C1144 public road is more widespread with the visual impact on receptors on upland hill tracks to surrounding hills and Munros the most pervasive. The principal receptors for this development are recreational users of the outdoors along with road users. The 10 visualisation locations, all within 10km from the development, are representative of a range of effects for road users and recreational users of the outdoors with photomontages and wirelines contained within the EIAR Volume 3a and Volume 3b to Highland Council and NatureScot’s standards.
- 7.49 The expected bare-earth visibility of the proposed development is illustrated in EIAR Volume 1, Chapter 7 Landscape and Visual, specifically through Figures 7.1a, 7.1b and 7.1c, ZTV for the dams, powerhouse, and the access track. Figure 7.1a shows the ZTV for the proposed dams, Figure 7.1b shows the combined ZTV for both the dams and powerhouse and Figure 7.1c shows the ZTV for the upper reservoir and associated works access tracks. These figures provide an overview of theoretical visibility across the 10km study area and demonstrate how visibility shifts in response to the varying landform surrounding Loch Cuiach and the upper reservoir bowl.
- 7.50 Information on key visual receptors is provided in Section 7.7 (Baseline Conditions: Visual) of the same chapter, together with Figures 7.5a and 7.5b, which map the visual receptors included in the assessment. These figures identify the principal public roads, mountain routes, long-distance walking routes, and Core Paths within the 10km study area, outlining the range of users, residents, recreational hillwalkers, long-distance trail users and road users, who may gain views of the proposed development from varying elevations and distances.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 7.51 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) forms part of the EIAR and provides:
- a landscape assessment of the potential effects of the development on landscape character, and designated landscapes; and
 - a visual assessment of the potential effects of the development on visual amenity of those present within the landscape, including established views from residential areas and routes.

- 7.52 The LVIA also gives consideration to cumulative effects occurring as a result of the addition of the proposed development alongside other proposed hydro, renewable energy and electrical infrastructure development within the study area.
- 7.53 Potential effects have been considered during various phases of the proposed development and during operation, in year 0 post completion and year 15 of operation, to illustrate the change associated with proposed mitigation, landscaping, planting and regeneration measures. Additionally, the construction phase of works is shown in 2 visualisations to demonstrate the temporary works, construction compounds, and activity prior to completion.
- 7.54 The methodology for the LVIA is considered to be sufficiently clear, being generally in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3). The methodology outlining how the applicant has come to their findings is included (EIAR Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual Section 7.5 Methodology). This methodology has been used to appraise the assessment provided and to come to a view on what combination of effects on the sensitivity of receptor and magnitude of change are leading to either a significant or not significant effect.
- 7.55 The Highland Council sought independent professional landscape advice from Ironside Farrar for this application. This was due to Highland Council’s Landscape Officer retiring whilst the application was pending consideration. Whilst they note that the LVIA broadly conforms with the stated guidance and common practice they note some inconsistencies and lack of detail, these include:
- Whilst the criteria on which landscape and visual susceptibility are assessed are clearly explained there are no tables detailing the levels (e.g. High, Medium, Low) of susceptibility of receptors, unlike for the landscape value levels noted in Table 7.3.
 - In terms of visual amenity, despite reference to “a view”, most receptors assessed are linear, representing a series of views or receptors’ visual experience.
 - The criteria and levels for both landscape and visual receptor sensitivity are noted in Table 7.4. and the levels for landscape sensitivity are clearly explained in terms of a combination of value and sensitivity. However, the Landscape Architect at Ironside Farrar considers it is less clear for visual receptors, which appears to focus on the value of views and not the susceptibility of receptors. Furthermore, the criteria appear to downgrade the sensitivity of a visual receptor based on the importance of the affected aspect to the receptor and/or the degree to which there are detracting features present. Therefore, residential receptors could in theory be of low sensitivity. They consider that the type of receptor and their expectations is a key factor in determining sensitivity and that aspect and the presence of detractors is more properly dealt with in determining the baseline from which magnitude of change is assessed. Otherwise, there is a risk of “double counting” in the assessment of effect.
 - The LVIA states that effects of Moderate and above are considered to be significant (paragraph 7.5.37) with Table 7.6 detailing the landscape and visual significance criteria on which this judged. However, the descriptions appear mainly to reference magnitude criteria rather than receptor sensitivity as contributory to level of significance. They note the table describes both Adverse and Beneficial criteria.

- The detailed assessment includes intermediate levels of significance of effect, falling between the main criteria. This is welcomed by Ironside Farrar as evidence of a more subtle level of judgement, however, it is not mentioned in the methodology.
- The assessment of cumulative effects is highlighted from the start of the chapter and an assessment undertaken in section 7.11, however, there is no mention of the basis, criteria or methodology for the cumulative assessment earlier in section 7.5.

- 7.56 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 effects 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.
- 7.57 The sensitivity of receptors is influenced by the value of the view and susceptibility to change leading to a sensitivity rating. Familiarity with the site and the extent, nature, and expectation of existing views by visual receptors is a key factor in establishing the visual sensitivity in terms of the development proposed.
- 7.58 The applicant has assessed the sensitivity of receptors between Medium and High given that recreational users of the outdoors attention and interest is on their surroundings. This is due to the study area being well used for various recreational activities, predominantly for walking, but also mountaineering, rock climbing, long-distance walking, mountain biking/cycling, running/fell running, swimming, canoeing/kayaking, fishing, horse riding, camping, informal recreation and estate-based outdoor pursuits. The relative remoteness of the locality heightens the sense of challenge and reward for outdoor enthusiasts and therefore, the sensitivity of each assessed recreational viewpoint is elevated. A large appeal of those taking part in these recreational pursuits in this part of Highland is to experience the surrounding landscape and views, with receptors in this area being people on walking routes connecting to Munro summits either within or in close proximity to WLA 18 Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar and/or Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA which increases their sensitivity.
- 7.59 The magnitude of change on views is an expression of the change that would result from the proposed development influenced by the size or scale of change, geographical extent, leading to a magnitude of change rating. From a number of viewpoints, the applicant has understated the effects on receptors given the significant change brought about by proposed development within the landscape.
- 7.60 The guidelines require evaluation of the magnitude of change to views experienced by sensitive receptors, comprising individuals living, working, travelling and carrying out other activities within the landscape, and the subsequent evaluation of the significance of effects. The potential to mitigate adverse effects has also been considered for both landscape and visual assessment.
- 7.61 In the assessment of each receptor and representative viewpoint, the applicant has come to a judgement as to whether the effect is Significant or not. Unusually, this has not been undertaken on a viewpoint by viewpoint basis as no assessment of individual viewpoints, such as hilltops or vantage points on routes, and there is no assessment of receptors at the 10 viewpoints used for visualisation locations. The focus on assessing

routes and not including specific viewpoint assessments raises concern with Ironside Farrar as the potential for identifying significant effects is reduced.

- 7.62 A key consideration in the effects on receptors of pumped hydro storage development is the sequential effect when travelling through an area on the network of recreational routes. Those travelling along scenic, recreational routes, whether designated as such or not, have a higher sensitivity to views.
- 7.63 The applicant has assessed a variety of landscape and visual receptors within the study area, including building-based receptors and route-based receptors. The effects on visual amenity relate to changes to available views rather than perceived changes to whole areas of a distinctive landscape character. 10 visualisation locations (VL) were selected in order to assess the landscape and visual effects. The VLs have been assessed at the early operation (Year 0) and much later (Year 15). 2 additional VLs also assessed the construction phase overlooking the powerhouse and lower works (VL2 Path from Quoich Dam) and the dams and upper works from surrounding upland locations (VL5 Gairich Summit). This is considered appropriate as it will take some time for the proposed landscaping, tree planting and other mitigation measures to become established along with weathering of the dam side-slopes.
- 7.64 Whilst it must be recognised that the submitted visualisations do not provide the entire wider context when not viewed on site, they do demonstrate the predicted effects well and are a useful aid in conceptualising the development and predicting its associated impacts.
- 7.65 The associated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) drawings also provide the predicted extent of bare earth visibility of the proposal including the dams and powerhouse (Figure 7.1a), dams only (Figure 7.1b) and access tracks (Figures 7.2a and 7.2b). Figure 7.1a indicates that visibility of the Fearna and Coire Dubh dams along with the powerhouse would extend up to 10km in all directions, the full range of the LVIA study area. This infrastructure would be seen from the north from the summits of Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach where dams and construction plant are very noticeable as shown by the ZTV. To the south / southeast visibility will extend across upland summits including Carn Dearg, Aonach Beag, and Beinn Eibhinn, where the Leamhain dam is prominent. To the southwest / west there will be intervisibility with the upper reservoir and from Sgùrr Mhurlagain, Sgùrr Mòr along with western hills above Loch Quoich. To the northeast ZTV extends toward the Creag Meagaidh Massive and Beinn a' Chaorainn, however, visibility is limited by landform in many places. There will also be continuous visibility along much of the southern and northern slopes of Loch Quoich, including the Gairich approach and hills opposite the dams.
- 7.66 The same effects are experienced when the ZTV applies to the Fearna and Coire Dubh dams only (Figure 7.1b). Visibility would extend across the 10km study area in all directions in the same locations noted previously. There is strong visibility to the north with the clearest zones of intervisibility, extensive visibility to the south / southeast, moderate to strong visibility to the west and only limited visibility to elevated summits to the east / northeast.
- 7.67 Again, there are linked effects relating to the visibility of access tracks (Figures 7.2a and 7.2b). These would be seen across the study area, to the north there will be strong visibility on major ridgelines including Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach. These are also

repeatedly identified as areas with visibility of construction and operational works, including the access tracks. To the north there is visibility across major summits including Carn Dear, Aonach Beag and Beinn Eibhinn. These elevated upland locales have clear intervisibility with the track corridor leading to the upper reservoir. The western visibility includes Sgùrr Mhurlagain Corbett and Sgùrr Mòr remote Munro. Higher elevation western slopes are noted as being intervisible with upper-track sections. Visibility to the northeast is more intermittent given intervening landform but higher sections of the Creag Meagaidh massif along with parts of Beinn a' Chaorainn will have views of access tracks. There will be sustained visibility along both sides of Loch Quoich, including southern slopes near Gairich and northern slopes where woodland does not conceal views. This area has some of the clearest predicted intervisibility with access track routes across the site.

- 7.68 Ironside Farrar considers the descriptions are reasonably accurate and the ZTVs show the extensive visibility of the dams around Coire Dubh and surrounding ridge and across the southern and western areas of Loch Quoich. There is much more limited visibility of the powerhouse, focused around the eastern end of the loch. The visibility of much of the access route would be limited by surrounding forestry.

Visualisations

- 7.69 Following a review of the LVIA, sufficient information has been provided to enable an assessment. Whilst some concerns were raised regarding faintness of images, coloration of images, haze, cloud cover, shadowing etc. within the visualisations provided (assessed further for each visualisation location below in Appendix 4), overall, the photomontages are considered to have been produced to an appropriate standard.
- 7.70 Ironside Farrar noted that visualisations provided show the proposed water level at its mid-point of approximately 30m (30m above the maximum drawdown level and 30m below the maximum inundation level). Visualisations for wind energy proposals would be expected to show the worst-case scenario with regards to landscape and visual impacts, therefore, they questioned why visualisations showing the maximum drawdown zone were not provided. The developer has referenced the reasoning for the mid-point visualisations (paragraphs 7.3.16–7.3.18 in EIAR Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual) as this water level is considered to be the most likely scenario for receptors viewing the proposed development given the fluctuating levels of the upper reservoir. As this is not the worst case, the LVIA also considers the landscape and visual effect of the potential maximum and minimum water level with wirelines provided from 8 locations (Figures 6.4.1a to 6.4.1h). Additionally, the applicant has provided wirelines of the potential maximum drawdown at the upper reservoir from 2 visualisation locations that overlook the reservoir (VL3 - Gleouraich and VL4 - Spidean Mialach). This approach has been considered appropriate for the assessment of previous pumped storage hydro schemes such as Loch Earba (24/01056/S36/ECU00005062).
- 7.71 The applicant noted that visualisations are intended to provide an illustrative resource to help people understand how the proposed development would appear within the landscape. They consider that showing reservoirs fully drawn down or fully filled would not necessarily provide the most likely scenario given such a situation would only happen if a maximum generation or pumping episode had just occurred. The applicant considers the worst-case scenario for wind turbines is not comparable given the changing visual nature of pumped storage hydro schemes over time and dependent on operational

requirements. Neither the upper Loch Fearna nor the lower Loch Quoich will be completely drawn down with the minimum level in both lochs retaining a substantial volume of water.

- 7.72 The maximum drawdown range of Loch Fearna will be approximately 60m when operational (approximately 600m AOD at maximum water level and 540m AOD at minimum water level). Loch Quoich has a current operational drawdown range of approximately 26m (approximately 200m AOD at maximum water level and 174m AOD at minimum water level) which will remain unchanged. The applicant notes that fluctuations of between 2.6m and 3.2m would occur to levels of the lower reservoir leading to no additional drawdown area. The water levels of Loch Quoich are already managed through the existing CAR licence arrangements and are unlikely to appear different to the existing variations that occur day to day. The LVIA has therefore assumed that the appearance would be no different and has not assessed the visual effects to Loch Quoich further.
- 7.73 Additionally, given the nature of pumped hydro storage, if one loch is at maximum water level the other is at minimum water level so receptors would see an extreme version of either loch in this setting. Showing the upper loch half full provides an accurate version of an applicable scenario, with the visual effects of Loch Fearna as well as its associated side drawdown zones being shown.
- 7.74 A number of representations raised landscape and visual concerns associated with the proposed development and the drawdown scar and fluctuating water levels will have a bearing in how the scheme is perceived within the wider surrounding area. Based upon an installed generating capacity of up to 1,800MW it would take approximately 20 hours of continuous electricity production at maximum output to move the maximum volume of water from the upper to lower reservoir. Conversely, it would take approximately 27 hours of pumping to move this volume of water from the lower to upper reservoir. The EIAR notes that full drawdown or full refill will be rare given system demand rarely sustains maximum pumping or generation for these durations.
- 7.75 The fluctuations in water level would be subject to the demands of the electricity market and may vary considerably day to day, therefore, there would be no predictable pattern of generation and pumping or predictable levels of drawdown on any given day. However, in reality, the potential for people to experience either of the reservoirs to be fully drawn down or fully filled at any given time would be rare because this would usually occur only if a maximum generation or pumping episode had just occurred. Whilst the LVIA gives consideration to the landscape and visual effect of the full potential drawdown, judgements have been made based on a varying situation and how the development would be viewed for the majority of the time.
- 7.76 Additionally, some concerns were raised by the Planning Case Officer and Ironside Farrar regarding faintness of images, coloration of images, haze, cloud cover and shadowing within the visualisations provided, particularly noticeable for VL8 - Sgùrr Mhurlagain Summit and VL10 - Sgùrr Mòr. Additionally, whilst the inner face of the dam is to be either concrete or asphalt finish (concrete has been depicted in the visualisations) a number of visualisations show this matching closely to the tone and colours of existing vegetation. Whilst these are noted in the appraisal of visualisations provided in Appendix 4 – Viewpoint Assessment Appraisal – Visual Impact, the applicant has responded on these particular points, reiterating that all photography has been

undertaken in compliance with the requirements of both Highland Council and NatureScot guidance, which is agreed. Whilst photomontages provide a useful aid in showing the appearance of the proposed development, they are just one tool used by the Planning Authority in the assessment of landscape and visual impact.

Landscape Impact

- 7.77 The landscape assessment has considered the potential effects of the proposed development to Landscape Character Types (LCTs), Knoydart National Scenic Area (NSA), Wild Land Area 18 – Kinloch Hourn–Knoydart–Morar (WLA), Moidart and Morar and Glen Shiel Special Landscape Area (SLA).
- 7.78 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.
- 7.79 The LVIA forming EIAR Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual gives an overview of the impacts and effects of the proposed development on landscape designations within the study area. EIAR Volume 4 Appendix 7.3 – LVIA Assessment of LCTs gives a more detailed assessment of Landscape Character Types.
- 7.80 The proposed development area contains 4 LCTs assessed in detail. These are LCT 235 Broad Forested Strath, LCT 237 Rocky Moorland – Lochaber, LCT 238 Rugged Massif – Lochaber, and LCT 239 Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber (sub-types A and B).
- 7.81 A further 6 LCTs were scoped out of the assessment given the limited intervisibility and/or screening by woodland. These are LCT 220 Rugged Massif – Inverness, LCT 230 Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Inverness, LCT 236: Smooth Moorland Ridges, LCT 360: Stepped Moorland, LCT 365: Rugged Massif – Skye & Lochalsh, LCT 369: Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Skye & Lochalsh. This approach is agreed.
- 7.82 The proposed development is located within LCT 239 Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber and split into sub-types. These sub-types were assessed separately by the applicant because of finer-scale local differences around Loch Quoich and the surrounding peaks. The upper reservoir, dams and other associated infrastructure are within LCT 239A located inside the corrie enclosed by Gleouraich, Spidean Mialach, and Gairich. The lower works including the powerhouse, switchyard and Loch Quoich shoreline are within LCT 239A and areas adjacent to LCT 239B. Ironside Farrar notes that the separation of LCT 239 into sub-types in effect appears to be based on the parts lying outwith or within the Knoydart NSA, with sub-type outwith the NSA. The southern access road passes through LCT 235 Broad Forested Strath and LCT 237 Rocky Moorland – Lochaber.
- 7.83 The assessment of landscape effects describes the physical and visual changes to the site and surroundings that would take place during construction and operation in terms of their effects on the character of the affected LCTs. Of the 4 assessed LCTs, 2 are assessed as significantly affected during construction (LCT 237 Rocky Moorland -

Lochaber and LCT 239 Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber (sub-type A)). Only LCT 239 sub-type A is assessed as significantly affected once operational. All other LCTs would have been assessed as not significantly affected due to the limited extent of effects.

7.84 The NatureScot 2019 Landscape Character Assessment describes the key characteristics of LCT 237 Rocky Moorland – Lochaber:

- Rugged, undulating plateaux of heather moorland with a textured and crinkled skyline and no distinct summits or peaks.
- Large patches of coniferous forestry.
- Uniform expanses of marshy grassland, sedges and rushes, rocky outcrops and stunted trees.
- Isolated upland lochans.
- Infrastructure and engineered structures associated with hydro-electricity schemes such as pylons, dams and substations.
- Closely related to Smooth Moorland Ridges, with long views but lacking the distinctive smooth relief of that type.
- Additional local characteristic: rugged and remote character away from infrastructure.

7.85 This area includes hills around the eastern edge of Loch Quoich and surrounding Glen Garry. Direct effects would include the temporary construction compound and works widening the access route on the existing track and public road. The applicant has assessed LCT 237 as Medium sensitivity. Construction effects are assessed as Moderate Adverse (significant). Operational effects after 15 years are assessed as Minor-Moderate Adverse (not significant).

7.86 The NatureScot 2019 Landscape Character Assessment describes the key characteristics of LCT 239 Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber:

- Pyramidal mountain summits with a jagged profile, often appearing as overlapping peaks in glen views.
- Sweeping slopes with screes plunging directly into deep glens or lochs with little or no flat shoreline fringe.
- Sparse vegetation with very few trees.
- Numerous rocky outcrops punctuating steep, rugged terrain.
- Inaccessible and remote with a strong wild character.
- Long panoramic views.

7.87 This area includes the mountains surrounding Loch Quoich. The bulk of the proposed infrastructure including the reservoir, dams and powerhouse area lie within it. The applicant has assessed LCT 239 as Medium-High sensitivity. Construction effects are assessed as locally Major Adverse (significant). Operational effects after 15 years are assessed as locally Moderate Adverse (significant). More widely, effects are considered Moderate (significant) during construction and Minor-Moderate (not significant) once operational.

7.88 Effects on other areas are all assessed as not significant. Whilst Ironside Farrar generally agrees with the applicant's assessment reaching this conclusion they note the following:

- Whilst EIAR Volume 4 Appendix 7.3 – LVIA Assessment of LCTs includes an assessment level for landscape value it does not include an assessment level for susceptibility before concluding the assessment of sensitivity. The Landscape Officer considers that this diminishes the transparency of the assessment.
- The assessment of landscape value for LCT 237 Rocky Moorland – Lochaber (Appendix 7.3 Table 2) is Medium-High. However, the subsequent assessment of sensitivity states it is “a moderately valued landscape” and assesses it to be of Medium sensitivity. Together with no statement of susceptibility, the Landscape Officer considers the assessment is not well supported by the evidence.
- The “local” effects on LCT 239 Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber (sub-type A) cover an extensive area of mountain and loch around the eastern end of Loch Quoich. Whilst the Landscape Officer agrees that the significant long-term effects over this area would be Moderate Adverse, they consider the effects on the more localised area of Coire Dubh and the surrounding mountain ridges and slopes would be Major adverse. This is exemplified by the visualisations for VL1 and VL2 and underlined by the detailed assessment (Appendix 7.3 Table 4) which states there would be a High magnitude of change within 500m to 1km of the area immediately enclosing the upper reservoir.
- The assessment does not state whether the effects of the proposed development are localised for the LCT 237 Rocky Moorland - Lochaber. However, Ironside Farrar considers the direct effects would be relatively limited in extent, within a context already affected by the existing Quoich dam, electricity transmission line and road access.

7.89 In summary, the proposed development would result in localised significant adverse effects to the character of the 2 LCTs: 237 Rocky Moorland – Lochaber and 239 Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber (Sub-type A) at various stages in the completion of the proposed development. The latter would be more extensively affected as most of the site lies within it and the greatest extent of visibility would be experienced across it. Effects on the former would be mainly indirect.

Nationally Designated Landscapes - Wild Land

7.90 The applicant carried out a full Wild Land Impact Assessment (EIAR Volume 4 Appendix 7.4 Wild Land Area Assessment) for WLA 18: Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar in accordance with NatureScot guidance and NPF4. The assessment included a detailed baseline description, identification of relevant Wild Land Qualities, desk and field study, sensitivity analysis, magnitude of change, assessment of effects on each WLQ, and proposed mitigation measures.

WLA 18 Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar

7.91 WLA 18 covers 1,065 km² across the west Highlands, making it one of the largest WLAs in Scotland. The designation covers much of the Knoydart peninsula and mountains around Lochs Quoich, Hourn, Arkaig and Morar. It is characterised by rugged, glaciated mountains, sweeping slopes, corries, fjords and deep glens, forming one of Scotland's most remote and awe-inspiring wild landscapes. The area contains 26 Munros and 22

Corbetts, attracting mountaineers, hillwalkers and wild campers. Access is limited to a few minor roads and boat routes, with the interior requiring long walks.

- 7.92 The proposed development will be located wholly within WLA 18 with only a portion of the southern access route where it links to the public road located outwith the designation.
- 7.93 The key attributes and qualities of the wild land area (Wild Land Qualities (WLQ)) are noted as:
- WLQ 1 - High, remote, rugged and rocky mountains, with a strong sense of naturalness and awe.
 - WLQ 2 - A very remote interior drawing adventurous and experienced hillwalkers.
 - WLQ 3 - Spectacular deep glens and lochs cut through the high mountains and hills, strongly influencing visibility, remoteness and access.
 - WLQ 4 - A strong influence of the sea around the north and western edges of the WLA.
 - WLQ 5 - Secluded and elevated rocky cnochan and plateaux with a strong sense of sanctuary.
- 7.94 The applicant's assessment of WLA 18 has been carried out following previous advice from NatureScot as part of the Scoping response (24/01204/SCOP). WLQ 4 and WLQ 5 were scoped out given they relate to areas outside the study area and were excluded from assessment. This approach is agreed. Having reviewed WLQ 1, WLQ 2 and WLQ 3 the applicant concludes that there would be no significant effect on WLA 18 as a whole, however, they conceded that there would be significant localised residual operational effects on WLQ 1 "within an area contained by the immediate enclosing slopes surrounding the upper reservoir including the corries within the Gleouraich/ Spidean Mialach horseshoe (Coire Mhèil, Coire Dubh and Coire Glas), and facing slopes of Gairich up to around 4km from the proposed Development and across the summit area and ridge of Spidean Mialach".
- 7.95 The ZTVs (Figure 7.1a to 7.1c) show wide visibility of the proposed dams, powerhouse and access track across much of WLA 18, including the slopes and summits of Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach to the north, and Gairich, Sgùrr Mòr and Sgùrr an Fhuarain to the south. Visibility also extends to summits and southwest facing slopes between Sgùrr Mhurlagain and Geal Charn, and to western mountains south of Kinloch Hourn and around Sgùrr a' Mhaoraich. Only the northern view is mostly screened by the Gleouraich–Mialach massif, with a small visibility area from Aonach air Chrith.
- 7.96 Given this visibility pattern, NatureScot considered WLQ 1 (high, remote, rugged mountains) is the WLQ most likely to be significantly affected. Their assessment considers construction effects to be significant, and that operational effects on WLQ 2 and WLQ 3 would not be significant. Both the applicant and NatureScot broadly agree that WLQ 1 would experience significant operational effects, but NatureScot considered the extent of these effects, and the resulting impact on the northern limb east of Glen Quoich, to be greater than assessed by the applicant.

7.97 The eastern boundary of the WLA 18 is defined by the interruption created by Loch Quoich and Loch Arkaig where developed northern shores separate the eastern part of WLA 18 into 3 distinct limbs. The assessment concludes that the northern limb and the middle limb west of Loch Blair are the areas most likely to experience significant effects, while the southern limb is unlikely to be affected. Following fieldwork undertaken by NatureScot, their appraisal focussed on two key sub-areas corresponding to the applicant's WLA assessment points (WL2–WL4 and WL5–WL7) covering the dams, reservoirs, powerhouse, access track and associated infrastructure. The eastern mountains, including Spidean Mialach, Gleouraich, Sgùrr Mòr, Sgùrr Mhurlagain and Gairich, form a clear transition between the more natural, expansive western interior and the more managed landscapes of Glen Garry to the east. While the eastern margins already experience views of human activity outside the WLA, the landscapes to the north, southwest and west remain largely free from such influence. The proposed upper reservoir and access track would sit at a higher elevation within this eastern mountain area, which is considered highly sensitive to development of this scale.

Study Area 1

7.98 This covers the southern part of the northern limb of WLA 18, where WLQ 1 is strongly expressed and where the proposed Fearnna and Coire Dubh dams, spillways and access track would be widely visible. Although some small hydro infrastructure and access tracks already influence lower slopes around Loch Quoich, the area generally retains a high sense of naturalness, ruggedness and awe, particularly around Coire Dubh and Loch Fearnna. The proposal would substantially alter this natural corrie and loch, replacing it with an upper reservoir, dam structures and a prominent drawdown zone, resulting in a significant loss of naturalness and diminished awe-inspiring views, including those from Spidean Mialach. The development would introduce large-scale infrastructure into an upland area currently free from major development, intensifying effects beyond existing small artefacts. It would also disrupt the established access route to the Spidean Mialach–Gleouraich ridge, rerouting walkers around or over the dams and reducing the sense of physical challenge that contributes to WLQ 1. Overall, NatureScot considered the proposal would cause significant adverse effects on the perception of naturalness, ruggedness, awe, and the fulfilment associated with accessing these mountains.

Study Area 2

7.99 This covers the western part of the middle limb of WLA 18, south of Loch Quoich and north of Loch Arkaig. Although WLQ 1, WLQ 2 and WLQ 3 are present, the appraisal focuses on WLQ 1, as WLQ 2 and WLQ 3 which are less susceptible here. From representative locations (WL5, WL6 and WL7) the Fearnna and Coire Dubh Dams, access tracks along with the powerhouse would be clearly visible from Gairich. While some small hydro features and drawdown at Loch Quoich are already evident from certain summits, these influences are mostly contained to the loch's north-eastern shoreline and do not strongly affect the wider mountainous context. From the south and southwest, including Sgùrr Mhurlagain and Sgùrr Mòr, the dramatic rise of the eastern mountains provides strong arresting qualities, which the proposal would diminish by reducing the perceived scale of the ridges and introducing clear man-made elements. The upper reservoir and associated infrastructure would interrupt long views northwards to Glen Shiel, the Kintail mountains and WLA 24, weakening visual connectivity between

the middle and northern limbs of the WLA. As a result, NatureScot considered the area east of Gleouraich would no longer be perceived as contributing to the wider WLA, and the proposal would significantly affect WLQ 1 by reducing arresting views and the perceived extent of the wild land.

- 7.100 In terms of the wider impacts to WLA 18, the applicant considers the effects on WLQ 1 would be localised, however, NatureScot initially concluded effects would extend much further, up to around 8km south, and could not be considered as localised. The eastern mountains of the WLA, although influenced by nearby human activity outside the WLA, still exhibit strong ruggedness, naturalness, awe and arresting qualities, and play an important role in containing the more managed landscapes to the east. The proposed upper reservoir would significantly diminish these qualities by altering the rugged landform of Spidean Mialach and Gleouraich and interrupting key north-facing views and visual connectivity towards Glen Shiel, the Kintail mountains and WLA 24. Taken together, NatureScot considered these effects would lead to a substantial loss of WLQ 1 across the northern limb east of Glen Quoich, to the extent that this area would no longer contribute meaningfully to the wider WLA, contrary to the applicant's assessment.
- 7.101 Various existing and proposed developments were reviewed with cumulative interaction between the proposal and existing hydroelectric schemes both within and outside WLA 18. Within the WLA, the proposal would be seen alongside small-scale hydro schemes on the lower slopes of Spidean Mialach, Gleouraich and Sgùrr Coire nan Eiricheallach. Although this would intensify the presence of hydro development when viewed from surrounding mountains, the small scale and limited influence of existing schemes means the cumulative effect would not exceed the level of impact caused by the proposal itself.
- 7.102 Outside WLA 18, the operational Loch Quoich hydro scheme, though excluded from the applicant's assessment, forms part of the cumulative baseline. The proposal would add to and extend the influence of hydro development when experienced from the mountains south of Loch Quoich, contributing to incremental erosion of WLQs in the Gairich area. Overall, the proposal will contribute to the cumulative attrition of WLQ 1 in the north-eastern part of the WLA.
- 7.103 Beinn Bheag Wind Farm was at Scoping stage in planning when the proposed development was submitted and was initially considered in the cumulative assessment. In combination, the wind farm and the proposal would have increased visibility of man-made development around Coire Dubh, Loch Fearna and Glen Kingie, intensifying effects on WLQs and would result in a substantial cumulative loss of wild land qualities in the eastern mountains of WLA 18. However, Beinn Bheag Wind Farm has recently been formally withdrawn and is not anticipated to be brought forward as a project. Therefore, it is no longer a relevant cumulative development and should be removed from the cumulative assessment with no further consideration required.
- 7.104 In terms of the amendments to the design and impact on the WLA 18, the revised isolation gate and screen are proposed to be accommodated within the Fearna dam structure, removing the previously separate upper control works structures and associated vehicle gantries from the upper reservoir from surrounding upland views and from within the WLA. Additionally, the spillway channel and access bridge has been removed from the Fearna Dam design, retaining only 1 spillway on the western end of the Coire Dubh dam. The Coire Dubh is less prominent in the landscape than the Fearna Dam and the western end is least visible and furthest from hillwalking routes. Overall,

whilst it is generally agreed that these design amendments would marginally improve the views above the upper reservoir and downstream appearance of the dam face from within WLA 18, the wider concerns regarding the extensive landscape and visual impacts remain given the scale of the proposed development, incongruous location and lack of mitigation available to minimise the effects noted.

- 7.105 Following the concerns raised by NatureScot noted above, the applicant submitted additional information with regards to a substantial increase in biodiversity net gain through a combination of on-site and off-site restoration, compensation, and enhancement (shown in Additional Information Report and Additional Information: Figure 8.7.1_E2 Habitat Enhancement Plan). Following review of improved measures proposed NatureScot confirmed they would no longer object to the application subject to appropriate conditions to safeguard the enhancements put forward by the applicant.
- 7.106 For the avoidance of doubt, NatureScot note that the measures proposed by the applicant to reduce the landscape and visual impact of the proposed development would not overcome the significant adverse effects on the qualities of WLA 18. Their position remains that the proposal would result in significant adverse effects on the perception of naturalness, ruggedness and sense of awe of WLQ 1 - High, remote, rugged and rocky mountains with a strong sense of naturalness and awe - some angular in profile with sweeping peaks, and some more massive in form. They still consider the effect would be to a degree that the northern limb of WLA 18 would no longer contribute to the wider WLA. Additionally, they note the proposal would contribute cumulatively to the incremental attrition of WLQ 1 exhibited in the north-eastern area of WLA 18, intensifying and extending cumulative effects from man-made development and contemporary land use.
- 7.107 NatureScot note that this effect would be that the northern limb of WLA 18 would no longer contribute to the wider WLA. The proposal would contribute cumulatively to the incremental attrition of WLQ 1 exhibited in the north-eastern area of WLA 18, intensifying and extending cumulative effects from man-made development and contemporary land use.
- 7.108 NatureScot is required to take other interests into account when discharging its responsibilities for nature, commonly known as NatureScot's balancing duties. This requirement and other interests are set out in their founding legislation – the Natural Heritage (Scotland) Act 1991 and the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996. As such, they have considered a range of interests and taken them into account in reaching their position on this proposed development. In this instance, they have considered the strategic importance of this scheme in meeting Scottish Government renewable energy targets, taking into account NPF4 as a whole, and the size and scale of the proposed development. They have also considered the accompanying OBEMP which should lead to significant environmental enhancement local to the proposal, and across the wider area, though importantly, they do not consider it will mitigate (avoid or reduce) the significant adverse effects on the qualities of WLA 18. It is for these balancing reasons that their position is one of conditioned objection, as without it being delivered, the balancing judgment would be altered.
- 7.109 Ironside Farrar noted the dams and reservoir lie within part of the WLA, both directly and indirectly affecting it. The Wild Land Assessment concludes there would be some localised significant effects during construction and operation, including significant

effects on 2 WLQ during construction and 1 WLQ during operation. However, it is considered that the affected area would continue to be perceived as part of the WLA due to the strong rugged character of the two enclosing peaks and their visual connection to other mountains within the WLA. They confirmed they have not reviewed the WLA 18 assessment in detail as this is a national level designation for which NatureScot is the relevant statutory consultee.

- 7.110 Assessment of Wild Land Area 24 – Central Highlands was scoped out of further assessment. Whilst it falls within the 10km study area there will be no intervisibility of the proposed development. This is agreed.

Knoydart National Scenic Area

- 7.111 The proposed development site is outwith the Knoydart NSA but within the 10km study area. It covers a small portion of the northwestern end of Loch Quoich approximately 6.5km to the west of the scheme.
- 7.112 The Knoydart NSA is recognised for its exceptional scenic and wild qualities, including its remoteness, dramatic coastal and mountain scenery, the majesty of mountains rising from sea level, and its exemplary glaciated landscape. Only a small portion of the NSA, comprising a narrow glen, small lochans, rocky knolls and rising rugged hills is included within the landscape designation. These features contribute to the NSA's valued sense of wildness and isolation.
- 7.113 The applicant undertook an assessment for the proposed development which found that visibility from the NSA would be limited to distant easterly views from a small part of its periphery towards the upper reservoir dams. Although the development would introduce some distant man-made features into easterly views, these would be seen alongside existing influences, such as the Skye overhead transmission line and hydro-related drawdown around Loch Quoich, meaning that the NSA's core wild and scenic qualities would remain unaffected. The development would appear within a different landscape context and would not influence the key characteristics or SLQs of the NSA, such as its coastal scenery, sea lochs or views to the Inner Hebrides. The LVIA concludes that no significant effects would occur during either the construction phase or once operational, consequently, Knoydart NSA was not considered further. This approach is agreed.

Regionally Designated Landscapes - Special Landscape Areas (SLAs)

- 7.114 The vast majority of the proposed development is in the Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA with the dams, powerhouse and western part of the access route all contained within the designation and would be directly and indirectly affected by it. The applicant has undertaken an LVIA of the SLA (Appendix 7.5) which evaluates the SLA baseline, character and context, the SLA's Special Landscape Qualities (SQs), sensitivity to development across relevant LCTs, direct, indirect and visibility-based landscape effect, effects on each SQ and overall significance during construction and operation.

Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA

- 7.115 This SLA encompasses one of the most distinctive expanses of the West Highlands, characterised by its long east–west mountain ridges, deep glens and far-reaching lochs that together form a classic Highland composition. Quiet, sparsely populated uplands

and secluded interior glens create an atmosphere of pronounced wildness and tranquillity, while dramatic changes in Atlantic weather lend the landscape a dynamic, often spectacular quality. The area provides access to the famed “back door” routes into Knoydart, Glen Shiel and Kintail, where hillwalkers and those covering long-distance routes traverse remote peaks and multi-day passes. Hidden gems such as the vast and undeveloped Loch Morar, with its wooded islands and intricate bays, sit alongside a coastline noted for its intimate rocky promontories, sandy beaches, machair and scattered crofting settlements. Historic associations with the Jacobite period enrich the sense of place, while iconic routes such as the A830 “Road to the Isles” and the West Highland Railway enhance the scenic drama as they thread between rugged peaks, native woodland fringes and far-reaching seaward vistas.

7.116 The Assessment of Highland Special Landscape Areas (2011) identifies the Special Qualities of the SLA as the distinctive west highland composition. Key Landscape Characteristics are noted as:

- Distinctive West Highland composition, characterised by strong east–west aligned mountain ridges, deep glens and lochs that typify the West Highland landscape.
- A key gateway or “back door” into Knoydart, Glen Shiel and Kintail, where long-distance routes converge and where wilderness journeys typically begin.
- Loch Morar as a hidden, undeveloped freshwater loch, notable for its size, depth and attractive wooded islands.
- Very sparse settlement patterns, with most habitation located around the A830 corridor, and the southern end of Loch Shiel.
- Quiet, uninhabited glens and isolated peaks, creating a strong sense of wildness, tranquillity and remoteness.
- Landscape strongly influenced by changing weather, with rapid transitions and spectacular sunsets viewed from high ground and coastal locations.
- Rich local heritage, including battle sites, places of refuge, and associations with the Jacobite uprisings.
- Transport corridors of national significance, such as the A830 “Road to the Isles” and the West Highland Railway, including the iconic Glenfinnan Viaduct.
- An intricate and diverse coastline, with rocky promontories, sandy beaches, dunes, machair, crofting settlements and rich native woodlands, offering expansive sea views and dramatic contrasts in scale.

7.117 3 of the 9 listed SQs are assessed in Appendix 7.5 which concludes that 2 would be significantly affected to some degree during construction and with locally significant effects on 1 during operation. The applicant considers the overall effect of the proposed development on the SLA is predicted to be Moderate Adverse (significant) during construction. There would be a localised Moderate Adverse (significant) effect during operation but the operational effect on the SLA as a whole would be Minor Adverse (not significant). Ironside Farrar disputes these conclusions.

7.118 They query the dismissal of significant effects on the first of the 3 SQs assessed which related to “The pattern of east-west-aligned mountain ridges, deep glens and lochs

typifies the West Highland landscape. This is popular with visitors world-wide, and images of the landscape are often used to represent and promote some of the distinctive qualities of Scotland. The opportunity to reach many high peaks and to sustain height over long distances makes this area particularly popular for hill walking and climbing". While the broad east-west pattern would not be affected, they consider the incongruous nature of the dam and water drawdown would adversely affect the image and distinctive qualities of the area. While freedom of access to hills would remain unaffected, a route would be diverted across the Fearn Dam, and this would also more widely affect the experience of hillwalkers accessing the ridges and summits of Spidean Mialach – Gleouraich and Gairich.

- 7.119 Additionally, there is some ambiguity in the main LVIA (along with Appendix 7.5) regarding significant operational effects on the third SQ related to "Quiet, uninhabited glens and isolated peaks create a landscape experience where the sense of wildness, and tranquillity are key qualities". This is clearly stated as locally significant in both the LVIA (paragraph 7.9.52) and Appendix 7.5 (paragraph 1.4.3) with both conclusions noting Moderate Adverse (significant) impact, however, the detailed assessment in Table 1 of Appendix 7.5 notes the operational effect would be Low-Medium. There is no statement as to whether the integrity of the designation would be significantly affected as a result of effects on the SQs.
- 7.120 Ironside Farrar considers that all 3 of the SQs referenced would be significantly affected, both during construction and operation. Whilst the most affected area is on the eastern periphery of the SLA, it is nevertheless within the same LCT as the other more western peaks and clearly distinctive from the areas around Glen Garry to the east, embodying the iconic and globally recognised qualities outlined in SQ 1.
- 7.121 In terms of the second SQ related to 'hillwalkers and wilderness enthusiasts who typically engage in multi-day treks' would be significantly adversely affected by views of the proposed development, outlined by VL3, VL4 and VL5 located on the closest surrounding summits and the assessment of visual effects on the hill routes. Those undertaking the circuit of Spidean Mialach – Gleouraich would be directly affected by the diversion of the existing path along the crest of the dam. All of these hills are Munros and are popular ascents.
- 7.122 Ironside Farrar agrees with the applicant's assessment that the third SQ related to '...a landscape experience where the sense of wildness, and tranquillity are key...' would be significantly adversely affected, again as demonstrated by the adjacent summits covered by VL3, VL4 and VL5.
- 7.123 The SLA covers a very extensive area with diverse mountain and coastal landscapes, different aspects of which are highlighted across the 9 SQs. The Landscape Officer notes that the significant effects on the 3 SQs most relevant to this part of the SLA are direct and that indirect (visual) effects are widespread westwards within this part of the SLA, mainly due to the adverse landscape and visual effects of the upper reservoir and dams
- 7.124 Ben Alder, Laggan and Glen Banchor SLA is extensive, covering a variety of mountain and coastal landscapes. While the most affected area would be on its eastern periphery, it is nevertheless within the designated area and the LCT most clearly characterising this part of it. The proposed development would also directly affect users of a mountain route

to two Munros and their experience of views from summits, ridges and routes within the wider area. As such, it is concluded that the integrity of the SLA would be significantly affected.

Siting and Design With Regards to Landscape Designations

- 7,125 As noted above, the EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 3 – Consideration of Alternative and Design highlights provides a detailed rationale for the need for the proposed development. The applicant notes that “the project team has considered the options for the scheme arrangement and has developed the design to minimise its footprint on local ecology and maximise the capacity and storage potential of the site” (at paragraph 3.9.2). Landscape and visual effects are also cited at several points in respect of the project design, particularly in the design of the dams containing the upper reservoir, the powerhouse by Loch Quoich and the various access tracks. However, it appears that capacity and operational factors, not landscape and visual factors, were the primary consideration for the choice of site. The location of the reservoir lies high up a mountainside, within a rugged mountain landscape of sweeping peaks and ridges characterised by its scenic qualities, wildness and value as a recreational resource.
- 7.126 Whilst an element of care has been taken in the design of the dams and other infrastructure, it is considered there is little that can be done to mask the differences between the existing natural lochan and corries in comparison with the large containing structures, associated tracks and the deep drawdown that would be viewed from above.
- 7.127 The LVIA attempts to make a comparison between the proposed upper reservoir and the existing Loch Quoich hydro dam and drawdown at the lower elevation. The existing dam has an approximate length of 320m with a height of 38m which is currently the largest rockfill dam in Scotland. The 2 proposed rockfill dams are at substantially larger scale, the curved Fearna Dam has an approximate length of 1161m with a height up to 65m from the finished ground level, the Coire Dubh Dam has an approximate length of 889m with a height up to 85m from the finished ground level. The high mountainside location and extensive containment of the reservoir present a much more unnatural and incongruous intervention to the largely undeveloped surroundings than does the expanded water body of Loch Quoich, which is largely contained by natural topography in a glen at the foot of the mountains.
- 7.128 Furthermore, the wider area, including the mountains in the immediate surrounding area, are a popular destination for hillwalkers and outdoor enthusiasts. Those ascending the closest mountains would experience the significant changes in proximity, including a path diversion across the Fearna Dam, and in views for much of their day on the route.
- 7.129 A combination of scenic grandeur, wildness and recreational access has led to multiple overlapping landscape and related designations to the wider area. Most of the proposed development lies within the Moidart, Morar and Glen Sheil SLA, the proposed reservoir within the Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA and the Knoydart NSA is under 6km to the west.
- 7.130 The LVIA makes the argument that the proposed development is localised to the eastern periphery of the designations and the most valued and scenic landscapes, represented by the Knoydart NSA, are little affected. However, most of the proposed development lies clearly within the mountainous area represented by LCT 239 Interlocking Sweeping

Peaks - Lochaber with only the access road within the less spectacular landscapes characterising Glen Garry further to the east. Additionally, views of the proposed development appear in the outlook west along the main “back door” road approaching Knoydart, across most of Loch Quoich and from 3 Munro peaks where walkers would be significantly adversely affected.

- 7.131 There are relatively few other signs of built development in the area, and these are in the bottom of the valley and lower slopes. It is of note that the Scoping request for the only other proposal with effects that would reach into higher areas, Beinn Bheag wind farm, has been formally withdrawn.

Visual Impact

- 7.132 National scale energy schemes such as this would be expected to result in significant visual impact effects, however, such effects do not automatically translate to unacceptable effects. This is a matter of planning judgement when considering the merits of any given scheme. The applicant’s assessment of effects on visual amenity has considered potential effects on visual receptors (people obtaining views) based in buildings and residential properties (building based receptors), using transport and recreational routes and taking advantage of the views at defined outdoor viewing locations (route-based receptors). Following a review of the applicant’s Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), there are areas of difference between the assessment of officers and that of the applicant.
- 7.133 Appendix 4 provides a summary of the applicant’s assessment and officer appraisal of this assessment, which highlights the differences and any concerns with regard to visual impact.
- 7.134 The visual receptors are listed by type with locations shown (Figure 7.5) with a more detailed description and assessment of effects also included (Appendix 7.2). Unusually, the applicant has not provided an assessment of individual viewpoints such as hilltops or vantage points on the routes and there is no assessment of receptors at the 10 viewpoints used for visualisations. The achievement of reaching such vantage points and summits and taking in the spectacular scenery in this part of Highland is a key factor for receptors traversing these recreational routes.
- 7.135 In terms of building-based receptors, there here are 10 groups of properties located along the C1144 public road, the track south of Loch Garry and on the edge of Invergarry where residents would have potential views of 1 or more elements of the proposed development. The closest building-based receptor to the dams is Kingie at approximately 4km to the east.
- 7.136 In terms of route-based receptors, the C1144 minor road to Kinloch Hourn which connects to the A87 at Glen Garry, passes to the north of Loch Garry and Loch Quoich. 11 recreational routes are identified, including mountain routes over the surrounding hills, Scottish Hill Tracks, Core Paths and a section of the Cape Wrath Trail.
- 7.137 The applicant concludes that none of the receptors based in dwellings would be significantly affected during construction or operation with significant visual effects (Major or Moderate Adverse) experienced at 3 route-based receptors during construction and 1 extending into the operational phase of the hydro scheme.

- 7.138 Whilst it is understood that the visualisations provided in support of the application are not assessed as viewpoints but are representative and illustrative of the experience of receptors from the locales noted above, VL1 - Minor Road Near Proposed Powerhouse could have been improved upon. This location focuses on the proposed powerhouse site and lower works, however, given the ZTV indicates visibility of Fearna Dam on the higher ground, an additional view in that direction would have been beneficial to understand how much of a visual effect it would have at that point, seen in the direction of travel along the public road.
- 7.139 There is broad agreement with the applicant's assessment with regards to significant visual effects during construction works. From the visualisation locations assessed, the applicant considers that only 2 of these viewpoints will experience significant effects into the operational stage at Year 15, VL3 – Gleouraich Summit, VL4 – Spidean Mialach Summit. Whilst their assessment is agreed with regards to these viewpoints it is considered that the applicant has understated various elements of the impacts to receptors using surrounding routes with VL1 - Minor Road Near Proposed Powerhouse Site, VL 2 - Path from Quoich Dam, VL5 – Gairich Summit, VL8 – Sgurr Mhurlagain Summit and VL10 – Sgùrr Mòr also considered to experience significant effects beyond Year 15. Albeit, VL8 – Sgurr Mhurlagain Summit and VL10 – Sgùrr Mòr were not assessed by the applicant as they were not covered by the routes they assessed. A further appraisal of the applicant's findings and areas of difference is outlined in Appendix 4 - Viewpoint Assessment Appraisal – Visual Impact.

Building Based Receptors

- 7.140 All properties are distant from the main works, and most would have views filtered by trees. The most affected properties are the closest, Kingie (B1) approximately 4km to the southeast set back from C1144 public road and Poulary and Aultnaslat (B2) further beyond between 4km and 5km. All other properties assessed are set back approximately 5km or more, with views of the proposed development either substantially filtered contained views or blocked entirely, these include Tomdoun (B3), Inchlaggan (B4), Ardochy (B6), A87 / KH road junction (B7), Torr na Carraidh / Halcyon Manor (B5), Garrygualach (B8), Greenfield (B9) and Invergarry (B10).
- 7.141 The applicant considers Kingie (B1) will experience Minor Adverse effects during construction and operation due to views of track construction and distant side views of the dam. Poulary and Aultnaslat (B2) will experience Minor-Moderate Adverse effects during construction and Minor Adverse effects during operation due to views of the construction compound, track construction and distant views of the dam.
- 7.142 The applicant's assessment of the dispersed building-based receptors scattered through Glen Garry is generally agreed. None of these are close to the main works and most are screened to a greater or lesser extent by surrounding trees and topography. However, it is considered that the applicant has understated some of the assessments of lower sensitivity for these receptors due to their location and/or lack of views and is not agreed. Residents at home are normally considered to have a higher sensitivity than the Medium and Low assessed by the applicant. Although the applicant has not applied an explicit rating for each building-based receptor, the applicant's methodology allows downgrading homes depending on conditions. Any limitations on views of the proposed

development should more properly be considered in the assessment of magnitude of change and not sensitivity as well.

Route Based Receptors

- 7.143 The majority of the routes assessed by the applicant are walking/mountain routes along with the C1144 public road. Of the walking trails 5 are mountain routes taking in various Munro summits, with 6 a mixture of hill tracks and long-distance trails. The routes vary in setback distance from the proposed development to immediately adjacent to the verge of the 10km study area.
- 7.144 The closest routes are immediately adjacent to the proposed development. The C1144 Minor Road (R1), a single-track public road running along Loch Garry and Loch Quoich which passes the powerhouse, tracks, and dam skyline. Likewise, the Mountain Route to Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach (R2), a circular route on the north side of Loch Quoich overlooks the upper reservoir and dams directly from ridge with highly elevated, panoramic views across the proposed development upper works and beyond.
- 7.145 The other routes assessed are between approximately 2km and up to 10km. These include the Mountain Route to Gairich (R3) with views across Loch Quoich to dams and the powerhouse. Route to Sgùrr a' Mhaoraich (R4) with elevated views from the west side of Loch Quoich. Mountain Route to Sgùrr Mòr & Sgùrr an Fhuarain (R5) accessed from Glen Dessarry to high, isolated summits with distant elevated views from the south of Loch Quoich. Glen Garry to Glen Shiel track (R6) which crosses the Glen Loyne area with low-elevation valley/moorland views and only a limited short section with theoretical visibility. Scottish Hill Track 247 (Strathan to Tomdoun via Glen Kingie) (R7) which passes through forestry and open glens with some distant skyline visibility of the dams. Loch Quoich to Inverie Track (R8) which follows north-western shore of Loch Quoich with long framed views along the loch with occasional open vistas. Dark Mile / Loch Arkaig to Loch Garry / Laggan (R9) which is a forested route with enclosed views. A section overlaps with the southern access road that will be utilised for construction traffic. Dark Mile to Invergarry (R10) overlooks forest corridors with enclosed glen views with no meaningful intervisibility. Invergarry Core Paths (R11) covers various Core Paths in the wider surrounding area including LO11.01 (Glenfinnan Estate Road), LO11.05 (Black Bridge to Mandally Road) and LO11.08 (Whitebridge trails) with enclosed surrounded by woodland. Cape Wrath Trail (R12) covers the long-distance trail which overlaps with portions of R1, R9 and R10 routes.
- 7.146 The applicant noted the proposed development would have significant (Major or Moderate Adverse) visual effects on 3 of the 11 route-based receptors in construction and 1 once operational. These are Route R1 - C1144 Minor Road between A87 and Kinloch Hourn, Route R2 - Mountain Route to Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach and Route R3 - Mountain Route to Gairich.
- 7.147 Route R1 - C1144 Minor Road between A87 and Kinloch Hourn will experience Moderate-Major Adverse effects during construction due to effects of all elements of the proposed development including the direct effects of road widening, close views of powerhouse construction, views of the southern access route along with intermittent views of the Fearn Dam on the hillside above the road. These will reduce to Minor Adverse (not significant) during operation, due to integration and softening of all the

elements noted through earthwork shaping, vegetation growth and/or tree screening which will become embedded within the landscape.

- 7.148 Route R2 - Mountain Route to Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach will experience Major Adverse effects during construction and Moderate Adverse effects during operation. This is primarily due to views of construction activity and operation of the reservoir and dam seen from much of the route, including a significant diversion of the path ascending Spidean Mialach around construction works and then along the Fearn Dam crest.
- 7.149 Route R3 - Mountain Route to Gairich will experience Moderate Adverse effects during construction, principally due to views of the dams and reservoir on the mountainside to the north of Loch Quoich but the lower works will also be visible from lower parts of the route. The effects would reduce to Minor – Moderate Adverse (not significant) during operation, with views of the dams mainly from upper parts of the route.
- 7.150 Most receptors assessed represent users of the minor road and various walking routes, including those ascending the surrounding Munro summits. As noted, there are no point-based receptors and none of the locations used for visualisations are assessed, including those based on the surrounding summits which raises a number of concerns. Whilst route-based receptors are routinely assessed in LVIA it is common practice to also assess viewpoints and/or single location receptors. This can lead to difficulty when reviewing the judgment of the LVIA assessors compared with assessing a single viewpoint with visualisations. Additionally, the assessment of whole routes without an accompanying assessment of viewpoint locations tends to lead to an “averaging out” of effects, giving insufficient weight to key viewpoints on the route such as mountain summits, which are the main objective for receptors along these routes.
- 7.151 It is not immediately clear how the applicant has come to grade the sensitivity of these recreational routes which appears to have been understated. The LVIA gives the C1144 (R1) a Low-Medium sensitivity. However, there is no clear reason for this assessment, including no assessment of value and susceptibility. Given the location of some of the affected route is within a designated landscape and the main users are likely to be tourists, people accessing the hills, along with recreational cyclists also using the road, the sensitivity is considered to be Medium-High.
- 7.152 The closest mountain route (R2) is assessed as having a High sensitivity, which is generally agreed, considering it lies in a highly scenic location and traverses 2 Munro summits. However, other similar routes further afield (such as R3 and R4) are given a lower sensitivity, despite their equivalent nature, and 1 route is even given a Low sensitivity (R6). This appears to relate to the distance of the routes and lack of availability of views. As noted above, receptors are people, who in this case are enjoying recreational pursuits outdoors and are likely to have high expectations of scenic views. As such, these should all be considered to have High sensitivity. Any lack of view or distance factor should be accounted for instead in the assessment of magnitude of change which would be normal practice.
- 7.153 Whilst there is broad agreement on many of the assessments of effects it is considered the applicant has understated elements of their evaluation. A higher level of magnitude and/or more significant effects for the operational period is noted from some summit views. The key areas of difference between the applicant’s assessment are noted below.

- 7.154 Route R1 - C1144 Minor Road between A87 and Kinloch Hourn is assessed as Medium-High sensitivity within the study area. For construction, the Medium-High magnitude, would more clearly lead to a Moderate-Major Adverse significant effect for travellers. However, for the operational period, this level of sensitivity would lead to a Moderate Adverse significant effect which would reflect the combined effects of seeing all the elements of the proposed development, including occasional views of the Fearn Dam on the mountain skyline.
- 7.155 Route R2 - Mountain Route to Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach will lead to Major Adverse effects during construction, which is in line with the applicant's assessment and agreed. However, for the operational stage it is considered there is a higher magnitude and significance of effect (Medium-High and Moderate-Major Adverse). The dams and reservoir would remain a highly intrusive and incongruous change, visible to varied degrees from much of the route including the Munro summits and a lengthy section of the path to Spidean Mialach. With regards to Spidean Mialach, the LVIA suggests this opens new views down Loch Quoich but earlier in the LVIA assessment considers Loch Quoich to be a visual detractor due to its dam and drawdown scar.
- 7.156 Route R3 - Mountain Route to Gairich gives receptors along this route a lower sensitivity than for R2 as it lies in the same wider setting and ascends a Munro. Whilst it is considered the magnitude assessments are generally reasonable for the whole route, the summit views should be graded higher. Despite the distance, the reservoir and dam appear a highly incongruous and unnatural feature in position, form and scale. Therefore, the effects are considered to be significant at the construction stage but also extending into operation (Moderate-Major and Moderate respectively).
- 7.157 Route R5 - Mountain Route to Sgùrr Mòr and Sgùrr an Fhuarain will see effects contained to summit ridges between the 2 hills on this route, limiting the overall magnitude of effect and overall significance. However, if an assessment of the summit view (VL10) alone was made, it is considered the effects would be significant. Whilst the proposed development would be a relatively small element of the view, the perched position halfway up a mountainside and the level crest of the dam is at odds with all other elements and character of the view.
- 7.158 VL8 - Sgùrr Mhurlagain has no assessment of this view or an associated route. The proposed development appears similar to that posed by the view from Sgùrr Mòr and effects would be of a similar magnitude and significance.
- 7.159 In conclusion, it is considered that the applicant's visual assessment is reasonably detailed and illustrated with broad agreement with the LVIA assessments of significant visual effects. However, differences in approach and further potential for significant effects are noted with the focus on assessing routes and not including specific viewpoint assessments has reduced the potential for identifying significant effects. There is also a lack of clarity and consistency in the assessment of sensitivity of receptors and understating of magnitude of change from some routes. Some of the more distant summit viewpoints still indicate potential for significant effects, such as Sgùrr Mòr and Sgùrr Mhurlagain, albeit not for whole routes to the summits. The significant effects relate largely to the influence of the upper reservoir which, during operation, would remain an intrusive and incongruous feature perched halfway up the mountainside.

Significant adverse visual effects of the development for recreational users of the outdoors are not considered to be well contained.

Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact

- 7.160 In addition to the above, it is important to consider the context of the development in combination with other renewable energy developments and assess the likely cumulative effects. Of particular importance is how renewable energy developments relate to each other in design and relationship to their surroundings, their frequency when moving through the landscape, and their visual separation to allow experience of the character of the landscape in between.
- 7.161 5 developments were initially identified for inclusion within the cumulative assessment either within or close to the study area (noted in paragraph 7.11.2 of EIA Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual and locations shown in Figure 7.6) These include major projects that have been consented but are yet to make a substantial start on site such as Coire Glas pumped storage hydro scheme (18/01564/S36/ECU00000577) and Skye Reinforcement Line (22/04580/S37/ECU00003395). Coire Glas, access routes and associated grid connection (which is currently at SCOP stage (25/04439/SCOP/ECU00006270) are mainly located outside the study area. Skye Reinforcement overhead electricity line, replacing the current OHL on a similar alignment, will run adjacent to the C1144 road to the north. Quoich Switching Station and overhead line reinforcement near Kingie has also been granted permission recently (24/03323/S37/ECU00005024) with works yet to start on site. Beinn Bheag Wind Farm (24/03581/SCOP/ECU00005186), located to the south of the Quoich Dam, with turbines up to 230m height and little further detail, was at scoping stage when the LVIA was undertaken. However, Beinn Bheag Wind Farm has recently been formally withdrawn and is no longer a relevant cumulative development.
- 7.162 The cumulative assessment has considered effect during operation only as it is difficult to predict when construction works would take place and what these would involve.
- 7.163 The LVIA concludes that there would be significant cumulative landscape effects at operational stage to LCT 239 Interlocking Sweeping Peaks – Lochaber (Sub-type A), WLA 18: Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar Localised Moderate Adverse, Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA with all experiencing Localised Moderate Adverse effects at the operational stage. However, these effects are only in the scenario where Beinn Bheag Wind Farm is present in the baseline which is no longer the case. Coire Glas is considered not to sufficiently interact with the proposed development and the Skye Reinforcement Line/Quoich substation do not significantly change the baseline landscape as they mainly replace existing infrastructure.
- 7.164 The initial assessment noted that Route R2 - Mountain route to Gleouraich/ Spidean Mialach and Route R3 - Mountain route to Gairich would experience localised Moderate Adverse effects along the routes, limited to the higher elevations of Route R3. Again, this was on the basis that the proposed development was an addition to the baseline including Beinn Bheag Wind Farm.
- 7.165 It is considered there is a lack of clarity from the details provided by the applicant as there is no explanation of the cumulative assessment methodology, including assumptions, criteria etc. and the basis of the assessment, i.e. whether the effects are

additional effects of the proposed development over and above the baseline, or the combined effects of the proposed development and baseline developments. However, the detailed assessment is clear that effects are additional.

- 7.166 The assessment does not include cumulative effects with other similar/related developments already in operation, including the existing Quoich hydro scheme and dam along with the existing OHL. Additionally, the assessment does not consider a baseline which includes all potential cumulative developments.
- 7.167 Given the effects on visual receptor R1 are likely to be significant, it is considered the cumulative effects would also be significant.
- 7.168 Whilst the lack of clarity is noted, it is agreed that, of the developments considered, the significant cumulative effects would only be with the initially proposed (but now withdrawn since the submission of this application) Beinn Bheag wind farm. The position of the proposed development relative to the wind farm would add noticeably to the extent and intensity of development around the east end of Loch Quoich. The additional cumulative effects on landscape and visual receptors would be of a similar magnitude to the solus effects, but more concentrated to the north side of the glen, due to the landscape and visual changes that would have resulted from the wind farm on the south side.

Additional Landscape and Visual Information

- 7.169 The Additional Information (AI) submitted on 3 December 2025 detail the changes to the proposed development that are intended to mitigate or offset landscape and visual effects. Details including plans, cross sections and amended Year 15 visualisations from 4 of the mountaintop viewpoints overlooking the upper reservoir and dams are provided (VL3, VL4, VL5 and VL8).
- 7.170 Whilst Table 1 of the Additional Information Report (AIR) makes reference to the potential for the reduction of the effects no formal reassessment of landscape and visual effects has been undertaken. The AIR concludes that the design and other improvements would “significantly reduce the environmental impacts further, but do not materially change the overall conclusions presented in the EIA report” (in paragraph 1.12.4). It is not entirely clear what this statement means given no detailed reassessment has been undertaken.
- 7.171 Whilst the package of AI is considered to provide sufficient written and diagrammatic detail to understand the proposed design amendments clearly, the removal of the 2 circular reinforced concrete intake towers from the reservoir would simplify its appearance by removing the most obviously artificial structures. Likewise, the removal of the Fearn Dam spillway and restoration of the Allt a’ Mheil Hydro access track would be an improvement, although is a relatively minor amendment. It is not entirely clear if these changes are illustrated in both the relevant visualisations (VL3 and VL5).
- 7.172 It is broadly agreed that the proposed native woodland planting between the road and reservoir could provide a degree of softening and/or screening of some elements of the proposed development including the dam access track and the foot of the dams. This would be mainly appreciated from the C1144 road. Again, it is not entirely clear if these

changes are illustrated in both relevant visualisations as the additional planting does not appear in VL3 and VL5.

- 7.173 It is acknowledged that the additional measures will reduce effects to some extent, particularly for the powerhouse area and southern access route where local rock, native vegetation including tree planting, and land forming can be employed to integrate and/or screen elements. Removal of the towers and spillway will simplify the appearance of the reservoir and the additional hillside planting may help screen the access tracks along with Fearn Dam from the C1144 road. However, given the position and elevation of the dams and the nature of drawdown as seen from higher elevations such as VL3, VL4, VL5 and VL8, options to further mitigate adverse impacts without also reducing the capacity of the proposed development are limited.
- 7.174 It is generally agreed that the AI details provided outlines the design and other changes proposed. Whilst it is agreed that there would be some reduction in landscape and visual effects based on the information submitted, it is considered that none of the assessed effects on receptors would change in magnitude or significance, although they may be considered slightly less adverse. It is considered that this accords with the ultimate conclusion of the AI.

Construction

- 7.175 The applicant has set out a detailed construction programme lasting approximately 7 years for the proposed development. Approximately 4.5 years of this period would involve the major civil engineering works associated with dam construction, tunnelling, the underground powerhouse and the upper reservoir. Year 1 will focus on ground investigations, early enabling works, temporary compounds and limited use of the C1144. Year 2 will see commencement of the main construction activities, including SAR construction, C1144 widening, upper and lower reservoir early works, portal and powerhouse site formation. Habitat compensation and enhancement measures would also begin during this period. Year 3 will see a peak of civil works to dams, tunnels, powerhouse caverns with underground excavation taking place 24 hours a day. Turbine and electrical installation will start in late Year 4, once the powerhouse caverns and major civil works have advanced sufficiently. Reservoir filling is programmed to occur in the second half of Year 4. Testing of structures and reinstatement will take place in Year 5 followed by commissioning activities, systems testing and grid integration in Year 6. Finally, demobilisation, finalised landscape reinstatement, monitoring and final handovers are due to take place in Year 7.
- 7.176 Significant temporary construction impacts are anticipated given the scale and remote nature of the scheme. These include construction traffic movements, noise, dust, and land disturbance resulting from the creation of laydown areas, compounds, concrete batching facilities, materials storage zones and heavy plant operations. A peak construction workforce of around 500 people is expected, supported by a dedicated onsite accommodation camp and an offsite staging area near Invergarry to reduce traffic loading on the public road network. It is for these reasons that the applicant has a commitment toward a project specific Construction and Environmental Management Document (CEMD) approach, the finalised details of which, following appointment of the project contractor, would require approval from the Planning Authority in consultation with relevant consultees. In addition, the applicant has also committed to the appointment of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) to oversee the project. This should

dovetail with a Planning Monitoring Officer role to monitor compliance with the conditions attached to any consent should the application be granted consent.

- 7.177 A mass balance (spoil management) strategy and borrow pit plan (Appendix 2.3 Mass Balance Strategy) estimates that approximately 10.1Mm³ of spoil will be generated by the proposed development and reused. The majority of excavated material will be from the upper works with approximately 8,500,000m³, with 1,214,784m³ material also unearthed from the lower works and 388,485m³ from the SAR. The strategy prioritises a “zero-waste” on-site reuse approach, ensuring that all suitable excavated material is re-purposed within the development footprint wherever practicable. This includes the reuse of rock excavated from the powerhouse cavern, the underground waterway system, and borrow pits within the upper reservoir basin, allowing the project to avoid importing bulk aggregates and to minimise off-site disposal.
- 7.178 The majority of rock material will be used to construct the Fearna Dam and Coire Dubh Dam, both of which are rockfill structures requiring large volumes of compacted site-won stone. Additional rock and aggregate will be used to build and surface the SAR, the widened section of the C1144 public road, internal access tracks and associated infrastructure, as well as for the manufacture of concrete, with only cement needing to be imported. Earth and peat materials generated from the dam footprints, tunnel spoil and local excavation zones will be used for reinstatement works, including the shaping of restored landforms, screen mounding, and peatland reinstatement across work areas.
- 7.179 SEPA note that for them not to consider the use of the spoil material as a waste activity there needs to be a genuine planning need which has been confirmed. SEPA note that the strategy and plan are based on preliminary ground investigations which may require to be updated following further works. SEPA have requested they be consulted on any additional proposals to make use of excavated material on site and ask that this is controlled by condition should the application be granted consent. The submission should include information on the volume of material to be used, the manner it is to be used and a justification for the need for the works. For the avoidance of doubt there should be no long-term storage of material on site and material should only be temporarily stored within the identified construction areas. Additionally, SEPA note that borrow pits associated with the upper reservoir works will be within the inundation area, therefore, the pits should be worked and restored in line with the strategy and plan which can also be controlled by condition should the application be granted consent.
- 7.180 Aggregates would be sourced from the powerhouse excavation and from the excavation of the underground waterway systems along with a number of borrow pits throughout the site to be mainly used for concrete production, access tracks and engineered fills. Rock materials would be sourced from the upper reservoir and tunnel excavation along with the borrow pits to be mainly used to build the Fearna and Coire Dubh Dams and track construction. Soil and peat from the dam footprints, powerhouse/lower works cuttings and borrow pit overburden to be mainly used for reinstatement, peatland restoration and screening bunds.
- 7.181 Normal construction shifts would generally apply for the surface works, such as the access tracks, dams, powerhouse, upper control works and lower control works, but the applicant notes that these could be subject to some variation to suit the ongoing work,

weather conditions and time of year. Underground operations are anticipated to continue 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- 7.182 There are likely to be some adverse impacts caused by construction traffic and disruption given the length of the build period for the proposed development. The recommended hours for activities which are audible at any noise sensitive receptor are between 8am and 6pm Monday to Saturday (with a requirement for a reduced 45dB LAeq 1 hour between 1pm to 6pm on Saturday as opposed to 55dB LAeq 1 hour for the rest of the week) with no works on Sunday. However, it is understood that for a development of this size, there is some merit in allowing some work to be carried on outwith normal working hours if it is likely to significantly reduce the overall length of the construction period and the impact on surrounding residents can be kept to a minimum.
- 7.183 Applicants must comply with reasonable operational practices with regard to 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. A condition is requested to secure details of how contractors would employ the best practicable means to reduce the impact of noise from construction activities.
- 7.184 The nature of the project anticipates the need for a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which would be controlled by condition should the application be granted consent. It should include site specific environmental management procedures which can be finalised and agreed through appropriate planning conditions. Due to the scale of the development SEPA would control pollution prevention measures relating to surface water run-off via a Controlled Activities Regulations (CAR), Construction Site Licence along with the hydropower element of the proposed development.
- 7.185 In addition to the requirement for submission and agreement on a CEMP the Council will require the applicant to provide a financial bond regarding final site restoration (restoration bond) in the event of non-operation and to provide a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) for the use of the trunk road network. Again, this would be controlled by condition should the application be granted consent.
- 7.186 A Community Liaison Group (CLG) will be conditioned should the application be granted consent to ensure that the Community Council and other stakeholders are kept up to date and consulted before and during the construction period.
- 7.187 Light pollution can have a significant effect on the rural countryside, from disturbing the way animals and plants perceive daytime and night-time to making developments visible across wide areas. For safety reasons, temporary lighting would be required for all external construction activities during hours of darkness and low natural light. This lighting would be designed to minimise illumination, glare or light spillage to nearby receptors. Once operational, external lighting is not required during the day-to-day operation of the proposed development. Some infrastructure may require low-level, task-specific lighting only when staff are present, such as during inspections, whilst undergoing maintenance or if there was an emergency. The specification of lighting could be controlled by condition should the application be granted consent.

Construction Infrastructure

- 7.188 A number of site compounds (SC) and borrow pits (BP) would be required across the site to accommodate the site establishment, lay down areas and extraction of materials for construction works. The locations generally correlate to the different construction areas across the site. The applicant has provided additional visualisations from VL2 Path from Quoich Dam and VL5 Gairich Summit to give an example of how the site compounds and borrow pits will appear during the construction phase when viewed from the surrounding area.
- 7.189 The main construction compound (SC1) will be located adjacent to the SAR to accommodate the substantial works complex. It has been sited to minimise haul distances for dam rockfill and to make use of the naturally level area of ground. SC1 will be used for storage of rockfill and filter materials for the dams, localised material processing (crushing and grading), short-term stockpiling of excavated rock prior to use, plant refuelling and maintenance area along with offices, staff welfare and other facilities. It will be designed as a temporary platform that will be reinstated following completion, as will all the other compound area.
- 7.190 In addition, 2 temporary worker residential camps are required on site to support the 7-year construction phase where up to 500 workers are expected at peak periods. The main worker camp (SC1) will be located at SC1 adjacent to the SAR on a level section of ground to accommodate the substantial compound area. 3 different areas make up SC1, the worker accommodation area will be approximately 4.5ha, the site offices and administration area will be approximately 4ha and the site laydown, storage and fabrication area will be approximately 6ha. The worker camp would contain offices and “bunkabin” style accommodation units which would be stacked in two or three storey levels to minimise the footprint on the ground along with amenities for workers. These would include night shift and day shift sleeping quarters, laundry, drying rooms and rest areas, canteen and catering facilities, medical/welfare room, recreation/TV rooms, site management offices, meeting rooms and contractor coordination spaces. Externally, there would be a shuttle bus arrival and departure zone with only limited on-site parking for supervisors/essential staff. There would also be areas for fuel, water and waste management infrastructure along with secure storage zones for tools, PPE and small plant equipment. A smaller satellite camp (SC3) will be situated at the upper reservoir works to minimise daily travel between the areas (Figure 2.41).
- 7.191 Given the substantial workforce on site, the camp will effectively operate as a new settlement within a relatively remote rural setting. This has caused concerns and referenced in a number of representations received. Comments considered the level of detail regarding the worker camp is insufficient. The applicant has provided a plan (Figure 2.30) and sections (Figure 2.31) for the SC1 worker camp and storage compound, along with other site compounds and borrow pits referenced, which can be controlled by condition should the application be granted consent. They confirmed that facilities for power generation, water supply and waste treatment will be provided. Given the large workforce located on site for a number of years it was considered that this would bring additional noise, traffic, environmental damage and light that will have an impact on residents in the surrounding area. Given the sizeable set back from residential properties, the intervening landform along with mitigation measures including the installation of 5m bunds and planting along the northeastern site boundary, it is

considered that the location and actions noted will minimise potential detrimental impacts to neighbour amenity. No concerns were raised regarding potential long lasting impacts to habitat or ecology, given the temporary nature of the worker camp and other site compounds, it is expected that the site will recover to its previous condition following reinstatement and planting which can be controlled by condition should the applicant be granted consent. In terms of traffic, whilst there will be vehicles coming and going from the site, workers staying in accommodation on site will help to significantly reduce vehicle movements.

- 7.192 SC2 will be located adjacent to Loch Quoich at the proposed switchyard site adjacent to the powerhouse and lower control works (Figure 2.39). This compound would be used mainly as a general laydown, storage, fabrication, stockpile and material processing area located at the lower works. It will also contain a warehouse facility, fuel and servicing, concrete batching plant and site offices, medical centre and welfare provision.
- 7.193 Multiple borrow pits will be excavated across the site to supply rockfill and aggregate for the Fearna and Coire Dubh Dams, SAR track construction and C1144 upgrades, graded stone for concrete production and engineering fill for cut platforms and working area.
- 7.194 Borrow pits BP1, BP2, and BP3 (Figure 2.33, Figure 2.35, Figure 2.37 respectively) are located within the area that will be inundated when the upper reservoir is formed, providing an element of environmental benefit by removing the landscape scarring and ecological disturbance. Material will be excavated for the Fearna and Coire Dubh Dam footprint to supply bulk rockfill for the embankment core and shoulders along with aggregate for dam filter layers and engineered fills. The proximity to the dams will significantly minimise haul distances. These are substantial works across 42.9ha (covering the connected BP1, BP2 and BP3) with excavation up to approximately 65m. The borrow pit faces will range from zero at existing ground level, to a maximum back face height of 65m around Loch Fearna. Once the reservoir has water in it, the maximum exposed face would be 60m high as the borrow pit face would extend 5m below the minimum water level in the upper reservoir.
- 7.195 A further 3 borrow pits are located along the SAR corridor at Poulary East, Glen Kingie Forest and Kingie Estate (Figure 2.27, Figure 2.28 and Figure 2.29 respectively). These will provide stone for the substantial road upgrading and widening works needed. The location will reduce the need to haul materials along the public road network. Each of these sites is an existing borrow pit location enclosed by woodland that would require further extension with the loss of trees.
- 7.196 The applicant considers the proposed development applies a landscape-led and minimal-transport methodology with regards to the borrow pits proposed. This will lead to site-won rock meet over 95% of material requirements which will help to minimise the carbon footprint of the scheme. The excavation works will follow a phased approach with peat and soil removed and stored separately for reuse. Rock will be extracted, crushed, and immediately moved to dam or track works. Pits in the upper reservoir inundation area will be worked and reinstated prior to flooding, as required by SEPA.
- 7.197 For the construction phase, it is proposed the site is connected to the local distribution grid. This would comprise a 10MW connection to the site compound SC1 and a second 10MW to the site at the powerhouse area. A buried cable would then run electricity to the upper works with generators only proposed for backup power. There are several

existing run of river hydro projects connected to the local distribution network and with the Fearna construction site being directly connected, this power would be used locally. Additionally, the existing Quoich hydro station generates 18MW, and although no formal proposals have been developed, it could potentially supply the site with power.

- 7.198 Vehicles used in the operation of the proposed development are proposed to be electric vehicles (EVs) wherever practicable. The powerhouse will provide sufficient charging points for all vehicles used to operate the scheme, as well as for staff vehicles to recharge whilst at work.

Noise and Vibration

- 7.199 EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 16 Noise and Vibration sets out the assessment of the potential noise and vibration impacts along with the likely effects on environmental receptors associated with the proposed development. The chapter identifies the closest noise-sensitive receptors (NSRs) along the C1144 road and near Invergarry evaluating predicted effects using recognised standards.
- 7.200 Given the substantial separation distances between the main development site and residential receptors, the closest set back approximately 4km, and recognising that the powerhouse, turbines, and associated equipment are located entirely underground, Highland Council's Environmental Health Team agreed that a detailed quantitative assessment of operational noise could be scoped out. However, the applicant has undertaken a qualitative operational noise assessment and submitted supporting information demonstrating that operational sound levels would fall well below the agreed 25dB (A) design limit at all receptors. The rock mass surrounding tunnels and chambers provides significant additional attenuation, ensuring that operational noise is not expected to be audible at any noise-sensitive locations. Nonetheless, a planning condition to ensure compliance with the agreed fixed operational noise limit can be attached should the application be granted consent.
- 7.201 Noise mitigation during construction is supported by the design of the scheme, notably the creation of a dedicated SAR and associated temporary haul roads. These will enable material to be transported between the lower and upper reservoir works whilst reusing tunnel spoil for dam construction. This will reduce the need for off-site disposal and avoid heavy construction traffic passing close to receptors such as those along the C1144. This significantly reduces potential noise and vibration emissions from vehicle movements and is welcomed by Environmental Health.
- 7.202 Whilst several representations raised concerns about construction noise, the applicant confirms that the remote location of the principal works means these activities will not give rise to significant impacts. Construction noise requiring more detailed consideration relates primarily to access track upgrades and construction traffic along sections of the SAR closer to residential properties near Invergarry. Predicted levels during access track construction may reach around 60dB at the most affected receptors (NSR4 covering a cluster of properties near Faichem/Invergarry and the River Garry), particularly during short duration works at the closest point. However, these works are transitory, typically lasting no more than 2 to 3 weeks for any given 100m segment, and will reduce in magnitude as works move away from receptors.

7.203 The applicant has submitted a Draft Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (CNVMP) which commits to the use of best practicable means (BPM) to minimise construction noise and vibration. This includes measures such as temporary noise bunds or barriers, careful plant selection, orientation of equipment, and restrictions on certain high-noise activities. Installation of temporary acoustic bunding or barriers in sensitive locations along the access track will be required prior to commencement of works and can be secured by planning condition should the application be granted consent.

7.204 The Environmental Health Team noted the following noise limitations shall be applied to the proposed development:

Noise

- Monday to Friday - 8am to 6pm 55dB LAeq 1 hour;
- Saturday - 8am to 1pm 55dB LAeq 1 hour; Saturdays - 1pm to 6pm 45dB LAeq 1 hour;
- Outwith the above times, noise from construction related activities shall not exceed 35dB LAeq 1 hour.

Groundborne Noise

- Monday to Saturday - 8am to 6pm 35dB LASmax;
- Outwith the above times, ground borne noise from construction related activities shall not exceed 30dB LASmax.

7.205 The Environmental Health Team noted the following vibration limitations shall be applied to the proposed development:

- Monday to Friday - 8am to 6pm PPV \leq 5mm/s
- Saturday - 8am to 1pm PPV \leq 5mm/s
- Outwith the above times, the peak particle velocity shall not exceed 0.3 mm-s⁻¹;
- The above limits apply to all construction activities other than blasting. For blasting, the applicant will be required to submit a scheme demonstrating that the BPM will be employed to minimise the impact of noise and vibration.

7.206 Construction noise and vibration would be managed through the finalised CNVMP which would be formally agreed with the Planning Authority prior to construction work commencing and is controlled by condition.

7.207 A number of representations raised concerns regarding the impact of noise associated with the proposed development. Whilst there will be noise during construction, given the separation distance from noise sensitive receptors it is generally considered the proposed mitigation measures are appropriate.

7.208 Community Councils raised concerns regarding their experience of Coire Glas pumped hydro storage scheme nearby following amendments to conditions controlling construction working hours which allowed for an extension of time. For a development of this national scale there is merit in allowing some work to be undertaken outwith

normal working hours if it is likely to significantly reduce the overall length of the construction period and the impact on residents can be kept to a minimum.

- 7.209 Additionally, a condition would require a Community Liaison Group be set up should the application be granted consent. Given the size and duration of the proposed development there may be disturbance over a prolonged period, not only noise but other issues such as increased traffic and accesses used for recreation, as such, the Community Liaison Group will help to ensure that the Community Council and other stakeholders are kept up to date and consulted before, during and after the construction period.
- 7.210 The applicant has adopted the best practical means and mitigation measures to control noise and vibration for the proposed development which would be managed through CNVMP and controlled by the conditions noted. It is agreed with the findings in EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 16 Noise and Vibration that the effects are not significant.

Roads, Transport and Access

- 7.211 The EIAR assessed the impact of the development on roads, transport and access. During the construction phase there will be fluctuations in traffic travelling to and from the site, with the predicted peak of construction traffic movement having been assessed to determine the worst-case effects on roads within the study area. EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 15 Transport and Access is supported by a Transport Assessment prepared by Pell Frischmann (Appendix 15.1). Chapter 15 notes that the assessment has been carried out in accordance with the guidance presented in the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) document, Environmental Assessment of Traffic and Movement (July 2023). This is considered appropriate.
- 7.212 The study area for the Transport Assessment comprises the C1144 public road between the site and the A87 Trunk Road, the A87 between Invergarry and Bunloyne Bridge, the A887 Trunk Road between Invermoriston and Bunloyne Bridge, the A82 Trunk Road between Invergarry and Fort William, and the A830 Trunk Road ("Road to the Isles") between Corpach and Fort William. The Trunk Road routes noted are all two-way single-carriageway routes forming part of the strategic network, maintained by BEAR Scotland and generally subject to national speed limits, with reductions through towns and villages. The C1144 is a minor public road running westward from its junction with the A87 at Daingean Bridge, passing by Loch Garry, Tomdoun, and Loch Quoich, before continuing towards Kinloch Hourn approximately 24km in length. The route is a single-track rural road with passing places, characterised by its narrow width, remote setting, and lack of designed capacity for significant volumes of heavy vehicles. Whilst the C1144 is noted as having a 60mph speed limit, actual speeds recorded near the proposed site access average far lower at around 30mph because of its geometry and condition. The TA highlights that the C1144 forms part of a "Consultation Route" within the Timber Transport Forum classification, meaning it is not suitable for unrestricted timber or heavy-haulage use, and requires consultation with the local Roads Authority before such traffic is permitted. This designation reflects the road's limited structural robustness and susceptibility to wear and tear. Therefore, the most notable traffic effects are predicted on the A87 west of Invergarry and on the upgraded section of the C1144.
- 7.213 Baseline safety information included in the TA shows no recorded personal injury accidents on the C1144 or the A87 in the immediate vicinity of the proposed access

during the review period. 8 accidents were recorded elsewhere within the study area, mostly involving motorcycles and clustered at bends or junctions, but none involved HGVs. Sensitive receptors include residents of Invergarry and Fort Augustus, communities located along A82 and A87 corridors, and users of nearby Core Paths intersecting the A87/SAR area.

- 7.214 Construction-period traffic comprises staff transport, either by private car or via staff minibuses operating between an off-site staging area and the workers' camp; Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) delivering supplies, provisions and materials to construction offices and accommodation compounds; Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) transporting fuel, oil, construction consumables and plant; specialist low loaders transporting construction machinery; bulk materials including cement and aggregates (with the majority of aggregates sourced onsite); and AILs associated with transformers, turbine equipment, tunnel lining segments and other large mechanical components.
- 7.215 Access for construction is proposed primarily via a newly developed SAR from the A87, making use of upgraded forestry tracks through Glen Garry Forest and requiring several new bridge crossings over the River Garry, Gearr Garry and River Kingie. The route is designed to avoid reliance on the C1144 public road given its fragile nature and concerns raised by Transport Planning going back to early preapplication discussion. A 2.3km section of the C1144 would also be widened by approximately 4m, with new drainage and verges, to facilitate two-way HGV movements. This infrastructure is intended to limit reliance on the C1144 during the main construction period, although the C1144 will continue to be required for ground investigations, enabling works, and as a contingency if the SAR becomes temporarily unavailable.
- 7.216 Construction works are anticipated to last approximately 101 months, with the peak construction period in 2032. Whilst 101 months equates to a construction period of 8.4 years, far longer than the 7 years referenced in other information submitted by the applicant, the EIAR must use the most conservative (worst-case) estimate, which is why the TA models a longer work programme.
- 7.217 The TA confirms that construction traffic for the project will be substantial and highly concentrated in specific peak months. During the busiest period, anticipated between month 37 and month 55, the wider road network would experience approximately 506 daily vehicle movements, comprising 328 car/LGV movements and 178 HGV/Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL) movements. On the C1144 itself, where flows are currently very low, peak construction traffic is forecast at 430 daily movements, including around 180 HGVs. The TA translates these numbers into percentage increases, showing that while trunk road impacts are modest (for example, a 20.2% total flow increase on the A87 west of Invergarry), the corresponding uplift on the upgraded stretch of the C1144 appears dramatically higher, at 655.7%, simply because the existing baseline on that road is extremely low. Nonetheless, the theoretical capacity assessment undertaken in the TA identifies no capacity constraints across any part of the study network, with even the most affected links maintaining substantial spare capacity.
- 7.218 Changes to the proposed development were presented as part of the Additional Information submission, these included the removal of the poor-quality Allt a' Mheil access track, characterised by steep gradients, erosion, and inadequate reinstatement, which would be removed and reinstated sensitively. Future maintenance access will be

taken via the new track for the hydro scheme, reducing cumulative landscape impacts within the Wild Land Area.

- 7.219 Following the initial concerns raised regarding the roads and traffic impact to the local community they applicant proposed further mitigation measures with the aim to minimise disruption during the widening works of the 2.3km stretch of the C1144 widening. These include 1km of offline temporary road near Quoich dam, a temporary link to the upper reservoir track enabling early access along with additional temporary widening east of the dam. A 770m screening bund is also proposed along the SAR adjacent to Loch an Staic to protect sensitive bird species.
- 7.220 Prior to mitigation, the EIAR identifies that users of the C1144 (High Sensitivity) and residents of Invergarry and Fort Augustus (Medium Sensitivity) would experience Moderate or Significant effects in accordance with IEMA criteria. However, the applicant notes that these effects occur only during the short peak period of construction and are transitory. With the implementation of the CTMP they consider that these impacts would diminish to levels assessed as Minor or Not Significant, with residual effects considered slight or negligible.
- 7.221 In terms of mitigation measures proposed to reduce traffic volumes during the construction phase, the establishment of a workers' camp within the site will help significantly reduce the number of trips on the road network. Along with the CTMP, various abnormal load mitigation works could be achieved through an Abnormal Load Transport Management Plan, Construction Staff Travel Plan, appropriate distribution of public information along with any cumulative measures controlled by condition should the application be granted consent.
- 7.222 Once operational, the applicant considers the traffic effects of the development to be insignificant, with typical flows expected to be no more than around 10 vehicle movements per day, well below recognised thresholds for requiring a formal transport assessment. For this reason, the operational phase has been scoped out of the detailed assessment. This approach is agreed.
- 7.223 With regards to the local road network, Highland Council's Transport Planning Team object to the application with regards to the capacity of the C1144, construction methodology applied and impacts on the wider community given the significant traffic volumes over an extended period alongside other national scale development in the locale.
- 7.224 Whilst the Transport Planning Team recognise the proposed reconstruction and upgrading of a portion the C1144, they maintain significant concerns regarding the detrimental cumulative impact the local community is already experiencing from the ongoing Skye Reinforcement OHL which has led to prolonged disruption along the route and will continue to do so for some time given the scale of the scheme. Therefore, the Transport Planning Team request that construction of the proposed development must not commence until OHL works within Glen Garry have been completed. Whilst they concede that this could potentially be controlled by a planning condition, they still have reservations regarding the cumulative burden on local residents.
- 7.225 In relation to the construction methodology, the Transport Planning Team raises concerns that the techniques currently proposed to widen and improve the C1144,

particularly around the Loch Quoich Dam area, may have unacceptable impacts both on the existing dam structure and on the travelling public. Whilst they acknowledge the applicant's proposal for a temporary track parallel to the C1144 for approximately 1km, they consider that significant disruption to road users is still likely, and that the temporary works will not sufficiently mitigate these risks. The remote, rugged environment and the existing road's evolved, rather than engineered, nature, raise particular concerns with the Transport Planning Team noting that these factors make the proposed design changes problematic and potentially unsafe.

- 7.226 The TA states that "Should there be any issues relating to the use of the SAR during the main construction works, there may be a requirement to use the C1144 until such time as the SAR was re-established. In these circumstances, the Applicant would propose to liaise with THC and provide the relevant information on the likely duration of use of the C1144 and what, if any, mitigation measures may be required." For the avoidance of doubt, Highland Council's Environmental Health Team note that should the C1114 public road be required for heavy construction traffic, it is expected that operating hours for construction traffic would be restricted to within their recommended times, 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday and 0800 to 1300 on Saturdays.
- 7.227 Predicted noise levels from construction traffic on the SAR are generally low at the properties along the C1144 and it may be that noise from HGV traffic outwith normal working hours will not be a significant issue. It is strongly recommended that the developer/contractor initiate and maintain good relations with the community in order to address any issues as they arise. Should the Environmental Health Team receive complaints about working hours or other construction noise issues, they would be required to investigate in accordance with the Control of Pollution Act 1974 (COPA).
- 7.228 With regards to the Trunk Road network, the EIAR assessed the impacts of the proposed development on these routes, including the movement of Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AILs) and considered cumulative effects with other major schemes. During the construction phase there will be fluctuations in traffic travelling to and from the site, and the EIAR has evaluated the worst-case peak construction period, noting that peak construction is anticipated in 2032. Baseline traffic has been derived from project-specific Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) surveys supplemented by Transport Scotland and DfT datasets, and these flows have been uplifted using National Road Traffic Forecast (NRTF) low growth to establish 2032 baseline conditions. Cumulative construction traffic associated with the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Scheme has also been incorporated, given the potential alignment of construction programmes. Staff transport is anticipated to be managed via an off-site staging area south of Invergarry, with workers transferred to the site by shuttle bus to minimise car trips on the trunk road network, supplemented by on-site workers' accommodation to reduce daily vehicle movements.
- 7.229 An Abnormal Indivisible Load Route Survey (AILRS) has been undertaken and identifies that abnormal loads, including turbine sets, transformers and heavy construction plant, are likely to be transported from the Port of Corpach, travelling via the A830, A82 and A87 Trunk Roads. The survey highlights several constraint points, including overhead utility lines and tree canopies that may require review or trimming, and identifies the need for coordination with Network Rail and Scottish Canals to ensure safe passage. Transport Scotland notes that final confirmation of the preferred port of entry and delivery route will be made post-consent, and that the detailed arrangements will need to be

agreed through appropriate conditions and advisory requirements noted should the application be granted consent.

- 7.230 Overall, Transport Scotland concludes that, with the inclusion of conditions and adherence to their technical approval processes, the proposed development would not result in significant residual effects on the Trunk Road network.
- 7.231 If the project were to be decommissioned, it is anticipated that the potential effects on transport and access would be equal to or lesser than the construction impacts noted.
- 7.232 Community Councils along with representations from the general public considered the C1144 is substandard and not suitable for the significant levels of construction traffic associated with the proposed development, even with the SAR utilised to alleviate the pressure on the public road. This has not however been borne out of the assessments undertaken forming part of the EIAR or Transport Scotland's consultation response. The applicant conceded the proposed development will increase traffic flows on the A86 which is narrow in sections during the construction period. They therefore propose to offer Transport Scotland financial support to introduce improved measures along the route such as enhanced signage, clearance of vegetation, improve forward visibility and enhanced laybys/passing places. The financial contribution would allow Transport Scotland to undertake any planned works early with the applicant hoping this goodwill gesture will assist in improving the road network for the benefit of all road users prior to works commencing on the proposed development and will allow Transport Scotland to bring forward its own considered works along the A86. The mechanism for securing this has not been confirmed, however, it is recommended this is secured by way of legal agreement, the detail of which required to be explored further between the parties and Scottish Ministers.
- 7.233 Community Councils and other representations received considered the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on road safety and consider mitigation measures proposed are inadequate. Additionally, they raised concerns about long term disruption from this scheme and noted there were various other national scale renewable energy developments and transmission infrastructure upgrade works in the wider surrounding area that could lead to detrimental cumulative traffic and road impacts. Based on the information available the applicant considers that it has been established that there are no specific road safety issues within the surrounding area that require to be addressed or would be exacerbated by the development.
- 7.234 The proposed development would lead to an increase in traffic volumes within the study area during the construction phase, with the greatest impact along the A87 and C1144. Whilst for a temporary period, these effects would continue over a number of years given the national scale of the proposed development. Outwith the peak period of construction, traffic volumes would fall considerably. Whilst the applicant considers they have adopted the best practical means and mitigation measures to control roads, transport and access related issues associated with the proposed development through the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures and subject to conditions attached from Transport Scotland, Highland Council's Transport Planning Team has significant concerns regarding the proposed development. They cannot agree with the findings in EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 15 Transport and Access, and the mitigation proposed that traffic and transport effects are not significant.

Wider Recreational Access

- 7.235 EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 14 Recreation and Access considers the potential direct and cumulative effects of the proposed development on public recreation and access during both the construction phase and once the scheme is operational. Such effects primarily relate to temporary disruption to the use of recreational facilities and routes, while other perceived amenity impacts (such as visual impact and noise for example) are assessed separately within the relevant EIAR chapters.
- 7.236 A number of existing tracks within the site will be rerouted, upgraded and/or widened in advance of main construction works. Several recreational routes, comprising a mixture of Rights of Way, Scottish Hill Tracks, upland footpaths and informal access lines, intersect the proposed development footprint (outlined in Figures 14.1 to 14.4 and 14.11 in the Recreation and Access chapter). Many of the principal walking and running routes would be directly affected by construction activity, including those that currently utilise Estate tracks also used by estate vehicles. Some sections of these tracks will be required for construction traffic, in other locations, new construction access tracks will be built separate from existing recreational routes. The proposals for maintaining access are set out in the draft Outdoor Access Management Plan (OAMP) (Appendix 14.1) which ensures that access is retained across the site except in areas where infrastructure is actively being constructed.
- 7.237 During the construction phase, access for the proposed development will be taken primarily from the Southern Access Route (SAR), which comprises approximately 23km of upgraded existing forest road, 4km of new access track, and 2.5km of widening of the C1144 public road near Quoich Dam. These tracks are required for the movement of HGVs, abnormal loads and construction traffic serving the upper reservoir, powerhouse and compound areas. Speed limits, signage and separation from recreational users are detailed in the draft OAMP. All major access infrastructure is concentrated along the SAR and upland routes toward the upper works sites. Post-construction, the SAR and associated tracks will be narrowed to operational widths to reduce landscape and recreational impacts.
- 7.238 Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach Munro circuit will be directly impacted by the proposed development, where the existing descent from Spidean Mialach crosses the area required for the Coire Dubh Dam and the upper reservoir. To retain access, a temporary mountain path diversion will be created during construction, routing walkers to the east and south of Fearna Dam. This adds approximately 1.2km to the walking route but will be built to Red (Specification) upland path standards, ensuring a safe and appropriate gradient. During operation, users of the route will have the additional option of crossing the completed Fearna Dam crest to reconnect with the existing stalkers' path in Coire Dubh. The new sections of path include 1416m descending from Spidean Mialach, crossing the dam in a westerly direction with a 612m and 609m section linking back to existing routes.
- 7.239 Access to Gairich, approached from the south of Quoich Dam, will be largely unaffected except for a proposed improvement to the boggy initial 1km of the route, where a formal constructed path could be installed (subject to landowner consent), improving recreational access as a legacy benefit of the scheme.

- 7.240 In terms of long-distance and strategic routes, sections of Scottish Hill Tracks (238b and 247) and the Cape Wrath Trail (Glen Garry Option) share the SAR for several kilometres. These routes will remain open throughout construction, with the draft OAMP noting mitigation measures proposed including the provision of traffic management and speed limits (15 to 20mph), signage at conflict points and shared-use protocols to ensure safe co-existence of walkers, cyclists and construction vehicles.
- 7.241 Along with the upgrade works to the C1144 and new/upgraded portions of existing forestry track to create the SAR new sections of diverted path connecting the Spidean Mialach route following the inundation of the upper reservoir. A 612m and 609m section will link
- 7.242 Whilst receptors enjoying outdoor pursuits including hillwalking, mountaineering, long-distance walking, wild camping and Estate-based outdoor recreation would experience some detrimental impacts along the routes noted, particularly during the construction phase, it is generally agreed that these would be Minor and not significant. During operation, the SAR will be used only for occasional major maintenance, greatly reducing interaction with recreational users. Canoe and angling access to Loch Quoich will be maintained, with a new improved slipway proposed near the powerhouse to accommodate fluctuating reservoir levels.
- 7.243 Construction and operational disturbance would be managed by provision of the measures outlined in the Outline Access Management Plan prepared in consultation with the Highland Council's Access Officer. The draft Access Management Plan demonstrates a commitment to maintain and, where possible, improve access through the site during the construction and operation of the proposed development. It notes that site tracks and paths will be provided to maintain public access routes during construction and operation of the proposed development, provide safe public access at all stages of development and enhance public outdoor access in the long-term. The most significant impacts on recreation and access during both construction and operation have been assessed by the applicant as Minor, and as such are not considered to be significant.
- 7.244 The Access Officer has to consider 2 key aspects of the proposed development, the first is the impact which the construction phase and permanent works have on existing access routes, the other is what opportunity exists in terms of access improvements as a legacy of the project. The Access Officer welcomes the mitigation measures and access management strategies outlined within the Outline Access Management Plan. They have no objection to the proposed development subject to the submission of a finalised Access Management Plan.
- 7.245 The Access Officer notes that responsibility for delivering the agreed Access Management Plan will lie with the applicant. The applicant should inform potential contractors of the obligations under the Access Management Plan but remains responsible for compliance. Whilst the Access Officer can accept improved mitigation and accommodation measures, any detrimental variations to the commitments outlined within the draft OAMP will not be supported.
- 7.246 Mountaineering Scotland have objected to the application given the area is a valued destination for mountaineers, hillwalkers and climbers, contributing significantly to

Scotland's outdoor tourism industry. They consider the construction and operation of the proposed development would disrupt access to popular mountain routes, including those leading to Munros such as Sgùrr nan Conbhairean and Gleouraich. Their view is that the associated noise, traffic, and visual disruption during the construction period would diminish the experience of remoteness and tranquillity that attracts outdoor enthusiasts to this region. They strongly disagree that the impact on walkers might be mitigated by new views where the track is routed across the dam, when they are climbing to much higher and better viewpoints.

Hydrology and Water Environment

- 7.247 EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 6 Hydrology and Water Management explains that the proposed development would utilise Loch Quoich as the lower reservoir and form a new upper reservoir at Loch Fearn and Coire Dubh, created by 2 new dams. Loch Quoich is already a highly regulated hydroelectric reservoir, operating on a 26m licensed range and providing major compensation and generation flows within the wider Garry cascade. The proposed development would operate entirely within this existing operational range, with an additional storage volume of approximately 40Mm³ transferred between the upper and lower reservoirs during pumping and generation cycles.
- 7.248 Compensation flows would be released from both the Fearn Dam and the Coire Dubh Dam into the Allt Fearn and the unnamed tributary of Allt Mheil respectively, with flow rates to be agreed through the CAR licensing process. These flows would mimic natural hydrology and ensure protection of downstream habitats and existing hydro operations. During construction, temporary diversion and bypass arrangements would maintain natural outflows from Loch Fearn and Coire Dubh, with methodologies, including over-pumping, forming part of the construction CAR licence.
- 7.249 Once operational, the scheme would act as a closed system, with all water retained within the Loch Quoich catchment. Reservoir level fluctuations would remain within the current hydrological envelope. Full generation cycles would take around 20 hours, while full pumping cycles would take approximately 27 hours. The upper reservoir would experience larger operational drawdown, approximately 60m, than Loch Quoich, with a range of approximately 26m, which will remain unchanged and will continue to operate within the existing parameters assessed as acceptable under CAR licence and reservoir safety legislation.
- 7.250 Safety and flood management are integral to the project design. Both new dams would be constructed and regulated under the Reservoirs (Scotland) Act 2011, separate to the planning process, with spillways designed to pass the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF) while maintaining adequate freeboard. The applicant confirms that no modifications to the Quoich Dam are required, and the project would not cause additional spilling at Loch Quoich. Embedded mitigation, outlined in EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 12 Geology, Soils and Water, includes measures to maintain drainage pathways, prevent erosion and sedimentation, maintain 10m watercourse buffers, and ensure all new watercourse crossings convey the 1 in 200-year plus climate change flows.
- 7.251 During the construction of the upper reservoir, it will be necessary to undertake temporary flow diversion measures to allow safe formation of the Fearn and Coire Dubh dams. The EIAR confirms that Loch Fearn will be partially drawn down, and natural surface water flows from the surrounding catchments will be diverted around or through

the construction areas to maintain downstream hydrology while preventing construction-related runoff from mixing with clean water. These provisions form part of the wider temporary water management strategy designed to protect water quality and maintain continuity of flows to downstream watercourses.

- 7.252 Once construction works are complete and the diversion measures are no longer required, the scheme will move into the reservoir filling phase. The EIAR does not indicate any requirement for continued diversion at this stage. Instead, filling will proceed under controlled conditions using the completed dam outlet and control structures. During this phase, the project will provide compensation flows through the dam infrastructure to replicate the natural regime and to ensure the maintenance of downstream ecological conditions. These operational releases will be regulated in line with the agreed mitigation commitments and CAR licence requirements.
- 7.253 Overall, temporary flow diversion is required only during the construction phase, with long-term flow continuity secured through the operational compensation arrangements once the reservoir begins to fill.
- 7.254 The first filling of the upper reservoir will aim to commence in the second half of Year 4 of construction works and will be a gradual, carefully controlled process. The applicant confirms that filling will only begin once both dams and all operational control structures are complete. The procedure will comply with dam safety and SEPA requirements, including staged impoundment and continuous monitoring. This will likely be filled at a slower pace than is possible during the commissioning phase, potentially over 2 to 3 days.

Water, Flood Risk, Drainage and Peat

- 7.255 EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 12 Geology, Soils and Water assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on these elements during both the construction and operational phase. With regards to flood risk, the EIAR confirms that the proposed development will not increase flood risk either on-site or downstream. SEPA flood mapping shows that almost all site infrastructure lies outwith areas of fluvial, surface water, groundwater or coastal flood risk. Where the powerhouse and switchyard overlap the Loch Quoich floodplain, these structures will be built on a raised platform at 205m AOD, above the maximum possible loch level of 203m AOD, ensuring they remain dry and do not alter flood levels.
- 7.256 Surface water flood risk across the main site and SAR is minor, limited to small depressions and existing watercourses, and is not considered a constraint. Groundwater flooding is ruled out due to the low-permeability geology and SEPA flood mapping showing no such risk. Reservoir inundation mapping shows the main site lies entirely outside the Quoich Dam breach zone, although parts of the access route fall within it; ongoing regulation under the Reservoirs (Scotland) Act manages this risk at source.
- 7.257 Both SEPA and Highland Council's Flood Risk Management Team has reviewed the hydrology, flood risk and drainage evidence and raise no objection, subject to the conditions noted. They are satisfied that the hydrological modelling demonstrates no increase in downstream flood risk, noting that the scheme will only operate when Loch Quoich is within an agreed level range, with generation ceasing automatically when levels are high. They request a condition requiring consultation on the final

“stop-generating/curtailment level”, which will be set under the site’s CAR licence to ensure no adverse effects on flood risk elsewhere. FRMT also confirms that SUDS must be secured for all new hardstanding and upgraded access roads, and that all watercourse crossings must be designed to accommodate the 1 in 200 year plus climate change flood event. Importantly, they confirm there are no sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the upper or lower reservoirs and therefore no direct flood risk to others, with the scheme’s closed-system operation ensuring minimal impact on the wider catchment.

- 7.258 Mitigation measures outlined in EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 19 Mitigation Schedule further supports flood protection and water environment safeguarding, including protection of water-dependent habitats, maintenance of natural drainage paths, runoff attenuation via SUDS, wet weather protocol, Pollution Prevention Plans during the construction phase, water quality monitoring along with strict CAR-regulated controls on abstraction, discharge and compensation flows. These measures collectively ensure that the proposed development will not increase fluvial flood risk, degrade water quality or alter hydrological pathways beyond agreed regulatory limits.
- 7.259 Design and construction of a suitable drainage system would follow SUDS principles and would ensure natural drainage without significant alteration of the hydrological regime of the local site area. The final drainage design is to be provided for review and approval by FRMT which shall demonstrate that all surface water will be managed in accordance with The Highland Council’s Supplementary Guidance: Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment. This can be controlled by condition should the application be consented. Any construction activity relating to, or undertaken in, the vicinity of watercourses would be carried out in general accordance with relevant SEPA Pollution Prevention Guidelines, The Water Framework Directive (WFD), The Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003 (WEWS), and the Controlled Activities Regulations (CAR) 2011 (as amended).
- 7.260 In terms of watercourse crossings, the proposed development will require 3 new large bridges, 14 new smaller crossings, and upgrades to 33 existing crossings along the route of the SAR. All new and upgraded watercourse crossings will be designed to meet SEPA hydraulic standards (1 in 200 year to 1 in 1000-year flood events plus climate change), maintain natural watercourse function, and comply with CAR licensing.
- 7.261 With regards to drainage, the applicant has submitted a Private Water Supply Risk Assessment (PWSRA) which has identified 2 supplies at Loch Quoich power station (PWS01) and Forest Row Cottage and Forest Gate (PWS03) as being potentially at risk from the proposed development (Appendix 12.5). The report notes that PWS01 is a surface water abstraction from Loch Quoich serving the power station. Assuming embedded mitigation measures, it is unlikely that the development will result in any significant impact on water quality, however, a monitoring program will be put in place.
- 7.262 PWS03 is a spring fed supply serving 2 properties, Forest Gate and Forest Row Cottage. The development will not present any risk to the source or the distribution to Forest Row Cottage, however, the proposed access route will cross pipework to Forest Gate. The assessment has stated that where pipework is crossed by the SAR this will be marked and a structural analysis undertaken and protection to the pipework will be in place for the duration of works and traffic movement. No details have been submitted of the monitoring program or mitigation works, therefore, this will need to be submitted prior to

work commencing and could be controlled by condition should the application be granted planning consent.

- 7.263 The principal soil types recorded at the site include deep blanket peat, peaty gleys and peaty podzols, shallow mineral soils over glacial till and localised alluvial soils. Extensive peat surveys were undertaken across the site, including more than 20,300 peat probes, with around 90% recording peat depths of less than 1m or no peat. The peat present is generally fibrous, shallow and well-drained, with no amorphous peat found. Peatland classes within the development area include Class 2, 3 and 5, with Class 2 mainly around the upper reservoir, the SAR crosses mostly Class 5, with limited Class 1 and 2 sections. The design has avoided deeper peat wherever feasible, but some disturbance is unavoidable due to the engineering footprint. A Peat Management Plan (Volume 4 Appendix 12.2) sets out how all disturbed peat will be safeguarded, handled and reused on site, achieving a material balance with no off-site disposal. A total of 250,000m³ of peat/peaty soils will be excavated with all re-used on site.
- 7.264 The Peat Landslide Hazard and Risk Assessment (PLHRA) identify some medium–high-risk areas, but with embedded design and construction safeguards, all residual risks are assessed as insignificant (Appendix 12.1). Mitigation includes maintaining drainage patterns, minimising peat excavation, restricting vehicle movements, and implementing a Peat Hazard Emergency Plan.
- 7.265 SEPA encourage the avoidance, minimisation and use of peat in areas disturbed by construction activities. More generally, SEPA is encouraged that other elements of the development avoid the deepest peat. Even with these steps to avoid impacts on the deepest areas of peat the development will still be estimated to disturb 65.86ha of blanket bog. In this case SEPA accept that total avoidance of this high-quality habitat is not possible given the specific site requirements for the pumped hydro storage scheme and note that NatureScot is content with the proposed offsetting and restoration proposals. These details will be controlled by condition.
- 7.266 Subject to the adoption of best practice construction techniques, project specific CEMD along with other relevant conditions noted the applicant considers there will be no significant adverse effects on soils, drainage and the water environment. This is agreed.

Natural Heritage and Protected Species (Including Ornithology)

- 7.267 The site does not form part of any statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation. However, the proposed development boundary is set back from the West Inverness-shire Lochs Special Protection Area (SPA) and site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which overlap, located approximately 5.5km to the southeast of the site meaning the requirements of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) and, for reserved matters, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, apply. Consequently, the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU), acting as competent authority, must undertake a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) prior to determining the application.
- 7.268 The SPA is designated for 2 Annex I breeding species - common scoter (*Melanitta nigra*), a red-listed, vulnerable breeding waterfowl species and black-throated diver (*Gavia arctica*), a breeding diver species in favourable condition. The SPA supports breeding populations of these species considered to be of European importance. Both species

rely on the lochs within the SPA for foraging, nesting, and brood-rearing habitat. Although the proposed development is located outwith the SPA boundary, Loch Fearna supports a pair of common scoter which NatureScot, RSPB and the EIAR identify as part of the SPA metapopulation. The proposed inundation and expansion of Loch Fearna to create the upper reservoir means the scheme will cause permanent loss of Loch Fearna as supporting habitat for the pair. This habitat loss could remove a potential breeding female from a declining SPA-associated population. NatureScot therefore concludes it cannot be ascertained that the proposal will avoid an adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA, specifically with regards to common scoter, and has objected to the application.

7.269 NatureScot also identifies additional impact pathways that would requiring further mitigation, these include:

- Non-physical disturbance and displacement from construction activity and helicopter use;
- Risks to water quality, which may affect aquatic prey species;
- Disturbance from access routes, including the C1144, if used during construction.

To avoid undermining SPA conservation objectives, NatureScot requires:

- A Bird Protection Plan for all works within 750m of the SPA boundary during breeding season;
- A Helicopter Method Statement;
- A completed CEMD, including surface water monitoring and biosecurity measures;
- A Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan targeted at SPA qualifying species.

7.270 Given the nature of the pumped storage hydro scheme, no mitigation measures are available to prevent the total loss of Loch Fearna as a supporting habitat. NatureScot advises that if the application is to be consented, a derogation case under the Habitats Regulations (Regulation 64 and 68) will be required. Potential compensatory measures noted include:

- Restoration of common scoter nesting islands;
- Installation of floating nesting habitats;
- Habitat development at Loch an Staic;
- Supporting a common scoter head-start programme.

7.271 Regulation 68 requires that where proposed developments may have an adverse effect upon the integrity of a European site, they must be carried out (in the absence of alternative solutions) for imperative reasons of over-riding public interest, Scottish Ministers must take appropriate compensatory measures to ensure that the overall coherence of the UK site network is maintained. For the avoidance of doubt, NatureScot has confirmed they have no statutory role in advising on whether the further tests in Regulation 64 and 68 are met, but they are happy to advise on sources of guidance, the impacts of alternative solutions on European sites, and on proposed compensatory measures.

- 7.272 Given West Inverness-shire Lochs SSSI overlaps with the SPA the advice from NatureScot also applies to SSSI and they object to proposed development as it will result in unavoidable adverse effects on natural heritage interests of national importance.
- 7.273 RSPB objected to the application as it does not believe the impacts of the proposed development have been properly assessed and considers that insufficient survey work has been undertaken. NatureScot is the statutory authority with regards to natural heritage and protected species. Whilst there is broad agreement that the proposed development would adversely impact common scoter and it cannot be demonstrated that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA, NatureScot considers that the supporting information provided is appropriate and has not raised any concerns regarding the surveys provided.
- 7.274 In addition to the designated sites in the wider surrounding area, Quoich Spillway SSSI is immediately below the Quoich Dam at the eastern end of Loch Quoich, approximately 1km west/northwest of the proposed powerhouse and marginally within the red line boundary covering the access to the site. The SSSI is notified for a nationally important Moine geological feature and the SSSI is underpinned by the Quoich Spillway Geological Conservation Review (GCR) site. There are natural heritage interests of national importance on the site, but NatureScot confirm these will not be affected by the Proposed development. The proposed widening of C1144 public road is partially within the boundary of the SSSI, however the extent would be minimal, and it should not have a detrimental impact on the Moine feature. There is also the possibility that works may create new exposure, although it is most likely to be on the rising slope side of the road, outside the SSSI and GCR site.
- 7.275 Garry Falls SSSI is located approximately 24km to the east/southeast from the proposed powerhouse. The SSSI is notified for nationally important upland mixed ash woodland and bryophyte assemblage. There are natural heritage interests of national importance on the site, but NatureScot confirm these will not be affected by the proposed development. Whilst the SSSI is located within the extensive red line site boundary at the mouth of River Garry adjacent to Loch Garry, however, no construction work is currently planned within 600m of the SSSI boundary. Therefore, the proposal is unlikely to affect the SSSI.
- 7.276 NatureScot note the site contains areas of peatland. They are generally in agreement with the assessment carried out by the applicant, which indicates that most of the site has been modified and indicators of near natural condition are limited. The site does not appear to contain indicators of a high-quality habitat within the development area, and they advise that predicted impacts could be offset by adequate peatland restoration. Total avoidance of peatland for the proposed development is not possible given the locational constraints associated with pumped storage hydro schemes. The offsetting plan is considered appropriate as there is clear detail as to how restoration areas have been selected with justification of the total area included within this plan. The proposed development has followed the mitigation hierarchy outlined in NatureScot's guidance Advising on peatland, carbon-rich soils and peatland habitats in development management (November 2023).
- 7.277 With regards to the outline PMP, the proposal for the extraction and storage of peat is considered appropriate with no concerns raised by NatureScot, SEPA or Highland

Council's Ecology Team subject to conditions requiring a detailed PMP be submitted should the application be granted consent.

Aquatic/Terrestrial Ecology

- 7.278 EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 11 Aquatic Ecology and Chapter 8 Terrestrial Ecology assessed the impact of the proposed development on these ecological and species interests. Various technical field surveys were carried out including macroinvertebrate surveys, macrophyte surveys, water quality monitoring, fish habitat surveys and fish ecology surveys. Chapter 11 considers the potential effects of the proposed development on aquatic ecology (including fish fauna, fish habitat, macroinvertebrates and macrophytes) during construction and operational periods.
- 7.279 Chapter 11 Aquatic Ecology evaluates potential effects on fish (Arctic charr, Atlantic salmon, brown/ferox trout, European eel), macroinvertebrates, macrophytes and aquatic habitats. Extensive surveys between 2023 and 2024 included electrofishing, eDNA sampling, macroinvertebrate assessments and a combined Loch Quoich/Gearr Garry temperature monitoring programme. Prior to mitigation, significant construction effects were identified for several fish species, particularly relating to water quality and temporary partial drawdown of Loch Quoich. Intake screens, a comprehensive Pollution Prevention Plan (PPP), single-span bridges, robust CEMD measures, and the continuation of temperature and water quality monitoring reduce all residual effects to Minor (Not Significant). Macroinvertebrate and macrophyte communities are similarly expected to remain unaffected at a significant level. This approach is considered acceptable and it is agreed the effects will not be significant.
- 7.280 The defined study area for Ground Water Dependant Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE) extended to cover a 250m buffer from all infrastructure. GWDTE are present within the site with surveys identifying M6 (acid flush/acidic sedge–bog moss flush), M10 (alkaline (base-rich) flush/rich fen flush), M29 (soakaway/wet runnel community/seepage line mire) and W4c (wet birch woodland/swampy birch–Molinia woodland) as highly groundwater-dependent habitats, and M15 (wet heath/cross-leaved heath wet heath) and parts of M25 (purple moor-grass mire/Molinia mire/wet grassy mire) as moderately groundwater-dependent, occurring across the proposed upper reservoir, lower works and the SAR.
- 7.281 The EIAR concludes that none of these habitats noted are sustained by groundwater. Instead, they are supported by surface water processes, including incident rainfall, localised waterlogging and overland flow on low-permeability soils. The EIAR therefore determines that the habitats, while hydrologically sensitive, do not meet SEPA's criteria for true groundwater dependency.
- 7.282 Although groundwater dependency is ruled out, the EIAR recognises the ecological sensitivity of these wetland communities and identifies a series of embedded mitigation measures to ensure that their sustaining hydrological regimes are preserved. Key among these is the requirement to maintain existing surface water flow paths, as these are the primary water sources supporting the identified habitats. To achieve this, the design incorporates permeable access tracks and regular cross-track drainage, ensuring surface water continues to move naturally downslope without being blocked or diverted.

The EIAR confirms that these measures will safeguard both water quantity and water quality in relation to the surface-fed wetlands.

- 7.283 Construction activities near sensitive wetland habitats will be overseen by an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW), who will ensure that drainage measures are correctly implemented and that surface water pathways and water flushes remain intact. The ECoW will also guide micro-siting where necessary to avoid localised hydrological disruption, particularly in areas supporting NVC communities identified as potentially sensitive. The EIAR further confirms that a minimum 10m buffer from all watercourses has been applied wherever practicable, reducing the risk of accidental disturbance to wetland hydrology during construction.
- 7.284 Broader hydrological protection measures embedded in the CEMD will also indirectly safeguard GWDTE. These include wet-weather working protocols, silt and pollution control measures, careful management of watercourse crossings, and restrictions on stockpiling materials near wetlands. Collectively, these measures prevent alterations to surface runoff behaviour, sedimentation or pollution, all of which could adversely affect the sensitive surface-water-fed habitats. The EIAR concludes that, with these design commitments and safeguards in place, there will be no significant adverse effects on GWDTE, and the existing ecological functions of these habitats will be maintained throughout construction and operation. This is agreed.
- 7.285 Chapter 8 assessed the impact of the proposed development on terrestrial ecology which has been informed by desk based and field survey data. Various technical field surveys were carried out detected evidence of protected species including mammals such as otter, pine marten and red squirrel, reptiles such as slow worm, adder and common lizard, amphibians such as common toad, invertebrates such as azure hawker and northern emerald dragonflies and small pearl-bordered fritillary and large heath butterflies.
- 7.286 Beyond peat and potential GWDTE, the proposed development affects a range of upland terrestrial habitats, including blanket bog, wet/dry heath, montane heath, upland flushes, rush-pasture and small areas of wet woodland. These habitats will be directly impacted where infrastructure, dams, inundation areas, tracks and borrow pits are located. While some permanent habitat loss will occur, especially in the upper reservoir area, the EIAR states that impacts will be mitigated through micro-siting, peat/habitat management, hydrology protection measures, and biodiversity enhancement.
- 7.287 Highland Council's Ecology Officer raises no objection to the proposed development subject to extensive ecological conditions being secured. They note that surveys confirmed a mosaic of wet heath, blanket bog, dry heath, woodland and aquatic habitats, with around 180ha of permanent habitat loss, including 62.68ha of peatland, some of which may be of national importance. Whilst protected mammals such as otter, pine marten and red squirrel are present, no resting sites were found and risks are mainly construction-related. They also noted that priority invertebrates (including small pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly and bilberry bumblebee), high-value dragonfly habitat (including azure hawker) along with incidental sightings of reptiles and amphibians recorded across the site, all of which will be affected through habitat loss, particularly for wetland-dependent species. The Ecology Officer is satisfied the scheme can meet NPF4 Policy 3 Biodiversity with the wider enhancement package proposed.

- 7.288 BugLife objected to the application as it does not believe the impacts of the proposed development have been properly assessed and considers that insufficient survey work has been undertaken. NatureScot is the statutory authority with regards to natural heritage and protected species. Along with Highland Council's Ecology Officer, they consider that the supporting information provided, and mitigation proposed, is appropriate and has not raised any concerns regarding the surveys provided.
- 7.289 It is considered the continued best practice and appropriate mitigation measures noted will minimise the impact of the proposed development on both aquatic and terrestrial ecology and can be controlled by appropriate conditions should the application be granted consent.

Habitat Loss

- 7.290 Whilst the application has applied embedded and best practice mitigation to minimise impacts where possible along with adherence to relevant legislation, the proposed development will still result in loss of habitat. The EIAR notes the proposed development will result in the permanent loss of 52.42ha of upland heath (M15) and temporary loss of 30.16ha, along with the permanent loss of 65.86ha of blanket bog (M17 and M25) and the temporary loss of 18.36ha of blanket bog (M17 and M25), in addition to the loss of an unknown quantity of bog pools (M1 and M3). The EIAR states these are "generally isolated, small, or occurring as a component of other NVC habitats" (Volume 1 Chapter 8, Terrestrial Ecology, page 40). In addition, Volume 4 Appendix 8.1A PSH NVC Survey, Section 2.3 notes that "given the size of the site and minimum mapping unit utilised, smaller features such as springs or flushes and bog pools may have been missed". The assessment of loss is therefore likely to be an underestimate.
- 7.291 M15 and M25 within the survey area are located on thinner peats and are therefore peatland communities that are unlikely to raise issues of national interest according to NatureScot's peatland guidance. M17 is a community where impacts have the potential to raise issues of national interest. Loss of M17 totals 62.68ha. NatureScot peatland guidance states that M1 and M3 are priority peatland communities that should be completely avoided.
- 7.292 Whilst the loss of the habitats above is noted NatureScot, SEPA and Highland Council's Ecology Officer have no objections subject to the conditions noted, should the application be granted consent.

Biodiversity Enhancement

- 7.293 Following concerns raised by NatureScot, particularly with regards to the detrimental impact on WLA 18, the applicant submitted a number of increased and improved biodiversity enhancement beyond the initial Outline Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (OBEMP) measures noted within the Additional Information Report (noted in Section 1.3). These include extensive peatland restoration, native woodland restoration and planting, deer management measures, aquatic habitat measures, eradication of invasive non-native species and additional landform screening to safeguard birds.
- 7.294 The peatland restoration proposed would be substantial, increasing from the initial 640ha proposed to 891ha, all within WLA 18. This represents mitigation at a 10:1 ratio for the 63ha of blanket bog affected by the scheme, plus a 414% biodiversity net gain

uplift. Locations proposed include: Glengarry Forest and Clunes, including montane peatland (both owned by Forestry and Land Scotland), West Glenquoich Estate, East Glenquoich Estate and land above Loch Quoich (owned by SSE).

- 7.295 The native woodland restoration and planting proposed would also be substantial, increasing from the initial 200ha proposed to 460ha, of which 255ha is within WLA 18. Measures include the restoration of degraded Caledonian pinewood with removal of exotic conifers, new planting to improve habitat connectivity (e.g., east of Poulary), major riparian woodland creation along the Gearr Garry, River Kingie, River Garry and tributaries, woodland expansion around Loch Quoich, Coire Mheil, and north of the C1144, helping to screen and mitigate the impact of Skye transmission pylons to some extent.
- 7.296 Deer management measures would cover an area of approximately 12,000ha which was not included within the OBEMP. The management measures proposed would reduce deer density in Glengarry Forest from 5 deer per km² to 2 deer per km² across the 12,000ha. Mitigation would include the repair and construction of approximately 23km of strategic fencing to make deer exclusion effective. Further reductions in deer numbers on private estates, where required, are proposed to allow woodland and peat restoration to succeed.
- 7.297 NatureScot disagrees with the conclusions of the submitted Deer Management Assessment (EIAR Volume 4: Appendix 8.7.1.1) noting the likely deer densities and subsequent impacts, outwith Glengarry Forest, are potentially too high for peatland restoration.
- 7.298 Aquatic habitat improvements are proposed across River Kingie, Gearr Garry, and River Garry. The proposed measures would deliver benefits to Atlantic salmon, brown trout, Arctic charr, invertebrates and improve ecosystem processes. The applicant outlines the key improvements would include Support to the Upper Garry Salmon Restoration Project, including improved smolt trapping and trucking and sediment augmentation in the lower River Garry, to restore degraded salmon spawning habitat, using gravel/cobble inputs and optional large wood structures. The installation of large wood structures in the River Kingie would create channel complexity, gravel retention, fish refuge and improved invertebrate habitat. Riparian planting would also enhance water quality, shading and food inputs.
- 7.299 Invasive non-native species would be eradicated with the removal of approximately 100ha of rhododendron along the north shore of Loch Quoich and within Coire Peitireach and Coire Dubh. Additionally, exotic conifers within Caledonian pine restoration areas will be removed along with the control of invasive fauna (such as wild boar, feral pigs and mink) if deemed beneficial to scoter or other priority species.
- 7.300 The applicant notes that all landowner agreements are already secured, enabling full delivery of enhancements. They state works could begin immediately after the final investment decision FID and be completed by the end of construction.
- 7.301 The compensation measures noted can be controlled through the implementation of a finalised BEMP, conditioned should the application be granted consent. Additionally, a legal agreement would be required for any off-site enhancement measures between parties.

- 7.302 Following the additional mitigation and enhancement measures NatureScot removed their initial objection in relation to WLQ1 of the Kinloch Hourn–Knoydart–Morar Wild Land Area. In reaching their position, they have applied their statutory balancing duties, considering the project’s strategic role in supporting national renewable energy goals and the environmental benefits of the proposed BEMP. However, whilst the wider benefits are acknowledged by NatureScot, they are not considered capable of mitigating the significant landscape and wild land impacts. Consequently, NatureScot’s position remains a conditioned objection, given the detrimental impact to WLQ1 in particular, with the caveat that without the proposed enhancement package, their assessment would be less favourable.
- 7.303 The development would noticeably diminish key Wild Land Qualities, particularly WLQ1, which embodies the area’s sense of naturalness, ruggedness, remoteness and awe. As a result, the northern part of WLA 18 would no longer contribute meaningfully to the wider wild land character, and the scheme would add to existing cumulative erosion of these qualities in the north-eastern portion of the WLA.
- 7.304 In reaching its position, NatureScot has applied its statutory balancing duties, considering the project’s strategic role in supporting national renewable energy goals and the environmental benefits of the proposed Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan. However, while these wider benefits are acknowledged, they are not considered capable of mitigating the significant landscape and wild land impacts. Consequently, NatureScot’s position remains a conditioned objection, with the caveat that without the proposed enhancement package, their assessment would be less favourable.
- 7.305 Highland Council’s Ecology Officer and Forestry Officer have not provided further comments with regards to the improved package of enhancement and mitigation measures. However, neither objected to the initial proposed measures subject to the conditions noted.
- 7.306 Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council, Mountaineering Scotland, along with a number of representations all objected to the proposed development with regards to the negative impact on Kinloch Hourn–Knoydart–Morar WLA and the updated package of measures referenced has not changed their views.

Forestry

- 7.307 EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 9 Forestry has undertaken an assessment of the woodland that is within the site boundary of the proposed development to evaluate the potential effects on trees and woodland and recommend appropriate mitigation where adverse effects are unavoidable.
- 7.308 Woodland within the development area includes native birch and Scots pine woodlands, areas recorded in the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) as Ancient Semi-Natural Origin (ASNO1750 / ASNO1860), and areas of Caledonian pinewood listed in the Caledonian Pinewood Inventory, alongside blocks of productive conifer plantation woodland. The EIAR identifies total permanent woodland loss of 6.98ha of ancient woodland and PAWS and 18.81ha of productive conifer woodland, arising primarily from SAR widening, new road construction through Kingie Estate Forest, and the Pouлары Quarry extension.

- 7.309 Whilst the Forestry Officer acknowledges that designated Ancient Woodland is irreplaceable, with the proposed SAR crossing several areas of ASNO woodland and native pinewood, the applicant has provided appropriate baseline woodland survey information (Appendix 9.1) and a clear breakdown of felling requirements. As such, they accept that Ancient Woodland loss is unavoidable in some locations, but the applicant has sought to minimise impacts through route selection and micro-siting.
- 7.310 Whilst acknowledging that designated Ancient Woodland is irreplaceable, they considered the applicant's initial proposed mitigation and compensatory planting of at least 100ha of new native woodland, along with 18.81ha of productive conifer, to be acceptable, provided it is clearly distinguished from wider biodiversity enhancements. Additional mitigation measures, which substantially increase native woodland restoration and planting to cover a total of 460ha, along with deer-proof enclosures, riparian improvements, rhododendron removal and of non-native conifers in Caledonian Pinewood areas taken away are welcomed. They emphasised the need for a clear distinction between compensatory planting (required under CoWR) and biodiversity enhancement woodland referred to in the OBEMP.
- 7.311 The Council's Forestry Officer raised no objection, subject to the conditions noted, and welcomes the substantial compensatory planting along with the additional mitigation measures proposed.

Built and Cultural Heritage

- 7.312 EIAR Volume 1 Chapter 18 Cultural Heritage has been scoped out of the EIA with only limited commentary in the chapter confirming that this was agreed following preapplication advice (23/01810/PREMAJ) and the Scoping response (24/01204/SCOP).
- 7.313 No historic environment assets are recorded within the red line site boundary although several nationally important heritage sites exist in the wider landscape, such as Category B Listed Quoich Dam, Category C Listed Tomdoun Church, and Scheduled Monuments in the wider surrounding area. Site surveys found no archaeological features, and the likelihood of undiscovered remains within the development boundary is considered very low. However, good practice measures are recommended, and these should include a protocol in the event of the discovery of previously unrecorded assets and the inclusion of cultural heritage issues within the CEMP which can be controlled by condition should the application be granted consent.
- 7.314 The findings within Chapter 18 Cultural Heritage are agreed with no built heritage concerns being raised by the Council's Historic Environment Team or Historic Environment Scotland subject to the condition noted.

Other Material Considerations

- 7.315 Representations raise concerns that the associated grid connection and substation have not been included as part of the pumped storage hydro application. Whilst it is correct that a grid connection from the Fearna pumped storage hydro scheme powerhouse would be required to connect the proposed development to the national electricity grid, this will be subject to a separate consenting process, with SSEN Transmission as the applicant, for regulatory reasons. If the proposed development is consented, its

connecting associated infrastructure is subject to a separate consenting process with that proposal requiring assessment on its own merit, having regard to any potential in combination cumulative effects. Previous public consultation has been undertaken by SSEN with regards to outline route corridors in May 2025 and the applicant has been proactively engaging with them throughout the lifespan of this scheme with the Scoping application for the associated grid connection to be submitted by SSEN in the coming months.

- 7.316 The associated grid connection for this scheme, along with other renewable energy developments, was previously considered by the Planning Authority as a separate application, to be assessed on its own merits and was not a material planning consideration. This previous position has been challenged by the decision on *Raeshaw Wind Farms Ltd v Scottish Ministers* [2026] CSIH 2010. In that case, the Court held that the Reporter erred in law by failing to undertake the necessary fact-specific evaluative exercise as to whether the wind farm and its required grid connection formed a single EIA “project”, and by proceeding on the basis that it was sufficient that the grid connection did not form part of the application and could be considered later through a separate consenting process. The Court also made clear that the question is not dependent on any intention to avoid EIA, but on whether, in substance, what is proposed should be treated as a single project for environmental assessment purposes. Relevant considerations include the non-exhaustive factors identified in *R (Wingfield) v Canterbury City Council* [2020] JPL 154, including functional interdependence and whether the deferred works are properly to be regarded as a stand-alone project, alongside consideration of the true nature and scope of the project and the degree of connection between its component parts
- 7.317 Whilst EIAR Volume 1, Chapter 2: Proposed Development does mention the required grid connection, it only briefly confirms that the developer has an accepted grid offer and that the switchyard will be constructed as part of this application to facilitate the separate grid connection application. The actual grid connection infrastructure, including routes, towers, cables, substations and related works, is not part of this application and is not assessed in the EIAR. It is considered that the proposed development and its required grid connection are functionally interdependent, in that the scheme could not operate for its intended purpose without connection to the grid. It is considered that the assessment of the project for EIA purposes cannot be determined solely by the way in which the current application has been framed so as to exclude the off-site grid connection infrastructure but requires consideration of the true nature and scope of the project in substance. In that regard, the fact that the grid connection infrastructure may come forward under a separate consenting process does not, in itself, resolve whether the wider scheme has been properly assessed for EIA purposes. It is further noted that the energy and operational benefits relied upon in support of the proposed application depend upon a grid connection being delivered. It is therefore considered that the grid connection is an essential component of the wider scheme, and that its omission from the application and EIAR gives rise to a legitimate concern as to whether the full environmental effects of the project have been assessed. For that reason, this matter has been taken into account in the Council’s proposed objection to the application. However, Scottish Ministers are the decision-maker, and it is ultimately a matter for them to determine, in light of *Raeshaw*, whether the proposed development and its required grid connection constitute a single project for EIA purposes and whether the assessment before them is legally adequate.

- 7.318 A representation questioned whether pumped storage hydro development can be considered to produce renewable energy. The proposed development would operate in two modes. In the “generating” mode the proposed development would produce electricity by releasing water from the upper reservoir through the reversible pump turbines and into the lower reservoir. In the “pumping” mode electricity would be imported from the grid to pump water through the reversible pump turbines from the lower reservoir up to the upper reservoir. Pumped hydro storage schemes are essentially large-scale batteries. In the “generating” mode they can be considered to produce renewable energy as the electricity generated by releasing water from the upper reservoir to the lower reservoir drives turbines in tunnels. Power is required to pump water from the lower reservoir to the upper reservoir in the “pumping mode” and in that sense the proposed development is not a renewable energy scheme in the same way as a wind farm, for example. It is however, described as “a reliable source of renewable electricity” in the Scottish Government’s Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023) along with the strong support in principle from NPF4. It is noted this technology will play an increasingly important role in the transition to net zero, providing flexibility to the grid and helping to secure a resilient and secure energy supply.
- 7.319 In terms of the design life of the facility, whilst the applicant notes that the proposal could feasibly remain operational indefinitely if maintained appropriately, safeguards need to be put in place to cover the proposed development ceasing operation with the usual decommissioning and restoration requirements secured. If the decision is made to decommission the pumped hydro storage scheme, moveable infrastructure would be removed, underground tunnels would be sealed, generation plant machinery would be removed. Where removal of infrastructure would result in more damage than leaving in place, it would be left in-situ, for example the dams, with disturbed ground reinstated, unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority. It is important to ensure that, should the application be granted consent, a condition will be required to deliver a draft Decommissioning and Restoration Plan (DRP) for approval prior to the commencement of any development and ensure an appropriate financial bond is put in place to secure these works. The finalised DRP would be expected to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with SEPA and NatureScot no later than 12 months prior to the final decommissioning of the site. The detailed DRP would then be implemented within 18 months of the final decommissioning of the development, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.
- 7.320 Given the complexity of national 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, should the application be granted consent.
- 7.321 There are no other material considerations.

Non-Material Considerations

- 7.322 Representations raise concerns that there is an over-provision of renewable energy development within the wider Highland region. Whilst there are various renewable

projects in the wider surrounding area, all such proposals require assessment on their own merits and are rightly subject of individual applications. NPF4 makes clear that grid capacity should also not constrain renewable development.

7.323 Representations raise concerns that there was a lack of information regarding the proposed package of community benefits. Community benefit is voluntary and holds no weight in the planning determination process as explained in the Socio-economics section of this report.

7.324 There are no other non-material considerations.

8. MATTERS TO BE SECURED BY LEGAL AGREEMENT

8.1 If the application is granted consent the following matters are to be secured by legal agreement. The Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance (DCSG) was adopted in November 2018. This guidance sets out the Council's approach to mitigating the impacts of development on services and infrastructure by seeking fair and realistic developer contributions to the delivery of such facilities. Energy developments are treated as industrial developments within the DCSG. Although The Highland Council is only a consultee in this case, the DCSG forms part of the approved Development Plan and therefore Scottish Ministers should apply its terms.

8.2 Owing to the development being served by the C1144 public road, contributions are required to the local road network.

8.3 In relation to public art, physical direct provision on, or in close proximity to the site would be appropriate, or elsewhere across the estate with provision of resting / sheltered areas at vantage points along affected walking routes, with consideration given to the select provision of interpretation boards if deemed appropriate. Scope for public art provision is therefore secured by condition, with scope for alternative form of public art to be explored further in consultation with interested parties, including the Community Liaison Group.

8.4 In terms of the delivery of biodiversity and enhancement measures, given the scale of the mitigation measures proposed along with a mix of land ownership in the wider surrounding area it is currently unclear if financial contributions towards off-site measures are required. Therefore, these measures may be required to be secured by legal agreement with the parties involved should consent be granted.

8.5 A wear and tear agreement for the impact on the local road network and a decommissioning and restoration financial guarantee can be secured by condition. This will be separate to the contributions required towards the local road network. Therefore, no further legal agreements are required should consent be granted.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The Scottish Government gives considerable commitment to renewable energy and supports the development of pumped storage hydro development where it can operate successfully and are sited appropriately. The project has potential to contribute to addressing the climate emergency through significant additional renewable energy generation. In this regard it is anticipated to contribute an additional 1800MW of installed

capacity and make a meaningful contribution toward addressing climate change on the road to net zero. In addition, the development has potential to bring economic benefits to the area, creating job opportunities and other socio-economic benefits, particularly during the considerable construction phase, reflective of the scale of this national development.

- 9.2 However, as with all applications, a balancing exercise must be undertaken. The benefits of the proposal must be weighed against potential drawbacks and then considered in the round, taking account of the relevant policies of the Development Plan, which includes NPF4, as well as all other material planning considerations.
- 9.3 Notwithstanding the nature and scale of the proposal, there have been a low level of public representations, with 12 objections received by Energy Consents Unit. In addition, a number of objections have been received from non-statutory consultees (BugLife, Mountaineering Scotland and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds). The host community council, Glengarry Community Council and adjacent Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council both object. Statutory consultee NatureScot along with Highland Council's Transport Planning both object with regards to the detrimental impact on common scoter and the qualifying interests of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA and SSSI and the public road network respectively. The external Landscape Architect from Ironside Farrar raised significant concerns in their advice to Highland Council with regards to the detrimental landscape visual impacts of the proposed development. Additionally, Highland Council's Development Plans Team raised concerns that the proposed development is not in overall conformity with the Development Plan.
- 9.4 The proposed development would lie in a remote and mountainous Highland landscape whose scenic grandeur and recreational value is acknowledged by three landscape-related designations. Given the scale of this substantial national scale development significant landscape and visual impacts are expected from pumped storage hydro developments, however, in this case, these are considered to extend beyond a localised range. The applicant has provided a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and its findings are contested. Whilst it is agreed that there will be significant effects on receptors at visualisation locations VL3 – Gleouraich Summit and VL4 – Spidean Mialach Summit into Year 15 of operation it is considered that the applicant has understated various elements of the impacts to receptors using surrounding routes with VL1 - Minor Road Near Proposed Powerhouse Site, VL 2 - Path from Quoich Dam, VL5 – Gairich Summit, VL8 – Sgurr Mhurlagain Summit and VL10 – Sgùrr Mòr will also experience significant effects once operational.
- 9.5 The proposed development would cause significant adverse direct and indirect landscape effects during construction and in long term operation. These would primarily be in the Interlocking Sweeping Peaks - Lochaber LCT, where most of the development footprint and visibility lies, and would be more limited in the Rocky Moorland - Lochaber LCT where direct effects and visibility are much less.
- 9.6 There would also be significant adverse effects on 2 landscape-related designations, Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA and Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA, during both construction and operation. The SLA covers a very extensive area of mountains and coasts and has 9 diverse Special Qualities. While the affected area is a small proportion of the SLA, 3 out of the 9 Special Qualities would be significantly adversely

affected, and this would significantly compromise the integrity of the landscape designation.

- 9.7 The most significant adverse visual effects during both construction and operation would be on hillwalkers using 2 mountain routes accessing the Munros Spidean Mialach and Gleouraich on which the reservoir would lie and Gairich on the south side of Loch Quoich which has views north to the site. For the former, the path accessing Spidean Mialach would be physically diverted, eventually along the Fearna dam. Users of the C1144 public road would also experience significant visual effects during construction and operation, due primarily to the construction of the powerhouse and switching station, but also with intermittent views of the Fearna Dam on the mountain skyline.
- 9.8 It is accepted that the design of the pumped storage hydro scheme has had to balance competing demands, including landscape character and visual amenity considerations; environmental constraints; topography and ground conditions; and technological and operational requirements. However, the scale and position of the proposed reservoir and dams, together with the depth of drawdown, would give them a highly artificial and incongruous appearance in a dramatic and largely undeveloped mountain landscape. This is underlined by the landscape and visual effects and the effects on the special qualities and integrity of the Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA. There is little that could be done to further mitigate the significant adverse effects of this structure, other than substantially reducing its capacity.
- 9.9 As well as the landscape and visual concerns noted, NatureScot objected to the application as the proposed development is likely to have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA and SSSI, particularly with regards to common scoter and black-throated diver. Key issues that raised particular concern included the permanent loss of Loch Fearna as a supporting habitat for common scoter, disturbance, water quality risks, and changes to prey availability. Supporting information provided by the applicant does not demonstrate that there will be no adverse effect on site integrity of the SPA and no viable mitigation exists for the loss of Loch Fearna. Therefore, derogation would be required if Scottish Ministers wish to grant consent for the planning application. Additional mitigation is needed for other impact pathways (such as Bird Protection Plan, Helicopter Method Statement, finalised Construction Environmental Management Document and Biodiversity Enhancement Plan) by condition if Scottish Ministers are minded to grant consent. The impacts on the West Inverness-shire Lochs SSSI mirror those on the SPA.
- 9.10 Additionally, Highland Council's Transport Planning team objected to the application as the proposed development the C1144 public road and feasibility of the works proposed as the route is not considered suitable for the scale or nature of the proposed improvements, given its geography and current condition. The road would require extensive upgrades, likely resulting in significant disruption for residents and road users over an extended period. The prolonged construction period for the proposed development, currently estimated by the applicant at around 7 years, would impose an unreasonable level of disruption on the local community. As a result, Transport Planning anticipates heightened road safety issues, including vehicle-to-vehicle conflicts and risks to non-motorised users. Whilst the applicant has outlined further mitigation measures relating to the C1144 public road through their submission of additional information, including 1km of offline temporary road near Quoich dam, a temporary link to the upper

reservoir track enabling early access along with additional temporary widening east of the dam, the concerns noted by Transport Planning remain.

- 9.11 The application has been assessed against the policies set out in NPF4 and the Development Plan, including Policy 11 – Energy Policy of NPF4 and 67 – Renewable Energy of the Highland wide Local Development Plan. This policy also reflects policy tests of other policies in the plan, for example Policy 28. Whilst the proposal can be considered to benefit from an in-principle support, given the contribution the development would make to towards tackling climate change, this is outweighed by the significant landscape and visual effects, detrimental impact on protected species and the local road network. It is noted that the proposal includes substantial habitat management and restoration measures, which could lead to peatland, forestry and biodiversity enhancement throughout the site and wider surrounding area.
- 9.12 Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act sets out what an applicant shall do in relation of the preservation of amenity. It is considered that the proposal has not had sufficient regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty and the significant detrimental effects cannot be mitigated. This is by virtue of the location, setting and design of the pumped storage hydro scheme, resulting in landscape and visual impacts which cannot be accommodated. This has resulted in a detrimental impact on Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA and the underlying LCTs which make up its special qualities
- 9.13 Additionally, it is considered that the proposal has not had sufficient regard to the desirability of, and failing to reasonably mitigate effects detrimental to, conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, by virtue of the location, setting and design of the pumped storage hydro scheme. This has resulted in a detrimental impact on the qualifying interests of West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA and SSSI, which cannot be mitigated.
- 9.14 A transmission line will be required to connect the development from the new switchyard beside the powerhouse to the national grid. This grid connection will be applied for separately by SSEN Transmission, and its precise form, route and infrastructure are not yet confirmed. As the off-site grid works do not form part of the current application and have not been assessed in the EIAR, it is considered that this raises a substantive issue as to whether the full extent of the project has been assessed for EIA purposes, having regard to the considerations identified in *Raeshaw*.
- 9.15 In light of *Raeshaw Farms Ltd v Scottish Ministers* [2026] CSIH 10, it is considered that the required grid connection is an essential and functionally interdependent part of the wider scheme, given that the development could not operate for its intended purpose without connection to the national grid. On that basis, it is considered that the omission of the grid connection infrastructure from the application and EIAR raises a legitimate concern as to whether the full environmental effects of the project have been assessed, and this forms part of the basis for the Council's proposed objection to the application. However, Scottish Ministers are the decision-maker, and it is ultimately a matter for them to determine whether the proposed development and grid connection together constitute a single project for EIA purposes and whether the assessment before them is legally adequate.

10. IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Resource: If an objection is raised to the proposal, there are significant staffing and financial resource implications associated with a Public Local Inquiry.
- 10.2 Legal: If an objection is raised to the proposal, the application will be subject to a Public Local Inquiry.
- 10.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): Not applicable
- 10.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever: The proposal has the ability to make a meaningful contribution toward the production of renewable energy.
- 10.5 Risk: Not applicable
- 10.6 Gaelic: Not applicable

11. RECOMMENDATION

Action required before consultation response issued to Scottish Ministers: N

- 11.1 It is recommended to **RAISE AN OBJECTION** to the application subject to:
 - A. The Committee granting delegated authority to the Area Planning Manager - South to agree the finished condition wording, with any substantive amendments to be subject to prior consultation with the Chair of the South Planning Applications Committee; and
 - B. **Reasons for Objection**
 - 1. The application does not accord with the provisions of Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 by virtue of not demonstrating sufficient regard to the desirability of, and failing to reasonably mitigate effects detrimental to, conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, by virtue of failing to demonstrate compliance with National Planning Framework 4 Policy 11 (Energy), Highland-wide Local Development Plan Policies 67 (Renewable Energy Developments) and 28 (Sustainable Design) as the development would have a significantly detrimental landscape and visual impact.
 - 2. The proposed development would have significant adverse effects on the Special Qualities of Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel Special Landscape Area and the underlying LCTs which make up its special qualities; and it would have a significant adverse effect on recreational receptors on surrounding routes and upland locations represented by viewpoints VL1 - Minor Road Near Proposed Powerhouse Site, VL 2 - Path from Quoich Dam, VL3 – Gleouraich Summit, VL4 – Spidean Mialach Summit, VL5 – Gairich Summit, VL8 – Sgùrr Mhurlagain Summit, VL10 – Sgùrr Mòr. This is contrary to National Planning Framework 4 Policies 11 (Energy) and 4 (Natural Places) and Highland-wide Local Development Plan Policies 57 (Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage), 61 (Landscape) and 67 (Renewable Energy Developments). Furthermore, the location, siting, scale, massing and design

of the proposed development is considered to be contrary to Highland-wide Local Development Plan Policy 29 (Design Quality and Place Making).

3. The proposed development would have significant adverse effects on West Inverness-shire Lochs Special Protection Area and Site of Special Scientific Interest designated for black-throated diver and common scoter. This is contrary to National Planning Framework 4 Policies 11 (Energy) and 4 (Natural Places), and Highland-wide Local Development Plan Policies 57 (Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage), 58 (Protected Species) and 67 (Renewable Energy Developments).
4. The proposed development would have significant adverse impacts on the local road network, including the C1144, and the mitigation proposed does not adequately address these impacts, contrary to NPF4 Policy 18 (Infrastructure First) and HwLDP Policy 28 (Sustainable Design). None of these concerns are outweighed by the economic benefits of this development or the contribution it will make to the country's net zero targets.
5. The required grid connection is an essential and functionally interdependent element of the proposed development, but the grid connection infrastructure has not been included within the application and has not been assessed in the EIAR. It is therefore considered, having regard to *Raeshaw Farms Ltd v Scottish Ministers* [2026] CSIH 10, that there is insufficient environmental information before the decision-maker to conclude that the true nature and scope of the project, and its likely significant environmental effects, have been lawfully and adequately assessed for EIA purposes.

Signature: Bob Robertson

Designation: (Acting) Planning Manager – South

Author: Roddy Dowell

Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.

Relevant Plans:

Document Type	Document No	Version No	Date Received
Plan 1 – Location Plan	FEA/FC4/001	E1	07.03.2025
Plan 2 – Site Layout Plan (with grid refs.)	FEA/FC4/000	E2	05.12.2025
Plan 3 – Site Layout Plan	FEA/FC4/002	E2	05.12.2025
Plan 4 – Fearn Dam General Arrangement	FEA/FC4/300	E2	05.12.2025
Plan 5 - Coire Dubh Dam General Arrangement	FEA/FC4/350	E2	05.12.2025
Plan 6 – Upper Control Works General Arrangement	FEA/FC4/600	E2	05.12.2025
Plan 7 – Lower Quoich Reservoir Plan	FEA/FC4/200	E2	05.12.2025
Plan 8 – Power House and Lower Control Works General Arrangement	FEA/FC4/700	E2	05.12.2025
Plan 9 – Access Tunnel General Arrangement	FEA/FC4/585	E1	07.03.2025
Plan 10 – Powerhouse Cross Section	FEA/FC4/430	E2	05.12.2025

Plan 11 – Site Compound SC1 Plan	FEA/FC4/941	E1	07.03.2025
Plan 12 – Site Compound SC3	FEA/FC4/950	E1	07.03.2025
Plan 13 – Borrow Pit BP1 Plan	FEA/FC4/1000	E2	05.12.2025
Plan 14 – Borrow Pit BP1 Cross Section	FEA/FC4/1001	E2	05.12.2025
Plan 15 – Borrow Pit BP2 Plan	FEA/FC4/1010	E2	05.12.2025
Plan 16 – Borrow Pit BP2 Cross Section	FEA/FC4/1011	E2	05.12.2025
Plan 17 - Borrow Pit BP3 Plan	FEA/FC4/1020	E2	05.12.2025
Plan 18 – Borrow Pit BP3 Cross Section	FEA/FC4/1021	E2	05.12.2025
Plan 19 – Poulary East Borrow Pit	FEA/FC4/1025	E1	07.03.2025
Plan 20 – Glen Kingie Borrow Pit	FEA/FC4/1030	E1	07.03.2025
Plan 21 – Kingie Estate Borrow Pit	FEA/FC4/1035	E1	07.03.2025

Appendix 2 – Development Plan and Other Material Policy Considerations

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (2023)

- A3.1 The NPF4 policies of most relevance to this proposal include
- National Development 2 (NAD2) – Pumped Hydro Storage
 - National Development 3 (NAD3) Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure
 - 1 - Tackling the climate and nature crisis.
 - 2 - Climate mitigation and adaptation
 - 3 - Biodiversity
 - 4 - Natural places
 - 5 - Soils
 - 6 - Forestry, Woodland and Trees
 - 7 - Historic assets and places
 - 11 - Energy
 - 12 - Zero waste
 - 13 - Sustainable transport
 - 18 - Infrastructure first
 - 20 - Blue and green infrastructure
 - 22 - Flood risk and water management
 - 23 - Health and safety
 - 25 - Community wealth benefits
 - 26 - Business and industry
 - 29 - Rural development
 - 33 - Minerals

Highland Wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP) (2012)

- A3.2
- 28 - Sustainable Design
 - 29 - Design Quality and Place-making
 - 30 - Physical Constraints
 - 31 - Developer Contributions
 - 36 - Wider Countryside
 - 51 - Trees and Development
 - 52 - Principle of Development in Woodland

- 53 - Minerals
- 55 - Peat and Soils
- 56 - Travel
- 57 - Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
- 58 - Protected Species
- 59 - Other important Species
- 60 - Other Importance Habitats
- 61 - Landscape
- 62 - Geodiversity
- 63 - Water Environment
- 64 - Flood Risk
- 65 – Waste Water Treatment
- 66 - Surface Water Drainage
- 67 - Renewable Energy Developments
- 69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure
- 72 - Pollution
- 73 - Air Quality
- 74 - Green Networks
- 77 - Public Access
- 78 - Long Distance Routes

West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (WestPlan) (2019)

- A3.3 The area plan's focus is mainly on regional and settlement strategies and identifying specific site allocations.

Other Highland Council Supplementary Guidance

- A3.4
- Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance (May 2024)
 - Developer Contributions (Mar 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)
 - Sustainable Design Guide (Jan 2013)

- Trees, Woodland and Development (Jan 2013)
- Special Landscape Area Citations (Jun 2011)
- Highland Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidelines (May 2006)

OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A3.5 Apart from the components of the approved development plan outlined above, whilst there are no notified nor validated Local Place Plans for the proposed site there is a notified Local Place Plan nearby whose preparation is being led by Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council. The Local Place Plan will define collective community aspirations which should be useful for the applicant, consultees and Scottish Government in assessing and addressing community benefit and wealth building issues.

Emerging Highland Council Development Plan Documents and Planning Guidance

A3.6 The Highland-wide Local Development Plan is currently under review and is at Main Issues Report Stage. It is anticipated the Proposed Plan will be published following publication of secondary legislation post National Planning Framework 4.

A3.7 In addition, the Council has further advice on delivery of major developments in a number of documents. This includes Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects (Aug 2010) and The Highland Council Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments (Jul 2016).

Other National Guidance

- A3.8
- 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)
 - 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)
 - Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape, SNH (2017)
 - Assessing Impacts on Wild Land Areas, Technical Guidance, NatureScot (2020)
 - Wind Farm Developments on Peat Lands, Scottish Government (2011)
 - Historic Environment Policy for Scotland, HES (2019)

- PAN 1/2011 - Planning and Noise (2011)
- PAN 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (2008)
- Circular 1/2017: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (2017)

Appendix 3 - Compliance with the Development Plan / Other Planning Policy

National Policy

- A4.1 NPF 4 forms part of the Development Plan and was adopted in February 2023. It comprises three parts:
- Part 1 – sets out an overarching spatial strategy for Scotland in the future. This includes spatial principles, national and regional spatial priorities, and action areas;
 - Part 2 – sets out policies for the development and use of land to be applied in the preparation of local development plans; local place plans; masterplans and briefs; and for determining the range of planning consents. This part of the document should be taken as a whole in that all relevant policies should be applied to each application; and
 - Part 3 – provides a series of annexes that give the rationale for the strategies and policies of NPF4, it outlines how the document should be used, and sets out how the Scottish Government will implement the strategies and policies.
- A4.2 **Part 1 - the Spatial Strategy** explains the unprecedented national challenges and need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to future impacts of climate change. It sets out that that Scotland's environment is a national asset which supports the nation's economy, identity, health and wellbeing and explains that choices need to be made on sustainable use of natural assets in a way which benefits communities. The spatial strategy reflects legislation in setting out decisions required in the long-term public interest. However, in doing so it is clear that the right choices about where development should be located need to be made to ensure clarity over the types of infrastructure provided and the assets that should be protected to ensure they continue to benefit future generations. The Spatial Priorities support the planning and delivery of sustainable places to reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity; liveable places for better and healthier lives; and productive places where there is a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.
- A4.3 At the national level, NPF4 considers that pumped hydro storage along with 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.
- A4.4 The proposed development is of national importance for the delivery of the national Spatial Strategy, whereby in principle support for this type of development is established. The proposed development constitutes NPF4 National Development 2 - Pumped Hydro Storage. Additionally, as the proposed development would be capable of generating over 50MW, it is of a type and scale

that constitutes NPF4 National Development 3 - Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure.

- A4.5 **Part 2 – Policies: NPF4 Policies 1, 2, and 3** now apply to all development proposals Scotland-wide, which means that significant weight must be given to the global climate and nature crises when considering all development proposals, as required by NPF4 Policy 1. To that end, development proposals must be sited and designed to minimise lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions as far as is practicably possible in accordance with NPF4 Policy 2, while contributing to the enhancement of biodiversity, as required by NPF4 Policy 3.
- A4.6 NPF4 Policy 3 Biodiversity intends to protect biodiversity, reverse biodiversity loss, deliver positive effects and strengthen nature networks. Under NPF4’s policy emphasis on biodiversity, all forms of development are required to include appropriate measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity proportionate to the nature and scale of development. The requirement to deliver biodiversity enhancement is a new duty.
- A4.7 Highland Council’s Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance was adopted in 2024 and is a material consideration. It is aimed at developers, agents, architects and their consultants. The guidance explains the approach that is required by the Highland Council to deliver biodiversity conservation, restoration and enhancement through the planning system. This guidance has been prepared to support the application of the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and is intended to be used in conjunction with relevant national and local policy and planning guidance. Scottish Government has published draft biodiversity planning guidance setting out the Scottish Ministers’ expectations for implementing NPF4 policies which support the cross-cutting NPF4 outcome “improving biodiversity”.
- A4.8 In September 2023, the Scottish Government released independent research conducted by SRUC on “Approaches to Measuring Biodiversity in Scotland”. The report’s findings and recommendations propose practical steps for achieving a consistent, cross-government approach to measuring biodiversity at the site level. Specifically targeting the planning sector, NatureScot has initiated efforts to create an adapted Page 4 of 9 biodiversity metric tailored for supporting the implementation of Policy 3b in National Planning Framework 4. This new tool aims to assist developers and planning authorities in evaluating the biodiversity enhancements resulting from developments. It will be applicable to major development projects, aligning with the goals of NPF4. While based on a metric utilised in England, it will be refined to suit Scotland’s requirements.
- A4.9 The design of the proposed development has sought to implement the NPF4 Mitigation Hierarchy with steps taken for avoidance and minimisation, prior to restoration and offsetting. It is noted that the applicant’s initial Outline Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan (OBEMP) has been substantially improved upon with the measures noted within the Additional Information Report (noted in Section 1.3). This proposes measures that will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity including nature networks. The sufficiency of the avoidance and minimisation, along with the detail of the restoration and offsetting proposals, together with other enhancement

measures, whilst welcomed, are not considered to diminish the significant landscape and visual concerns that have been raised.

- A4.10 The proposed ecological compensation and enhancement measures include:
- Peatland restoration extending to at least 891ha;
 - Native woodland restoration and planting increased extending to at least 460ha;
 - Deer management measures across a 12,000ha area, reduction in deer density in Glengarry Forest from 5 to 2 deer per km² and approximately 23km of deer exclusion fencing;
 - Aquatic habitat improvements across River Kingie, Gearr Garry and River Garry;
 - A deer enclosure area (Appendix 8.6) extending to approximately 1,500ha which would be fenced off from deer to provide areas of regeneration and encourage the restoration of native woodland;
 - Invasive non-native species control through the removal of approximately 100ha of rhododendron, removal of exotic conifers within Caledonian pine restoration areas and invasive animal species.
- A4.11 Complementing those policies is NPF4 Policy 4 Natural Places, which sets out that development proposals by virtue of type, location, or scale that have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment will not be supported. The policy goes on to clarify what that means for different designations. It sets out that proposals with likely significant effects on European sites (SACs or SPAs) require Appropriate Assessment of the implications for the conservation objectives, and that development proposals that will affect a National Park, NSA or SSSI will only be supported where:
- i. The objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised; or
 - ii. Any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.
- A4.12 It is considered the proposal is not in overall conformity with NPF4 Policy 4, particularly with regards to 4b) and 4c), as it would have significant adverse effects on West Inverness-shire Lochs SPA and SSSI designated for black-throated diver and common scoter. As such, an Appropriate Assessment is required.
- A4.13 Similarly, sites designated in Development Plans for local nature conservation or Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) are protected in NPF4 Policy 4 unless the development will result in significantly adverse effects on its qualities or its integrity, or these effects are clearly outweighed by social, environmental, or economic benefits of at least local importance. The most significant policy change for Natural Places brought about by NPF Policy 4 is with regard Wild Land Areas, which states that renewable energy developments that support national targets will be supported in Wild Land Areas (WLA) and that buffer

zones around WLAs will not be applied, so that effects of development out with WLAs will not be a significant consideration.

- A4.14 It is considered the proposal is not in overall conformity with NPF4 Policy 4, particularly with regards to 4d), as it would have significant adverse effects on Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA and Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA.
- A4.15 In terms of Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA, whilst not a reason for objection, the development would noticeably diminish WLQ1, which embodies the area's sense of naturalness, ruggedness, remoteness and awe. As a result, the northern part of the WLA would no longer contribute meaningfully to the wider wild land character, and the scheme would add to existing cumulative erosion of these qualities in the northeastern portion of the WLA.
- A4.16 In terms of Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA, it is considered that 3 out of the 9 SQs would be significantly adversely affected by the development and that this would significantly compromise the integrity of the SLA.
- A4.17 Policy 6 aims to protect and expand forests, woodland and trees with significant protection offered to Ancient Woodland with a presumption against woodland removal without appropriate compensatory planting. NPF4 Policy 6 b) notes that "Development proposals will not be supported where they will result in: i. Any loss of ancient woodlands, ancient and veteran trees, or adverse impact on their ecological condition; ii. Adverse impacts on native woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees of high biodiversity value... iii. Fragmenting or severing woodland habitats, unless appropriate mitigation measures are identified and implemented in line with the mitigation hierarchy." NPF4 Policy 6 c) notes that "Development proposals involving woodland removal will only be supported where they will achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits in accordance with relevant Scottish Government policy on woodland removal. Where woodland is removed, compensatory planting will most likely be expected to be delivered". Whilst the proposal will result in the loss of 6.98ha of designated Ancient Woodland and 18.81ha of productive conifer, and acknowledging that designated Ancient Woodland is irreplaceable, it is considered the proposal is generally in overall conformity with NPF4 Policy 6 given the significant compensatory scheme of at least 460ha of native woodland restoration and planting.
- A4.18 Policy 11 intent is 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 and emerging low-carbon and zero emissions technologies including hydrogen and carbon capture utilisation and storage (CCUS)". It specifies that the principle of all forms of renewable, low-carbon, and zero emission technologies is supported (with the exception of wind farm proposals located in National Parks or National Scenic Areas) including enabling works, such as grid transmission and distribution infrastructure' which encompasses this application.
- A4.19 It states that development proposals should 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. The policy goes on to say that significant weight will be placed on the contribution of the proposal to renewable energy generation targets and on greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, while identifying impacts, including cumulative impacts, that must be suitably addressed and mitigated against. Policy 11e) i. to xiii. sets out the criteria against which applications must be assessed.

- A4.20 This includes a broad range of matters similar those to be assessed under HwLDP Policy 67 including landscape and visual impacts. It advises that where impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied such effects will generally be considered acceptable. While the adopted NPF4 reflects a stronger presumption in favour of all national scale energy developments, judgment is still required at the project level to ensure proposals do not have unacceptable landscape and visual impacts even if the contribution to national renewable energy targets is considerable.
- A4.21 On that point it is noted that both legislation and planning law indicate that where there may be incompatibility between NPF4 and the Local Development Plan (LDP) (HwLDP, WestPlan and Highland Council Supplementary Guidance) published prior to NPF4, then the more recent document shall prevail. Notwithstanding however, in instances of incompatibility, this requirement may not eliminate the provisions of the LDP in their entirety whilst these documents remain an extant part of the adopted Development Plan. That means that the Council may wish to still give considerable weight to the provisions of its LDP over national policies where there is strong justification for doing so, such as where the Council feels that LDP policy is better equipped to respond to local matters of importance or site-specific conditions for example.
- A4.22 It is considered the proposal is not in overall conformity with NPF4 Policy 11., particularly with regards to 11 e) ii. and e) vi. requires the proposed development project design and mitigation will demonstrate how the following impacts are addressed:
- Significant landscape and visual impacts, recognising that such impacts are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy. Where impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable;
 - Impacts on road traffic and on adjacent trunk roads, including during construction;
- A4.23 The proposal will have significant adverse landscape and visual impacts on Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA and Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA, although as noted, the impact to the WLA is not noted as a reason for objection. It is considered that the landscape and visual impacts are not sufficiently contained and will extend beyond the localised area, as demonstrated by the significant adverse effects experienced by receptors at viewpoints VL8 – Sgùrr Mhurlagain Summit and VL10 - Sgùrr Mòr at 8.6km and 9.14km from the proposed development, for example. In terms of design mitigation measures available that could potentially reduce the significant landscape and visual effects, given the nature of the proposed development, location and setting there

is little that could be done to further alleviate the significant adverse effects of this structure, other than substantially reducing its capacity.

- A4.24 Additionally, the proposal will have significant adverse impact on the public road given the C1144 route is not considered suitable for the scale or nature of the proposed improvements given its geography and current condition. The road would require extensive upgrades, likely resulting in significant disruption for residents and road users over an extended 7-year construction period which is considered to impose an unreasonable level of disruption on the local community.
- A4.25 Given the nature of pumped hydro storage, the proposed development will have a significant impact on hydrology, the water environment and flood risk. However, various mitigation measures will minimise any significant adverse effects.
- A4.26 Additionally, whilst the generality of HwLDP's topic policies are superseded by those in NPF4 HwLDP policies that offer greater detail than NPF4 or that are tailored to Highland circumstance (and are not wholly incompatible with NPF4) are still relevant and may be applicable. In particular, Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage, Policy 61 – Landscape and Policy 67 Renewable Energy given the location within Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA and Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA and with the proposed development being pumped hydro storage.
- A4.27 It is considered the proposal is not in overall conformity with Policy 57, Policy 61 and Policy 67 of HwLDP. Policy 57 requires all development proposals be assessed taking into account the level of importance and type of heritage features, the form and scale of the development, and any impact on the feature and its setting. The following criteria will also apply:
- For features of local/regional importance development will be allowed if it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that they will not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource; and
 - For features of national importance development will be allowed if it can be shown not to compromise the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource. Where there may be any significant adverse effects, these must be clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance. It must also be shown that the development will support communities in fragile areas who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services.
 - For features of international importance developments likely to have a significant effect on a site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site for nature conservation will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment. Where it is unable to ascertain that a proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of a site, it will only allow development if there is no alternative solution and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. Where a priority habitat or species (as defined in Annex 1 of the Habitats

Directive) would be affected, development in such circumstances will only be allowed if the reasons for overriding public interest relate to human health, public safety, beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, or other reasons subject to the opinion of the European Commission (via Scottish Ministers). Where unable to ascertain that a proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of a site, the proposal will not be in accordance with the development plan within the meaning of Section 25 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

A4.28 In terms of Policy 67, whilst the proposed development would contribute towards meeting renewable energy generation targets and generally have a positive effect on the local and national economy the Council has to be satisfied that it is located, sited and designed not to be significantly detrimental overall, either individually or cumulatively with other developments, having regard in particular to any significant effects on the following:

- Natural, built and cultural heritage features;
- Species and habitat;
- Visual impact and impact on the landscape character of the surrounding area (the design and location of the proposal should reflect the scale and character of the landscape and seek to minimise landscape and visual impact, subject to any other considerations);
- Amenity at sensitive locations, including residential properties, workplaces and recognised visitor sites (in or outwith a settlement boundary);
- The amenity of users of any Core Path or other established public access for walking, cycling or horse riding;
- Tourism and recreation interests; and
- Land and water-based traffic and transport interests.

A4.29 While NPF4 considers national developments as a focus for delivery, they should also be exemplars of the community wealth building approach to economic development. The intent of NPF4 Policy 25 Community wealth building is 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. NPF4 Policy 25 supports the following proposals:

- Development proposals which contribute to local or regional community wealth building strategies and are consistent with local economic priorities will be supported. This could include for example improving community resilience and reducing inequalities; increasing spending within communities; ensuring the use of local supply chains and services; local job creation; supporting community led proposals, including creation of new local firms, and enabling community led ownership of buildings and assets.
- Development proposals linked to community ownership and management of land will be supported. Following consultation, the Highland Council's

Community Wealth Building Strategy 2024-2027 was agreed by the Council on 19 September 2024. The strategy provides a framework that sets out how the Council will utilise different activities to maximise the impact of investment in local areas and support more local ownership of assets and wealth. The finalised version of the strategy will be uploaded to the Council's website in due course.

A4.30 It is noted there could be approximately 500 people employed on site during the peak construction phase, with construction worker numbers varying depending on the stage of the works (the applicant anticipates that the construction phase will take approximately 7 years). Once operational, the proposed development could generate up to the equivalent of 48 full-time jobs, taking account of multiplier effects, which is stated as equating to a gross value added (GVA) impact of £2.5 million to the local Highland economy per year. These jobs will include operational, engineering, maintenance and administrative roles with the applicant expecting these to be filled locally or by workers relocating to the area.

A4.31 **Part 3: Annex B – National Developments Statements of Need.** National developments are significant developments of national importance. Appendix B identifies 18 types of national development which will support the delivery of the spatial strategy. The statements of need set out in the Appendix are a requirement of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997). Any project identified as national development is required to be considered at a project level to ensure all statutory tests are met.

This project is classified as National Development under Annex B Section 2 Pumped Hydro Storage and Section Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure including:

a) On and offshore electricity generation, including electricity storage, from renewables exceeding 50 megawatts capacity;

A4.32 This brings the application under the tests set out under Policy 11. As noted earlier, it is considered the proposal is in overall conformity with NPF4 Policy 11.

Highland wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP)

A4.33 The HwLDP identifies the site as “wider countryside” under Policy 36. It sets out a range of parameters against which development will be assessed. It states that development proposals may be supported if they are judged to be not significantly detrimental under the terms of the policy noting “Renewable energy development proposals will be assessed against Renewable Energy Policies, the non-statutory Highland Renewable Energy Strategy and where appropriate the Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance”.

A4.34 HwLDP Policy 57 – Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage requires all development proposals be assessed taking into account the level of importance and type of heritage features, the form and scale of the development, and any impact on the feature and its setting. It does acknowledge the nearby internationally important Garry Falls SSSI, South Laggan Fen SSSI, West Inverness-shire Lochs SSSI and SPA, nationally important Allt Fearnha Gorge, Glen Garry Forest, Loch Quoich Native Woodland and Glen Kingie Forest designated Ancient Woodland

and locally important Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA.

- A4.35 HwLDP Policy 67 - Renewable Energy sets out that “renewable energy development should be well related to the source of the primary renewable resource needed for operation”. It states that “The Council will consider the contribution of the proposed development in meeting renewable energy targets and positive/negative effects on the local and national economy as well as all other relevant policies of the Development Plan and other relevant guidance”. The Council will support proposals where it is satisfied that they are located, sited and designed such as they will not be significantly detrimental overall, individually or cumulatively with other developments against eleven specified criteria (as listed in HwLDP Policy 67). Such an approach is consistent with the concept of Sustainable Design (HwLDP Policy 28) and the concept of supporting the right development in the right place at the right time.
- A4.36 Policy 69 – Electricity Transmission Infrastructure states that “proposals for overground, underground or sub-sea electricity transmission infrastructure (including lines and cables, pylons/ poles and vaults, transformers, switches and other plant) will be considered having regard to their level of strategic significance in transmitting electricity from areas of generation to areas of consumption”. Subject to balancing with this consideration, and taking into account any proposed mitigation measures, the Council will support proposals which are assessed as not having an unacceptable significant impact on the environment, including natural, built and cultural heritage features.
- A4.37 Although HwLDP Policy 67 and Policy 69 are considered compatible with NPF4 Policy 11, NPF4 expresses greater support for renewable energy projects outwith National Parks and NSAs and requires greater weight to be attributed to the twin climate and biodiversity crises in the decision-making process, whilst still recognising that a balancing exercise must still be carried out.
- A4.38 As noted earlier, it is considered the proposal is not in overall conformity with HwLDP Policy 57, 61 and 67.

West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (WestPlan) (2019)

- A4.39 There are no site specific or wider policies within WestPlan which are relevant to the proposed development.

Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023)

- A4.40 The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan has been published for consultation. Ministers will likely give consideration to this document in their decision on the application; however, limited weight can be applied to the document given its draft status. Unsurprisingly, the material on pumped hydro storage in the document reflects in large part that contained in NPF4. A fundamental part of the Strategy is expanding the energy generation sector. Overall, the draft Energy Strategy forms part of the new policy approach alongside NPF4 and confirms the Scottish Government’s policy objectives and related targets reaffirming the crucial role that pumped hydro storage and

enabling transmission infrastructure will play in response to the climate crisis which is at the heart of all these policies.

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
	App	Low–Medium	Medium–High	Moderate–Major Adverse	Significant	Medium–High	Moderate–Major Adverse	Significant
	THC	Medium-High	Medium-High	Moderate-Major adverse	Significant	Medium High	Moderate-Major adverse	Significant
<p>This viewpoint is located on the C1144 minor road east of the proposed development. VL1 is within Route R1, which covers the entire length of the C1144 between the A87 junction and Kinloch Hourn, which has been assessed as a whole by the applicant with their findings used above.</p> <p>The visualisation is representative of views available to road users approaching Loch Quoich from Kingie and sits within the eastern edge of the Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA extending westwards and encompassing the upland and loch-side terrain surrounding the development site. This increases its sensitivity. This location lies adjacent to the northern shoreline of Loch Quoich where existing hydro-electric infrastructure, including the Quoich Dam, transmission towers and areas of brownfield ground remaining from historic hydro construction, contributes to a more managed baseline character. Access to this viewpoint is taken directly from the public road, which also serves as an approach route for hillwalkers heading towards the surrounding mountains such as Gairich and the Gleouraich-Spidean Mialach ridge via nearby paths and estate tracks.</p>								

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
<p>The baseline defined in Sections 7.6 (Landscape) and 7.7 (Visual) of EIAR Volume 1: Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual is agreed. This section of Loch Quoich is characterised as a transitional area, where the influence of existing hydro development and other infrastructure gradually shifts into a more remote mountain landscape further west. Although localised evidence of human intervention is present, the wider setting retains a strong upland character defined by steep enclosing mountain slopes and the open water surface of the loch.</p> <p>From VL1, there are open views across Loch Quoich towards the steep mountain slopes of Spidean Mialach and Gleouraich, with the existing Quoich Dam, OHL towers and disturbed ground visible in the foreground. Whilst these elements already introduce a more developed character into the view the surrounding mountains still retain strong visual dominance. The alignment of the C1144 provides alternating open and more contained views as the road tracks close to the loch edge and landform periodically narrows the field of vision.</p> <p>The applicant considers the sensitivity of receptors as Low-Medium. However, there is no clear reasoning for this assessment, and it is considered understated. Given the viewpoint location is within a regionally recognised landscape designation and its role as a key arrival point into a valued upland area used by a mixture of tourists, hillwalkers, along with recreational cyclists also using the road, it is considered that receptor sensitivity is more accurately described as Medium-High, as the applicant’s assessment underestimates the experiential and scenic importance of this approach corridor.</p> <p>During the construction phase, the applicant identifies a Medium magnitude of change at this location, driven by the introduction of construction plant, road widening, Southern Access Route works and activity associated with the powerhouse and switchyard. Given the close proximity of these works, the applicant considers this to be Significant. Whilst this is agreed, it is considered the magnitude of change has been understated and is more accurately described as Medium-High.</p>								

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
<p>The applicant has not explicitly provided details for the early operation (Year 0) of the hydro scheme, only referring to Year 15. During operation, the applicant states that the completed powerhouse and switchyard would remain visible but appear partly recessed within the existing brownfield quarry footprint. The applicant assigns a Low magnitude of change during the operational phase, taking account of landform containment and the moderating influence of mitigation planting and earthworks. As a result, the level of effect is assessed as Not Significant with the wider mountainous setting continuing to dominate and the presence of existing hydro-infrastructure limiting the degree of contrast introduced by the new structures. This is not accepted as the C1144 road still experiences notable effects from all infrastructure (dam skyline presence and powerhouse visibility amongst other infrastructure) post-construction. The magnitude of change has been understated and is more accurately described as Medium-High with Significant effects continuing once the proposed development is operational.</p> <p>Whilst the existing Quoich Dam and OHL along with the consented Skye Reinforcement Line transmission are in the wider view it is generally considered the cumulative effects will not combine in a manner that would materially intensify visual impacts from this location.</p> <p>Although the powerhouse complex would be located close to the viewpoint, its detailed form and material treatment are mitigated to some extent by the building's recessed siting, use of earth modelling and planting which will help to integrate the new infrastructure into the landform. Over time, with the establishment of planting and the maturing of screening measures, the powerhouse sits relatively comfortably within the existing visual pattern of hydro-related features that already define this stretch of Loch Quoich. Whilst these mitigation measures help limit the long-term visual intrusion of the powerhouse and lower works such mitigation measures are unavailable for the upper works.</p>								
	App	Medium	Low–Medium,	Minor–Moderate	Not Significant,	Low–Medium,	Minor–Moderate	Not Significant, Not Significant

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
VL 2 - Path from Quoich Dam			Low–Medium	Adverse, Minor–Moderate Adverse	Not Significant	Low–Medium	Adverse, Minor–Moderate Adverse	
0.75km from the proposed development	THC	High	Medium–High, Medium	Moderate–Major Adverse, Moderate Adverse	Significant, Significant	Medium–High, Medium	Moderate–Major Adverse, Moderate Adverse	Significant, Significant
View looking North West		During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction
	App	Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Significant	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Significant
	THC	High	High	Moderate–Major Adverse	Significant	High	Moderate–Major Adverse	Significant
This viewpoint is located on the recreational path that leads westward from the Quoich Dam, on the northern side of Loch Quoich. VL2 is the starting point for Route R3 – Mountain Route to Gairich which has been assessed as a whole by the applicant with their findings used above.								

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
		<p>The visualisation is representative of views experienced by walkers leaving the dam area and moving toward the lower hill slopes and onward routes to the surrounding mountains. The viewpoint is within the eastern section of the Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA extending across the upland terrain west of the dam which increases its sensitivity. At this location, existing hydro-electric infrastructure, including the Quoich Dam, overhead transmission towers and disturbed brownfield ground associated with earlier construction works, contributes to a more managed baseline character within the immediate foreground. Access to this viewpoint is taken by foot from the dam area, a node from which recreational users commonly depart for hillwalking routes towards Gairich and, more distantly, the Gleouraich–Spidean Mialach ridge.</p> <p>The baseline defined in Sections 7.6 (Landscape) and 7.7 (Visual) of EIAR Volume 1: Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual is agreed. The eastern end of Loch Quoich is characterised as a transitional landscape, where the strongly managed influences of the Quoich Dam and its associated infrastructure gradually give way to a more remote and rugged upland environment as one travels further west. Although localised evidence of human intervention is present, the broader setting remains defined by steep mountain landform, the long linear expanse of the loch and the increasing sense of wildness once beyond the dam corridor.</p> <p>From VL2, walkers experience open views across the lower reaches of Loch Quoich, framed by the steep northern mountain slopes of Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach. Foreground elements include the Quoich Dam, OHL towers and residual brownfield ground, which contribute a more developed aspect to the immediate context. Beyond this foreground, however, the broader composition quickly becomes more naturalistic, with rising landform and the expanse of the loch drawing the viewer’s attention westwards. The alignment of the path provides a mix of open and partially screened views, depending on the local topography as it gradually rises away from the existing dam.</p>						

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
		<p>The applicant considers the sensitivity of receptors as Medium. The applicant has applied Medium sensitivity owing to the immediate presence of hydro infrastructure and the fact that walkers pass directly through a managed node before entering more remote lands. As noted in the report, receptors are people, who in this case are enjoying recreational pursuits outdoors and are likely to have high expectations of scenic views. As such, these should all be considered to have High sensitivity. The presence of existing infrastructure within the view should be accounted for instead in the assessment of magnitude of change which would be normal practice. Given the importance of this path as a gateway into the SLA's upland interior and the experiential value placed on views from foot-based recreational routes, it is considered that receptor sensitivity should more appropriately be judged as High, as the applicant's assessment slightly understates the scenic and experiential importance of the location.</p> <p>During the construction phase, the applicant identifies a Medium magnitude of change at this location due to the proximity of construction activity associated with the lower works, including access improvements, plant movement and operations linked to the powerhouse and switchyard. With construction occurring close to this frequently used recreational route the visual effect at VL2 during construction would be Significant, reflecting the clear visibility of works and the temporary intensification of activity within an already semi-modified landscape in the immediate locale. Whilst this is agreed, it is considered the magnitude of change has been understated and is more accurately described as High.</p> <p>The applicant has not explicitly provided details for the early operation (Year 0) of the hydro scheme, only referring to Year 15. During operation, the applicant considers the powerhouse and switchyard would remain visible but appear set within an area already influenced by hydro infrastructure, with landform containment and mitigation planting reducing the prominence of this and other associated infrastructure over time. The applicant attributes a Low-Medium magnitude of change during this phase concluding that the level of effect is Not Significant.</p>						

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
<p>This is not accepted as even at the long-term operational stage; the reservoir and dam will appear as incongruous and unnatural on the ridgeline above the powerhouse. The magnitude of change has been understated and is more accurately described as Medium-High at Year 0 reducing to Medium at Year 15 once mitigation measures have taken effect leading to Significant effects continuing once the proposed development is operational.</p> <p>Whilst the existing Quoich Dam and OHL along with the consented Skye Reinforcement Line transmission are in the wider view it is generally considered the cumulative effects will not combine in a manner that would materially intensify visual impacts from this location.</p> <p>As with VL1, although the powerhouse and associated lower works infrastructure introduce new built elements into the view, their design and placement, partly recessed and supported by earthworks and planting, assist in moderating their long-term visual influence. Over time, as vegetation becomes established and the contrast between engineered and natural landform softens, the development sits more comfortably alongside the existing pattern of hydro-related features at the eastern end of Loch Quoich. Again, as with VL1, whilst these mitigation measures help limit the long-term visual intrusion of the powerhouse and lower works such mitigation measures are unavailable for the upper works.</p>								
VL3 – Gleouraich Summit	App	High	Medium, Medium	Moderate Adverse, Moderate Adverse	Significant, Significant	High, High	Medium-High, Medium	Significant, Significant
	THC	High	Medium-High,	Moderate–Major	Significant, Significant	High, High	Medium-High,	Significant, Significant

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
1.35km from the proposed development			Medium-High	Adverse, Moderate–Major Adverse			Medium-High	
View looking South East		During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction
	App	High	High	Major Adverse	Significant	High	Major Adverse	Significant
	THC	High	High	Major Adverse	Significant	High	Major Adverse	Significant
<p>This viewpoint is located on the summit of Gleouraich, one of the prominent Munros forming the northern enclosing ridge above Loch Quoich. VL3 is part of Route R2 - Mountain Route to Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach, with Gleouraich summit approximately halfway through the ascent portion of the route, which has been assessed as a whole by the applicant with their findings used above.</p> <p>The visualisation is representative of views obtained by hillwalkers undertaking the Gleouraich–Spidean Mialach ridge traverse and forms part of a celebrated high-level recreational circuit within the Kinlochhourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA and Moidart, Morar and Glen SLA, which increases its sensitivity. From this elevation, receptors overlook both the upper reservoir corrie where the Fearn Dam and upper reservoir are proposed along with the broader mountain system that frames the western reaches of the loch. Access to this viewpoint is gained via</p>								

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
		<p>established mountaineering routes from the northern side of Loch Quoich, which are popular with experienced walkers seeking remote, high-level mountain experiences.</p> <p>The baseline defined in Sections 7.6 (Landscape) and 7.7 (Visual) of EIA Volume 1: Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual is agreed. This high-elevation setting is characterised by sweeping panoramas of rugged peaks, deep glens and extensive upland slopes with very limited visible human modification except for the Quoich Dam corridor far below. Within the upper mountain zones, the absence of strong human reference points, coupled with the scale and simplicity of the surrounding landform, contributes significantly to the sense of wildness and remoteness associated with the SLA.</p> <p>From VL3, elevated open views extend directly over the upper reservoir corrie, where the Fearn Dam, upper reservoir and associated drawdown zone would be located. The dam and reservoir basin lie in the immediate visual envelope of the summit, occupying a landform bowl directly below the ridge. The lower works at Loch Quoich, including the powerhouse and switchyard, are visible at a greater distance, though they form a smaller component of the overall panorama when compared with the upper reservoir works. The scale of the surrounding mountains remains dominant; however, the engineered features would introduce very noticeable changes to the immediate upper corrie when compared with the largely natural baseline.</p> <p>Receptors at VL3 are hillwalkers undertaking a well-known Munro ascent. The applicant identifies their sensitivity as High, reflecting their elevated recreational value, prolonged engagement with views, and the panoramic sweep available from the summit. This is agreed. Given the viewpoint's location within the WLA and SLA and strong association with key wild land qualities, including perceived remoteness, scale</p>						

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
		<p>and naturalness, the High sensitivity rating is appropriate and accurately reflects the expectations and perceptual priorities of visitors at this vantage point.</p> <p>During the construction phase, the applicant identifies a High magnitude of change at this viewpoint. From this elevation, construction plant, materials, access works and the shaping of the new dam infrastructure would be clearly visible. Construction-phase impacts are anticipated on the summits surrounding the upper reservoir, including Gleouraich, due to the direct views onto active earthworks and engineering activity leading to a Significant effect. This is agreed.</p> <p>The applicant has not explicitly provided details for the early operation (Year 0) of the hydro scheme, only referring to Year 15. During operation, the applicant notes that the completed dams, upper reservoir and seasonal drawdown would remain prominent features within the corrie when viewed from the summit. They consider the magnitude of change as Medium which will give rise to Significant localised effects, particularly from the summits surrounding the upper reservoir, such as Gleouraich. The introduction of a clearly managed landform reduces aspects of wildness and the perception of a wholly natural corrie, although they consider the wider mountain panorama retains its fundamental large-scale character and scenic value. Whilst it is agreed there will be a Significant effect the magnitude of change has been understated and is more accurately described as Medium-High long term given the dams and reservoir will remain a highly intrusive and incongruous change within the landscape visible from much of the mountain R2 route, not just the Munro summits.</p> <p>There are no cumulative visual effects anticipated at this summit location. This is agreed.</p>						

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
<p>The engineered form of the dam and upper reservoir introduces substantial permanent change into the view from VL3. Whilst the applicant makes reference to mitigation measures such as landform refinement, material treatment and strategic siting to help diminish the contrast between built and natural features when viewed from high elevation, these approaches are unable to remove visibility given the elevated vantage point and unobstructed sightlines from the wider Route R2.</p>								
VL4 – Spidean Mialach Summit 1.21km from the proposed development View looking South West	App	High	Medium, Medium	Moderate Adverse, Moderate Adverse	Significant, Significant	High, High	Medium-High, Medium	Significant, Significant
	THC	High	Medium-High, Medium-High	Moderate–Major Adverse, Moderate–Major Adverse	Significant, Significant	High, High	Medium-High, Medium-High	Significant, Significant
		During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction
	App	High	High	Major Adverse	Significant	High	Major Adverse	Significant

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
	THC	High	High	Major Adverse	Significant	High	Major Adverse	Significant
<p>This viewpoint is located on the summit of Spidean Mialach, one of the paired Munros forming the northern enclosing ridge above Loch Quoich alongside Gleouraich. As noted with VL3 above, VL4 is part of Route R2 - Mountain Route to Gleouraich and Spidean Mialach, with the Spidean Mialach summit reached after the Gleouraich summit (VL3), approximately 2/3 to 3/4 of the way through the circular route.</p> <p>The visualisation is representative of high-elevation views obtained by hillwalkers traversing the Gleouraich–Spidean Mialach ridge, a well-established and popular mountaineering route within the Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA and Moidart and Morar and Glen Shiel SLA, which increases its sensitivity. From this summit, viewers obtain expansive panoramas across the upper reservoir corrie where the Fearn Dam and upper reservoir are proposed, as well as long-distance views toward the lower reservoir area and the eastern end of Loch Quoich. Access to this viewpoint is gained through established upland routes from the northern and northeastern sides of the loch, attracting recreational users seeking remote, high-level experiences within the WLA and SLA.</p> <p>The baseline defined in Sections 7.6 (Landscape) and 7.7 (Visual) of EIA Volume 1: Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual is agreed. The summit is situated within a landscape of large-scale, steep mountain landforms, deep corries and long, remote glens, where human influence is generally limited to distant glimpses of the Quoich Dam corridor far below. The absence of significant foreground development and the elevated vantage contribute strongly to the sense of wildness and naturalness characteristic of the SLA, which is influential in defining the scenic quality of this upland environment.</p>								

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
		<p>From VL4, there are open, elevated views directly over the upper reservoir corrie, where the Fearn Dam, reservoir and associated drawdown zones would be prominent features once constructed. As with VL3, the upper reservoir infrastructure sits directly below the ridge, making the engineered landform and reservoir containment highly visible from this summit. The proposed route diversion, which would require hillwalkers approaching Spidean Mialach to traverse the dam crest itself, further shifts the character of the immediate setting from natural to managed. Views toward the lower works at Loch Quoich are more distant but remain discernible as minor features within the broader panorama. The surrounding mountainous setting, however, continues to dominate the wider composition.</p> <p>Receptors at VL4 are hillwalkers undertaking a Munro ascent or ridge traverse. The applicant identifies receptor sensitivity as High, reflecting the prolonged engagement with views, the elevated recreational value of the summit and the expectation of a largely natural panorama. This is agreed. Given the viewpoint's location within the WLA and SLA and strong association with key wild land qualities, including perceived remoteness, scale and naturalness, the High sensitivity rating is appropriate and accurately reflects the expectations and perceptual priorities of visitors at this vantage point.</p> <p>During the construction phase, the applicant identifies a High magnitude of change at VL4 due to clear visibility of dam construction, earthworks and associated activity. The summit's elevated position offers direct downward views into the construction area, meaning works, machinery and landform modification would be readily perceivable from summits surrounding the upper reservoir, including Spidean Mialach, leading to a Significant effect. This is agreed.</p> <p>The applicant has not explicitly provided details for the early operation (Year 0) of the hydro scheme, only referring to Year 15. As with VL3, during operation, the applicant notes that the Fearn Dam, upper reservoir and drawdown effects would remain clearly visible from the summit</p>						

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
			<p>and would continue to alter the perceived naturalness of the corrie. They consider the magnitude of change is Medium which will give rise to Significant localised effects, particularly from the summits surrounding the upper reservoir, such as Spidean Mialach. The introduction of engineered features into the landform at this proximity reduces aspects of wildness and the perception of a wholly natural corrie, although they consider the wider mountain panorama continues to dominate and retains its fundamental large-scale character and scenic value. Whilst it is agreed there will be a Significant effect the magnitude of change has been understated and is more accurately described as Medium-High long term given the dams and reservoir will remain a highly intrusive and incongruous change within the landscape visible from much of the mountain R2 route, not just the Munro summits.</p> <p>Whilst the existing Quoich Dam and OHL can be glimpsed in the wider, distant view it is generally considered the cumulative effects will not combine in a manner that would materially intensify visual impacts from this location.</p> <p>As with VL3, the engineered form of the dam and upper reservoir introduces substantial permanent change into the view from VL4. Whilst the applicant references mitigation measures such as landform refinement, material treatment and strategic siting to help diminish the contrast between built and natural features when viewed from high elevation, these approaches cannot remove visibility given the elevated vantage point and unobstructed sightlines from the wider Route R2.</p>					
VL5 – Gairich Summit	App	Medium	Low-Medium, Low-Medium	Minor-Moderate Adverse, Minor-	Not Significant, Not Significant	Low-Medium, Low-Medium	Minor-Moderate Adverse, Minor-	Not Significant, Not Significant

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
3.5km from the proposed development View looking North East				Moderate Adverse,			Moderate Adverse,	
	THC	High	Medium-High, Medium	Moderate Adverse, Moderate Adverse	Significant, Significant	Medium-High, Medium	Moderate Adverse, Moderate Adverse	Significant, Significant
		During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction
	App	Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Significant	Medium	Moderate Adverse	Significant
	THC	High	High	Moderate-Major Adverse	Significant	High	Moderate-Major Adverse	Significant
This viewpoint is located on the summit of Gairich, a prominent Munro rising on the southern side of Loch Quoich. VL5 is the end point of Route R3 – Mountain Route to Gairich from Quoich Dam, which has been assessed as a whole by the applicant with their findings used above.								

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
<p>The visualisation is representative of elevated panoramic views obtained by hillwalkers ascending this well-known peak. From this summit, the views overlook the upper reservoir corrie to the north, where the Fearn Dam and upper reservoir are proposed, along with clear, elevated views toward the lower works at the eastern end of Loch Quoich. The summit forms part of the wider mountainous interior of the Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA and Moidart, Morar and Glen Shiel SLA, which increases its sensitivity. Access to this viewpoint is gained via established upland paths from the southern shore of Loch Quoich, which are popular with experienced hillwalkers seeking remote mountain terrain and extensive long-distance views within the WLA and SLA.</p> <p>The baseline defined in Sections 7.6 (Landscape) and 7.7 (Visual) of EIAR Volume 1: Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual is agreed. The summit offers sweeping upland panoramas across rugged peaks, broad glens and the long water body of Loch Quoich, with the existing Quoich Dam and its associated infrastructure located some distance to the east. At this elevation, the sense of wildness and naturalness becomes a defining perceptual quality, as human influence is generally restricted to distant features at the loch edge. The simple, large-scale landform and expansive horizons reinforce the WLA and SLA’s key characteristics, including remoteness, tranquillity and lack of visible development.</p> <p>From VL5, there is a broad and elevated visual envelope in which both the upper and lower components of the proposed development are visible. To the north, the Fearn Dam and upper reservoir would be seen directly across Loch Quoich at mid-range distance, occupying a position within the corrie beneath the ridge of Spidean Mialach and Gleouraich. To the east, the powerhouse and switchyard on the loch shore are discernible as relatively small-scale features within the broader mountainous setting, although their presence introduces noticeable built elements into what is otherwise a largely undeveloped corridor.</p>								

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
		<p>Receptors at VL5 are hillwalkers ascending or reaching the summit plateau of Gairich. The applicant identifies receptor sensitivity as Medium as they consider views to be intermittent along the wider R3 mountain route. This is not considered to reflect the elevated recreational value, immersion in panoramic views and expectations of a predominantly natural landscape from VL5 and is not agreed. Given the viewpoint's location overlooking the proposed upper reservoir from within the WLA and SLA and strong association with key wild land qualities, including perceived remoteness, scale and naturalness, a High sensitivity rating is considered appropriate and more accurately reflects the expectations and perceptual priorities of visitors at this vantage point.</p> <p>During the construction phase, the applicant identifies a Medium magnitude of change, citing the visibility of construction activity at both the upper and lower sites from the summit of Gairich, as construction works, earthmoving and plant operations would be perceivable at a distance, particularly at the upper reservoir where landform modification will be extensive. Whilst it is agreed there will be Significant effects it is considered that the applicant has understated the magnitude of change which is considered to be High given substantial construction-phase engineering works that will be observed from elevated viewpoints such as Gairich.</p> <p>The applicant has not explicitly provided details for the early operation (Year 0) of the hydro scheme, only referring to Year 15. During operation, the applicant identifies a Low-Medium magnitude of change along the wider Route R3, noting that the dominance of the wider mountainous panorama reduces the proportional influence of Fearna Dam, upper reservoir and drawdown effects, as well as limited views of the powerhouse and switchyard beyond. The applicant considers that these effects would not be significant. This cannot be agreed given the new features, including the Fearna and Coire Dubh Dams, which appear incongruous halfway up the hillside, and will remain a clearly perceivable and permanent alteration to the landscape when viewed from Gairich. The applicant has understated the magnitude of change and is more accurately described as Medium-High at Year 0, marginally reducing to Medium at Year 15 given the dams and reservoir will</p>						

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
	App	Low-Medium	Low	Minor Adverse	Not Significant	Low-Medium	Low	Not Significant
	THC	Medium-High	Low/Low-Medium	Moderate	Not Significant	Low/Low-Medium	Moderate	Not Significant
<p>This viewpoint is located near Kingie, a cluster of properties, on the eastern section of the C1144 minor road. VL6 is approximately 750m to the west of Kingie B1 building based receptor. Whilst B1 is in the wider surrounding area Route R1, which covers the entire length of the C1144 between the A87 junction and Kinloch Hourn and has been assessed as a whole by the applicant, is considered the more appropriate assessment, with the applicant's findings used above.</p> <p>The visualisation is outwith the eastern boundary of the Glen Shiel Special SLA but forms a key approach point into the landscape designation from the C1144. From this location, the proposed Fearna Dam will be visible on the skyline at certain alignments, while the lower works, including the powerhouse and switchyard, are close to the roadside corridor. Existing hydro-electric features, including the Quoich Dam, transmission towers and construction platforms, already contribute to a more managed edge beyond the fringes of the SLA at this approach point. Access to this viewpoint is taken directly from the public road, which also serves as an approach route for visitors heading to recreational areas around Gairich and the Gleouraich–Spidean Mialach ridge.</p> <p>The baseline defined in Sections 7.6 (Landscape) and 7.7 (Visual) of EIAR Volume 1: Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual is agreed. This part of the east Loch Quoich corridor represents a transitional landscape where the perception of remoteness strengthens as receptors travel west,</p>								

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
		<p>however, human influence remains clearly visible at this point of entry. The enclosing mountains rise prominently beyond the loch, while the existing hydro scheme provides a distinct foreground anchoring of infrastructure within an otherwise upland landscape. The approach from Kingie, therefore, marks a perceptual threshold with a shift from more settled eastern landscapes toward the more remote, mountainous interior of the SLA.</p> <p>From VL6, there are forward views along the loch corridor toward the rising western mountains, with intermittent visibility of the Fearn Dam where it appears on the skyline in certain alignments. The powerhouse and switchyard, located at the loch's eastern end, occupy a position near the road and are experienced in the context of the pre-existing Quoich Dam, overhead lines and disturbed ground. As the road gradually descends and bends towards the loch, alternating open and more contained views occur due to landform and roadside vegetation. The combination of distant mountain scenery and nearby hydro-infrastructure establishes a mixed character typical of this part of the eastern Loch Quoich approach into the SLA.</p> <p>As noted above, receptors at VL6 are users of the C1144, some distance from residents at Kingie and the small cluster of properties (Building Based Receptor B1) set back from the C1144 road. Receptors in the immediate surrounding area are primarily road users, with occasional recreational users travelling towards hillwalking access points along the C1144. The applicant identifies the sensitivity of receptors as Low-Medium due to their location and/or lack of views which is considered to have been understated.</p> <p>During the construction phase, the applicant identifies a Low magnitude of change at VL6. Construction activities, including road widening, SAR junction works, plant movement along with building the powerhouse and associated lower works, would be clearly perceptible at close</p>						

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
<p>proximity. Whilst there will be an element of intensified activity and the modification of the approach corridor's currently semi-managed character views of construction works will be filtered and distant with the effects relatively limited from this location. Whilst it is considered the applicant has marginally understated the magnitude of change during construction it is agreed the effect will not be significant.</p> <p>The applicant has not explicitly provided details for the early operation (Year 0) of the hydro scheme, only referring to Year 15. During operation, the applicant assigns a Low magnitude of change, noting that the wider landscape context already contains hydro-infrastructure and that mitigation planting along with earthworks will reduce the prominence of the operational powerhouse and switchyard over time. This will lead to effects that are not significant given this corridor is already influenced by the existing Quoich Dam and related infrastructure. Whilst Farna Dam will change the existing undulating ridgeline through the introduction of the smooth, flat surface of the dam, on balance it is generally agreed that the effect will not be significant given the route is rising at this point with views more focussed on distant hills to the west.</p> <p>There are no cumulative visual effects anticipated at this summit location. This is agreed.</p> <p>Although the lower infrastructure lies close to the C1144 road, the use of landform shaping and earth bunding around the powerhouse and switchyard assists in reducing visual contrast over time. These mitigation measures allow the proposed development to sit more comfortably within an already hydro-modified corner on the outskirts of the SLA.</p>								
VL7 - Minor Road near	App	Low–Medium	N/A, Low	NA, Minor Adverse	N/A, Not Significant	N/A, Low	N/A, Minor Adverse	N/A, Not Significant

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
Loch a' Choire Bheithe 6.45km from the proposed development View looking East	THC	Medium-High	Low, Low,	Moderate, Moderate	Not Significant, Not Significant	Low, Low,	Moderate, Moderate	Not Significant, Not Significant
		During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction
	App	Low–Medium	Low	Minor Adverse	Not Significant	Low	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
	THC	Medium-High	Low	Moderate	Not Significant	Low	Moderate	Not Significant
<p>This viewpoint is located on the C1144 minor road near Loch a' Choire Bheithe, west of the Quoich Dam corridor, and is representative of mid-distance views experienced by road users travelling along the northern side of Loch Quoich. VL7 is within the far western section of Route R1, which covers the entire length of the C1144 between the A87 junction and Kinloch Hourn, which has been assessed as a whole by the applicant with their findings used above.</p> <p>From this visualisation landform screening and the curvature of the loch significantly moderate visibility toward the proposed development, though partial views of the Fearn dams may occasionally be obtained in specific alignments. From here the influence of existing hydro-electric</p>								

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
<p>infrastructure diminishes with increasing distance from the eastern loch end. Access to this viewpoint is entirely road-based, and the route forms a key link for visitors heading towards more remote western walking areas. The locale is within Knoydart National Scenic Area NS, which increases its sensitivity.</p> <p>The baseline defined in Sections 7.6 (Landscape) and 7.7 (Visual) of EIAR Volume 1: Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual is agreed. This stretch of the C1144 is characterised by an increasingly natural loch-side environment where steep surrounding mountains and the elongated form of Loch Quoich dominate the landscape. Human modification becomes less apparent when compared with the eastern approach, with the exception of intermittent glimpsed views back toward distant hydro-infrastructure. The transition westwards is marked by a strengthening perception of wildness and remoteness, key components of the NSA.</p> <p>From VL7, the viewer obtains oblique, mid-distance views along the loch corridor, with intermittent glimpses toward the Fearn Dam where local landform and road alignment allow visibility. The powerhouse and switchyard near the eastern loch end are generally not perceptible from this distance, being both geographically remote and largely screened by intervening terrain. The scene is dominated by mountain flanks rising sharply from the water's edge, with naturalistic landcover and the elongated loch surface forming the primary visual focus. The relative insignificance of built features in the view reinforces the sense of progression into a more remote landscape.</p> <p>Receptors at VL7 are predominantly road users, experiencing views in a transient and forward-facing manner. The applicant assigns receptor sensitivity as Low-Medium, as they consider the roadside context and the limited duration of visual exposure. It is considered that this has been understated given the viewpoint location is within a nationally recognised landscape designation and used by a mixture of tourists,</p>								

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
		<p>hillwalkers, along with recreational cyclists often using the road to access surrounding walking routes and Munro summits in the wider surrounding area. Therefore, it is considered that receptor sensitivity is more accurately described as Medium-High which reflects the expectations and perceptual priorities of visitors at this vantage point.</p> <p>During the construction phase, the applicant identifies a Low magnitude of change at VL7, given that construction activity may be perceptible but not dominant given the set back at the lower elevation from the works. The applicant considers that the effect will not be significant, this is agreed.</p> <p>The applicant has not explicitly provided details for the early operation (Year 0) of the hydro scheme, only referring to Year 15. During operation, the applicant assesses the magnitude of change as Low, noting that the Fearn Dam will appear distant and recessive within the large-scale mountainous setting. Road widening will merge into its surroundings and that the lower works remain concealed from view. The applicant considers that the effect will not be significant, this is agreed.</p> <p>There are no cumulative visual effects anticipated at this roadside location. This is agreed.</p> <p>Fearn Dam will introduce a long-term engineered element into an otherwise natural environment with the NSA noted for the perception of wildness and remoteness. Given the Fearn Dam will take up a relatively small portion of the view and whilst perceptible, will not be a dominant feature within the landscape.</p>						

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
VL8 – Sgurr Mhurlagain Summit 8.6km from the proposed development View looking North East	App	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	THC	High	Medium-High, Medium	Moderate Adverse, Moderate Adverse	Significant, Significant	Medium-High, Medium	Moderate Adverse, Moderate Adverse	Significant, Significant
		During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction
	App	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	THC	High	High	Moderate-Major Adverse	Significant	High	Moderate-Major Adverse	Significant
	<p>This viewpoint is located on the summit of Sgùrr Mhurlagain, a prominent Corbett situated south of the Loch Arkaig–Loch Quoich watershed and is representative of distant elevated panoramic views obtained by hillwalkers traversing high-level mountain routes in this part of the Highlands. This summit visualisation was requested by NatureScot and has not been assessed by the applicant as it is not covered by any of the route-based receptors (Route R1 to Route R12). Whilst comparable to Munro summits such as VL5 - Gairich (part of the wider Route R3) or Sgurr Mòr/Sgùrr an Fhuarain (part of the wider Route R5) is therefore treated as an unassessed summit viewpoint.</p>							

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
<p>From this visualisation, the viewer experiences wide-ranging inter-mountain views extending across the western end of Loch Quoich, including long-range alignment toward the proposed Fearna dams and, to a lesser extent, towards the lower works at the loch's eastern end. The summit lies within the Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA, which increases its sensitivity, and forms part of the extended highland environment where remoteness, mountain scale and a strong sense of naturalness are key experiential qualities. Access is gained via upland routes from surrounding glens, used by hillwalkers seeking remote and challenging terrain.</p> <p>The baseline defined in Sections 7.6 (Landscape) and 7.7 (Visual) of EIAR Volume 1: Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual is agreed. At this elevation, the landscape is characterised by extensive mountain panoramas, long lochs and complex ridgelines, with visible human influence generally limited to distant glimpses of infrastructure at Loch Quoich. The sense of wildness is high due to the combination of elevation, geographic remoteness and the largely undisturbed character of the surrounding landform. These attributes collectively elevate the scenic value and perceptual sensitivity of the wider setting.</p> <p>From VL8, both the Fearna Dam, Coire Dubh Dam and the upper reservoir would register as clear, noticeable and incongruous engineered features, even at long-range viewing distances. Although they occupy only part of a very broad and complex panorama, Ironside Farrar emphasise that their form, artificial geometry and elevated position on the mountainside would still be perceived distinctly against an otherwise wild, expansive and natural mountain landscape. The effects from Sgùrr Mhurlagain summit would be of a similar magnitude and significance to those observed at other distant summit viewpoints such as Sgùrr Mòr and Gairich.</p>								

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
<p>Receptors at VL8 are hillwalkers seeking remote, high-elevation mountain experiences. Receptor sensitivity is High given mountain walkers at summits have high expectations of unmodified, panoramic and wild upland landscapes. Downgrading of sensitivity for distant views is not accepted as receptor expectations remain high regardless of distance, and that the elevated position within the WLA reinforces susceptibility to landscape change in such settings.</p> <p>During the construction phase receptors will experience a High magnitude of change. While individual pieces of plant or machinery may not be identifiable at this distance, the presence of large-scale excavation, exposed ground, dam construction profiles and track formation would be prominent and clearly perceptible at summit elevations. These construction activities create a form and level of alteration inconsistent with the surrounding wild upland character. This leads to a Moderate–Major Adverse effect which will be Significant.</p> <p>At the early operational stage at Year 0 it is considered that the upper reservoir and dams would remain highly incongruous, prominent and unnatural in long-distance summit views. Even at locations over 8km away, the dam crest and reservoir form are visually incompatible with the mountain landform, producing a Medium–High magnitude of change. The engineered nature of the structure and its perched position remain sufficiently visible to materially alter the perception of naturalness from the summit. This leads to a Moderate Adverse effect which will be Significant.</p> <p>At the later operational stage at Year 15, although mitigation and revegetation soften the appearance of disturbed lower-slope areas to a certain extent, it is considered receptors would continue to experience a Medium magnitude of change from Sgùrr Mhurlagain summit. The dam crest, the unnatural, perched outline of the upper reservoir and the evident fluctuations in the drawdown zone remain visible and</p>								

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
<p>perceptually discordant within an otherwise wild upland panorama. As a result, this leads to a Moderate Adverse effect which will be Significant even after long-term mitigation has fully established.</p> <p>There are no Significant cumulative visual effects anticipated at this summit location given that Beinn Bheag Wind Farm has since been withdrawn and other schemes such as the Skye Reinforcement Line involve negligible landscape change.</p> <p>Sgùrr Mhurlagain would experience visible and materially adverse effects. The conclusions noted are consistent with other distant summits noted above.</p> <p>The cloud cover and shadowing in the image make it slightly hard to discern the hillside leading up to Fearn Dam and Coire Dubh Dam which is unfortunate. Even so, it is considered the visualisation complies with the relevant standards.</p>								
VL9 – Minor Road near Bac nan Canaichean Path	App	Low–Medium	N/A, Low	NA, Minor Adverse	N/A, Not Significant	N/A, Low	N/A, Minor Adverse	N/A, Not Significant
	THC	Medium-High	Low, Low,	Moderate, Moderate	Not Significant, Not Significant	Low, Low,	Moderate, Moderate	Not Significant, Not Significant

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
3.3km from the proposed development		During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction	During construction
View looking East	App	Low-Medium	Low	Minor Adverse	Not Significant	Low	Minor Adverse	Not Significant
	THC	Medium-High	Low	Moderate	Not Significant	Low	Moderate	Not Significant
<p>This viewpoint is located on the C1144 minor road near the junction with the Bac nan Canaichean path on the northern side of Loch Quoich and is representative of mid-distance travel views experienced by road users moving westwards along the loch corridor. VL7 is within the western section of Route R1, which covers the entire length of the C1144 between the A87 junction and Kinloch Hourn, which has been assessed as a whole by the applicant with their findings used above.</p> <p>From this visualisation topography and intervening landform significantly restrict visibility toward the proposed development, though distant glimpses of the Fearn Dam will be seen occasionally from certain alignments along the road. The influence of the existing hydro-electric infrastructure at the eastern end of the loch gradually diminishes with increasing distance. Access to the viewpoint is by vehicle or bicycle, and the route is also used by walkers travelling toward more remote western hills and informal access points along the loch.</p> <p>The baseline defined in Sections 7.6 (Landscape) and 7.7 (Visual) of EIA Volume 1: Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual is agreed. This section of the loch is defined by an increasingly naturalistic composition where steep mountain flanks rise abruptly from the water, and the</p>								

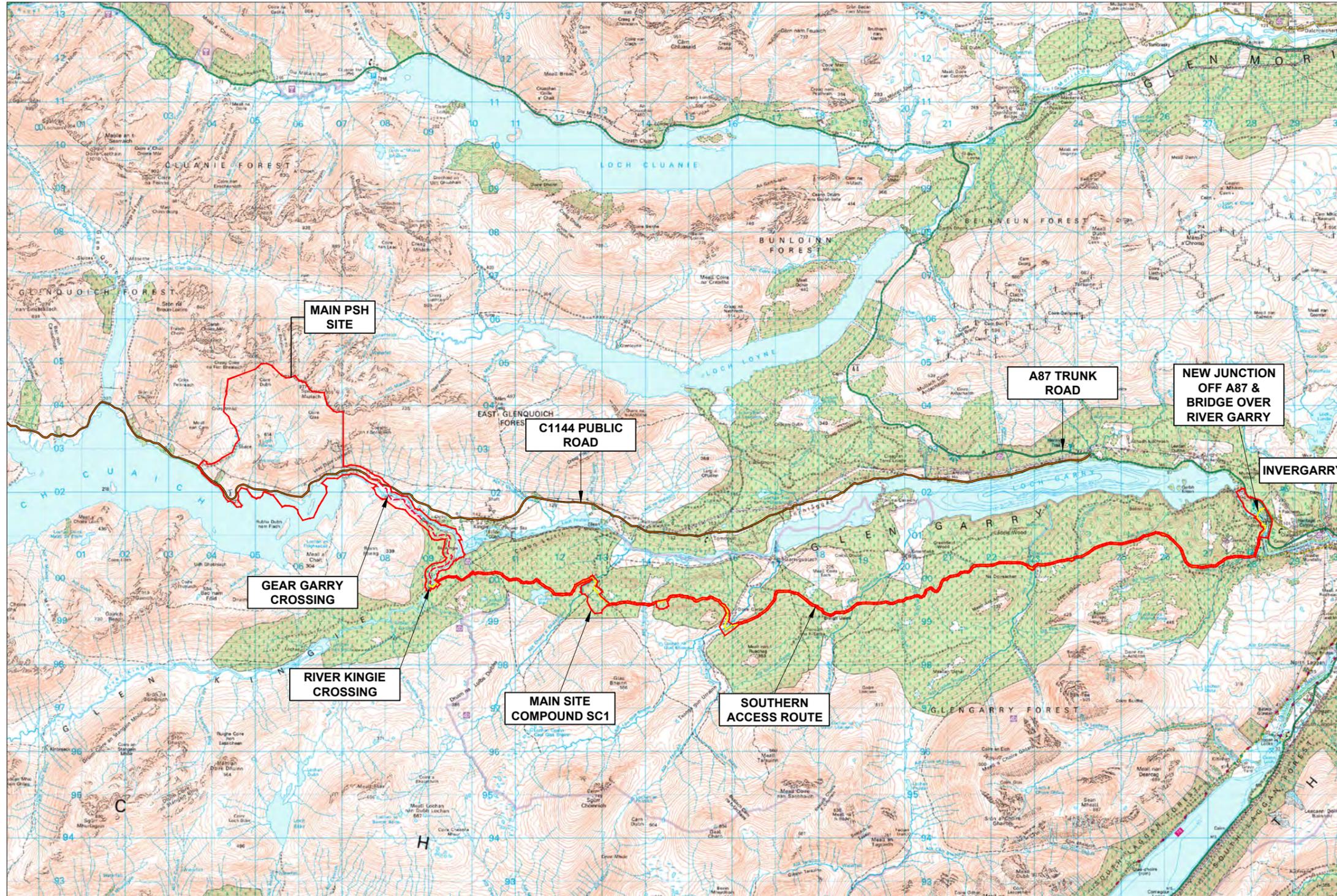
			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
		<p>elongated form of Loch Quoich becomes the dominant visual structure. The more industrialised character associated with the Quoich Dam corridor is no longer a material influence at this distance, and the sense of remoteness and wildness continues to strengthen as the road proceeds westward into the interior of the NSA.</p> <p>From VL9, views towards the proposed development are intermittent, oblique and limited. Fearna Dam, located far to the east and partly screened by intervening landform, may appear as small, distant features in specific gaps in the terrain. The powerhouse and switchyard at the loch's eastern end are generally not visible from this location due to distance and substantial topographic obstruction. As a result, the scene is predominantly defined by natural mountain slopes, occasional patches of rugged vegetation and the sweeping linear form of the loch, all of which reinforce the sense of an increasingly remote landscape as one travels west.</p> <p>Receptors at VL9 are principally road users, who typically experience the view in a transient and forward-facing manner. The applicant classifies receptor sensitivity as Low-Medium. Whilst they acknowledge the value of the surrounding landscape they consider there will be limited duration of receptor engagement and note the distance to the proposed works. As with other viewpoints along Route R1, it is considered that this has been understated given the viewpoint location is used by a mixture of tourists, hillwalkers, along with recreational cyclists often using the road to access surrounding walking routes and Munro summits in the wider surrounding area. Therefore, it is considered that receptor sensitivity is more accurately described as Medium-High consistently along this route which reflects the expectations and perceptual priorities of visitors at this vantage point</p>						

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
			<p>During the construction phase, the applicant identifies a Low magnitude of change at VL9, given that construction activity may be perceptible but not dominant given the set back at the lower elevation from the works. The applicant considers that the effect will not be significant, this is agreed.</p> <p>The applicant has not explicitly provided details for the early operation (Year 0) of the hydro scheme, only referring to Year 15. During operation, the applicant assesses the magnitude of change as Low, noting that the Fearna Dam will appear distant and recessive within the large-scale mountainous setting. Road widening will merge into its surroundings and that the lower works remain concealed from view. The applicant considers that the effect will not be significant, this is agreed.</p> <p>There are no cumulative visual effects anticipated at this roadside location. This is agreed.</p> <p>As with VL7 set further back, Fearna Dam will introduce a long-term engineered element into an otherwise natural environment. Whilst the Fearna Dam will take up a relatively minor portion of the view the design appears to project out over the mountain vista. Given the design and location concerns mitigation measures are limited</p> <p>There are no cumulative visual effects anticipated at this viewpoint. The EIAR confirms that no other relevant developments would combine visually with the Fearna scheme in the VL9 context, and that neither transmission-related infrastructure nor other hydro proposals overlap in</p>					

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
	THC	High	High	Moderate–Major Adverse	Significant	High	Moderate–Major Adverse	Significant
<p>This viewpoint is located on the summit of Sgùrr Mòr, a high and remote mountain to the west of Loch Quoich. This summit visualisation was requested by Glengarry Community Council and has not been assessed by the applicant as it is not covered by any of the route-based receptors (Route R1 to Route R12). Whilst comparable to Munro summits such as Gairich (part of the wider Route R3) or Sgùrr Mòr/Sgurr an Fhuarain (part of the wider Route R5) is therefore treated as an unassessed summit viewpoint.</p> <p>The viewpoint is representative of far-distance elevated panoramic views obtained by hillwalkers traversing long upland routes in the western Highlands. From this summit, the viewer experiences expansive, wide-horizon vistas extending eastwards along the length of Loch Quoich, encompassing distant views toward Fearna Dan and Coire Dubh Dam along with the upper reservoir. The lower works positioned at the eastern end of the loch will also be seen but to a much lesser degree. The viewpoint lies within the Kinloch Hourn – Knoydart – Morar WLA, a nationally valued landscape characterised by extensive mountain ranges, deep glens and notable perceptions of wildness and remoteness, which increases its sensitivity. Access to Sgùrr Mòr is typically achieved via demanding mountain routes, making this a viewpoint appreciated almost exclusively by experienced hillwalkers engaging deeply with the upland environment.</p> <p>The baseline defined in Sections 7.6 (Landscape) and 7.7 (Visual) of EIAR Volume 1: Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual is agreed. At this elevated western vantage point, human influence is minimal, and the defining characteristics are the large-scale mountainous landform, the</p>								

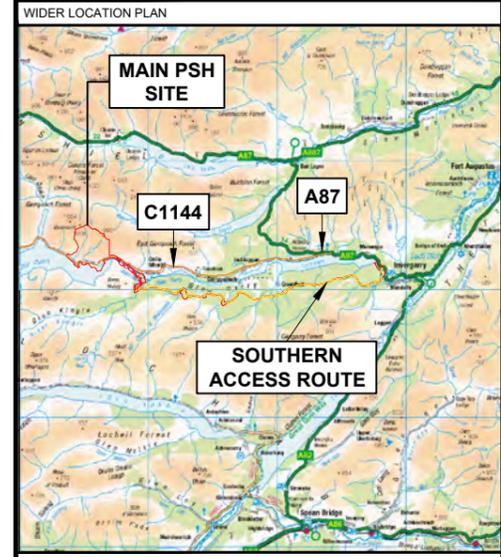
			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
		<p>sweeping alignment of Loch Quoich and extensive interlocking ridges stretching across the landscape. From such distance, existing hydro-infrastructure at the eastern end of the loch is visually faint or imperceptible, and the sense of naturalness and remoteness is a key perceptual attribute. The panoramic quality of the vista underscores the WLA's scenic value, with natural features overwhelmingly dominating the view.</p> <p>Both the Fearna Dam, Coire Dubh Dam and upper reservoir would be a noticeable, incongruous and unnatural presence in long-range summit views. Although the development occupies only a portion of the very broad panorama, its form, location and artificial geometry would still register clearly within an otherwise highly natural and expansive mountain setting.</p> <p>Receptors at VL10 are hillwalkers seeking remote, high-level mountain experiences. It is considered that receptor sensitivity is High, reflecting the expectation that visitors to such elevated and remote summits anticipate extensive, largely unmodified vistas. The summit's position within a nationally designated landscape of exceptional scenic value reinforces the high susceptibility of visual receptors to landscape change, even though the proposed development is located at a substantial distance at over 9km.</p> <p>During the construction phase, although the presence of machinery would not be individually identifiable, the incidence of large excavations, dam profiles, disturbed land and the high-level access works would register as a High magnitude of change even at extended viewing distances. This leads to a Moderate–Major Adverse effect which will be Significant.</p>						

			Proposed Development			Cumulative		
Viewpoint	App / THC	Sensitivity of the Receptor the Receptor (Susceptibility / value of the view) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Magnitude of change (Scale of Change / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) Major, Moderate, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 0, Year15)	Magnitude of Cumulative Change (Scale / Extent / Duration) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Level of Effect (Magnitude of Change / Sensitivity of Receptor) (Year 0, Year 15) High, Medium, Low, Negligible	Significance (Major and Major-Moderate are Significant. Moderate may be significant) (Year 1, Year 15)
		<p>At the early operational stage in Year 0 the perceptual character of the upper reservoir and dams would remain highly incongruous and unnatural, producing a Medium–High magnitude of change for summit receptors. The dams appear to be visually incompatible with the mountain landform, and despite the setback distance of the viewpoint, they will still be clearly perceptible as engineered structures. As such, there will be a Moderate Adverse effect which will be Significant.</p> <p>By the later operational stage in Year 15, although mitigation and revegetation would reduce lower-level contrast and soften access infrastructure to a certain extent receptors would continue to experience a Medium magnitude change. The dam crest, the unusual, perched form of the reservoir and the extent of water drawdown would persist as prominent, unnatural components in an otherwise wild upland outlook. This will lead to a Moderate Adverse effect which will be Significant even after mitigation has become fully established.</p> <p>There are no cumulative visual effects anticipated at this Munro summit location. This is agreed.</p> <p>Sgùrr Mòr would experience visible and materially adverse effects. The conclusions noted are consistent with other distant summits noted above.</p> <p>The haziness of the image makes the Fearn Dam and Coire Dubh Dam appear slightly less prominent within the landscape which is unfortunate. Even so, it is considered the visualisation complies with the relevant standards.</p>						



PLAN
1:100,000 @ A3

IF IN DOUBT - ASK



- LEGEND
- PLANNING BOUNDARY
 - EXISTING ROAD UPGRADED
 - NEW ROAD
 - C1144 PUBLIC ROAD

E1	17.02.25	MH	FOR PLANNING	FRA	FRA
REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHKD	APP'D

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PROJECT
PROPOSED FEARNA PSH

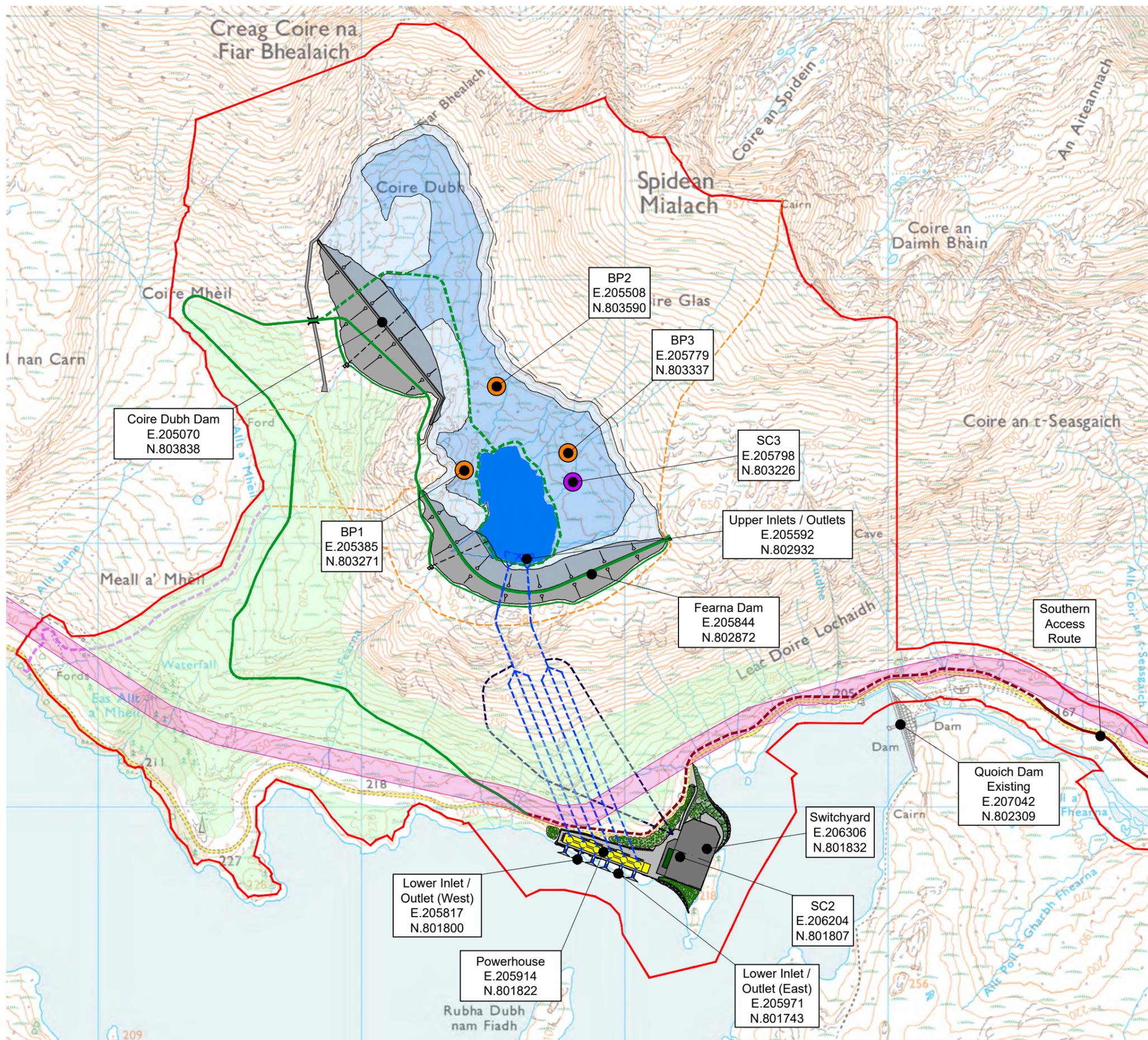
TITLE
**LOCATION PLAN
FIGURE 2.1**

SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:100,000	STATUS EIA
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/001		REVISION E1

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North



Plan
1:15,000 @ A3



IF IN DOUBT - ASK

LEGEND

- Planning Boundary
- Loch Fearna Surface Area @ +537.0m - 10.4774ha
- Loch Fearna Surface Area @ +600.0m - 96.5099ha
- Minimum Operating Level @ +540m
- Powerhouse
- Lower Inlet / Outlet
- Dam Footprint
- Dam Valve House
- Compensation Flow Outlet
- ▽ Upper Inlet / Outlet
- High Pressure Tunnel
- Access Tunnel
- PSH Track
- Temporary Construction Access (within inundated area)
- C1144 Public Road Widening
- Southern Access Route
- Public Footpath Diversion
- Post and Wire Fence
- Existing Hydro Track
- Borrow Pit (with reference number)
- Site Compound (with reference number)
- Laydown Areas
- Switchyard and Switchgear Building
- Areas of New Planting
- Native Woodland Creation
- Skye Upgrade Corridor

E2	02.12.25	MH	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	FRA	FRA
E1	17.02.25	MH	FOR PLANNING	FRA	FRA
REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CH'KD	APP'D

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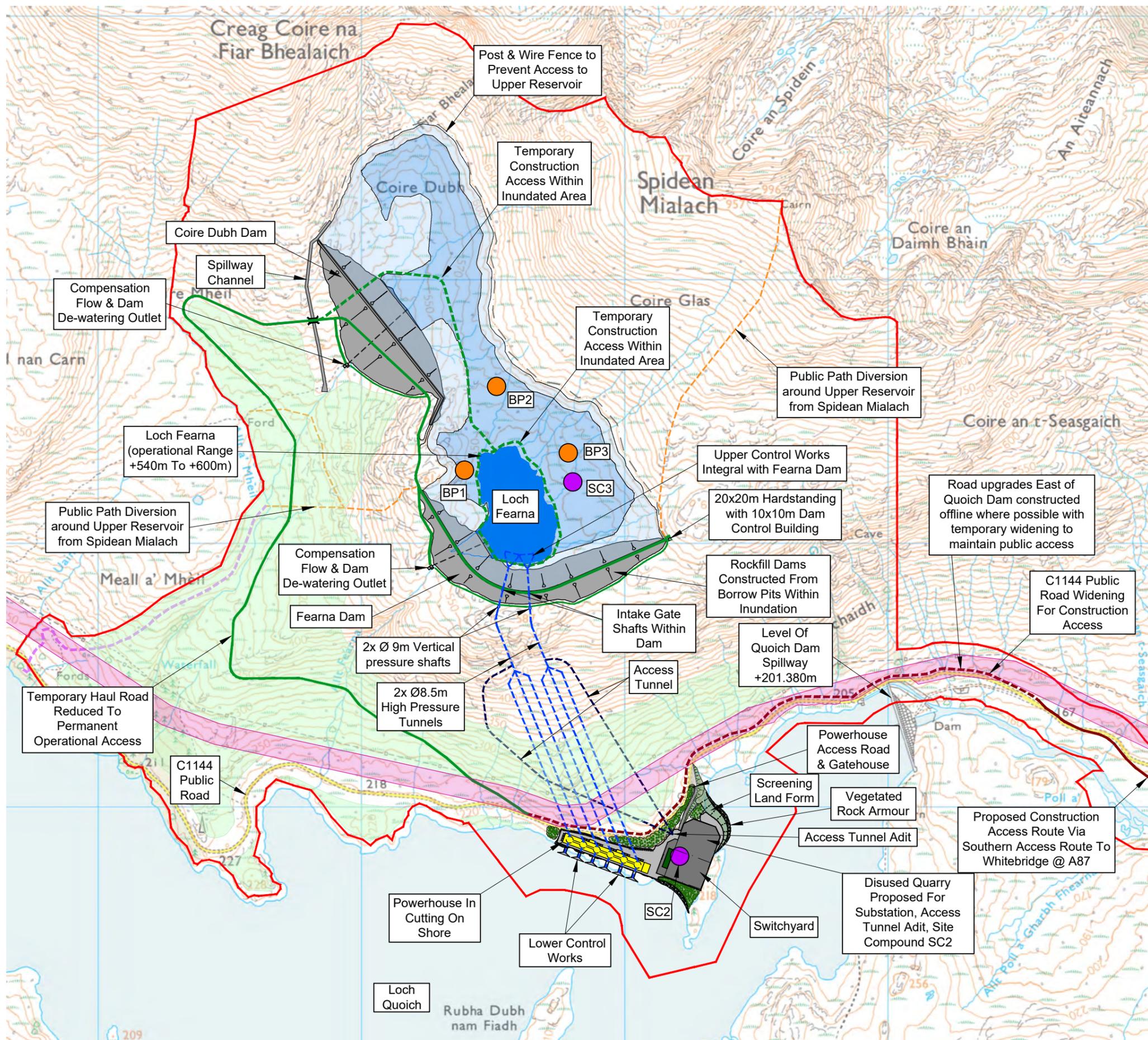
TITLE
**SCHEME ARRANGEMENT WITH GRID REFERENCES
FIGURE 1.1**

SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:15,000	STATUS EIA
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/000	REVISION E2	

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North



IF IN DOUBT - ASK

LEGEND

- Planning Boundary
- Loch Fearna Surface Area @ +537.0m - 10.4774ha
- Loch Fearna Surface Area @ +600.0m - 96.5099ha
- Minimum Operating Level @ +540m
- Powerhouse
- Lower Inlet / Outlet
- Dam Footprint
- Dam Valve House
- Compensation Flow Outlet
- Upper Inlet / Outlet
- High Pressure Tunnel
- Access Tunnel
- PSH Track
- Temporary Construction Access (within inundated area)
- C1144 Public Road Widening
- Southern Access Route
- Public Footpath Diversion
- Post and Wire Fence
- Existing Hydro Track
- Borrow Pit (with reference number)
- Site Compound (with reference number)
- Laydown Areas
- Switchyard and Switchgear Building
- Areas of New Planting
- Native Woodland Creation
- Skye Upgrade Corridor

E2	02.12.25	MH	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	FRA	FRA
E1	17.02.25	MH	FOR PLANNING	FRA	FRA
REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHK'D	APP'D

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PROJECT
PROPOSED FEARNA PSH

TITLE
**SCHEME LAYOUT
FIGURE 2.2**

SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:15,000	STATUS EIA	REVISION E2
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/002			

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Plan
1:15,000 @ A3



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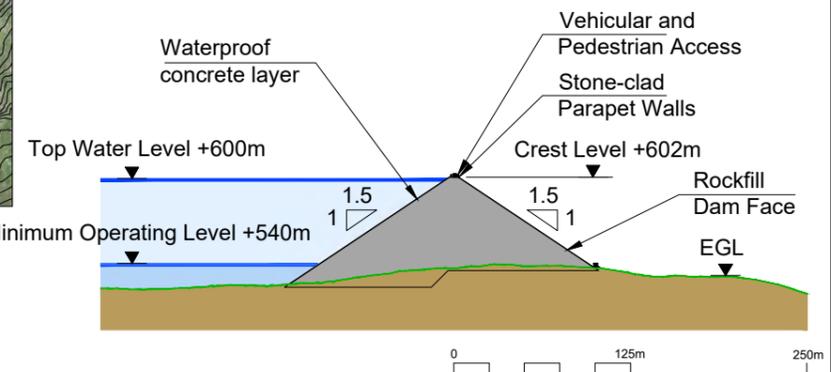
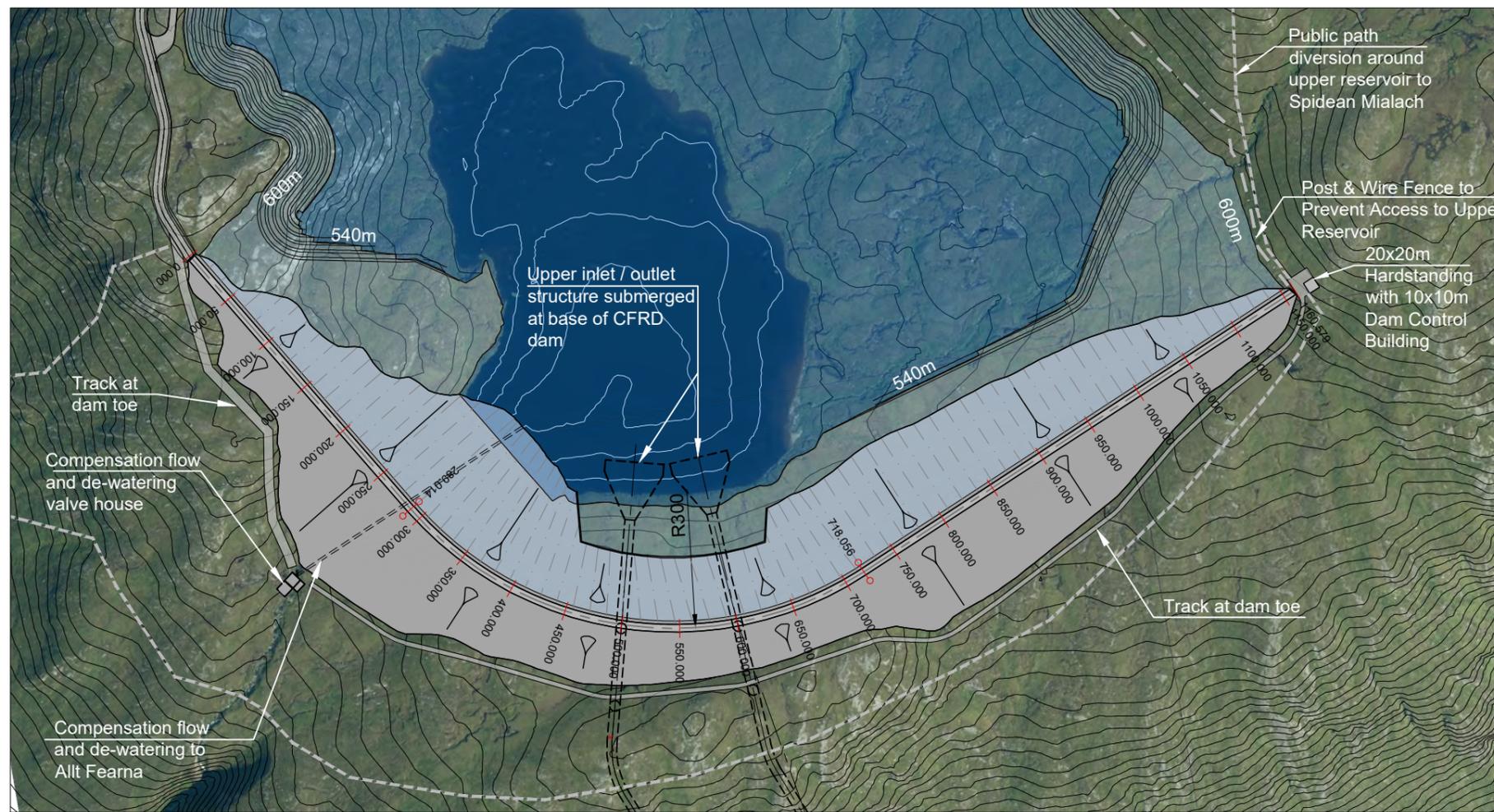
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NOTES

- All levels are in metres above ordnance datum (mAOD).
- All dimensions are in metres u.n.o.

LEGEND

- +600m Maximum Inundation Level
- +540m Minimum Operating Level
- Dam Footprint
- Dam Valve House
- Compensation Flow Outlet
- Upper Inlet / Outlet
- Tunnels
- Public Footpath Diversion
- Post & Wire Fence

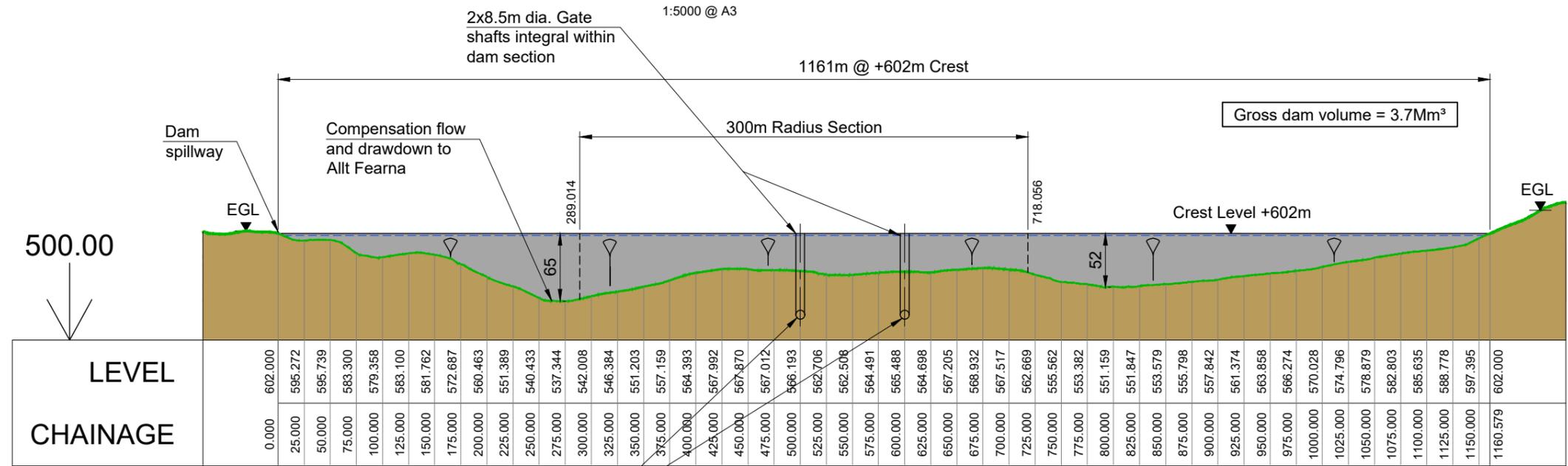


Plan Fearna CFRD Dam

1:5000 @ A3

Dam Cross Section

1:5000 @ A3



Elevation Fearna CFRD Dam

1:5000 @ A3

E2	02.12.25	MH	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	FRA	FRA
E1	17.02.25	MH	FOR PLANNING	FRA	FRA
REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHKD	APP'D

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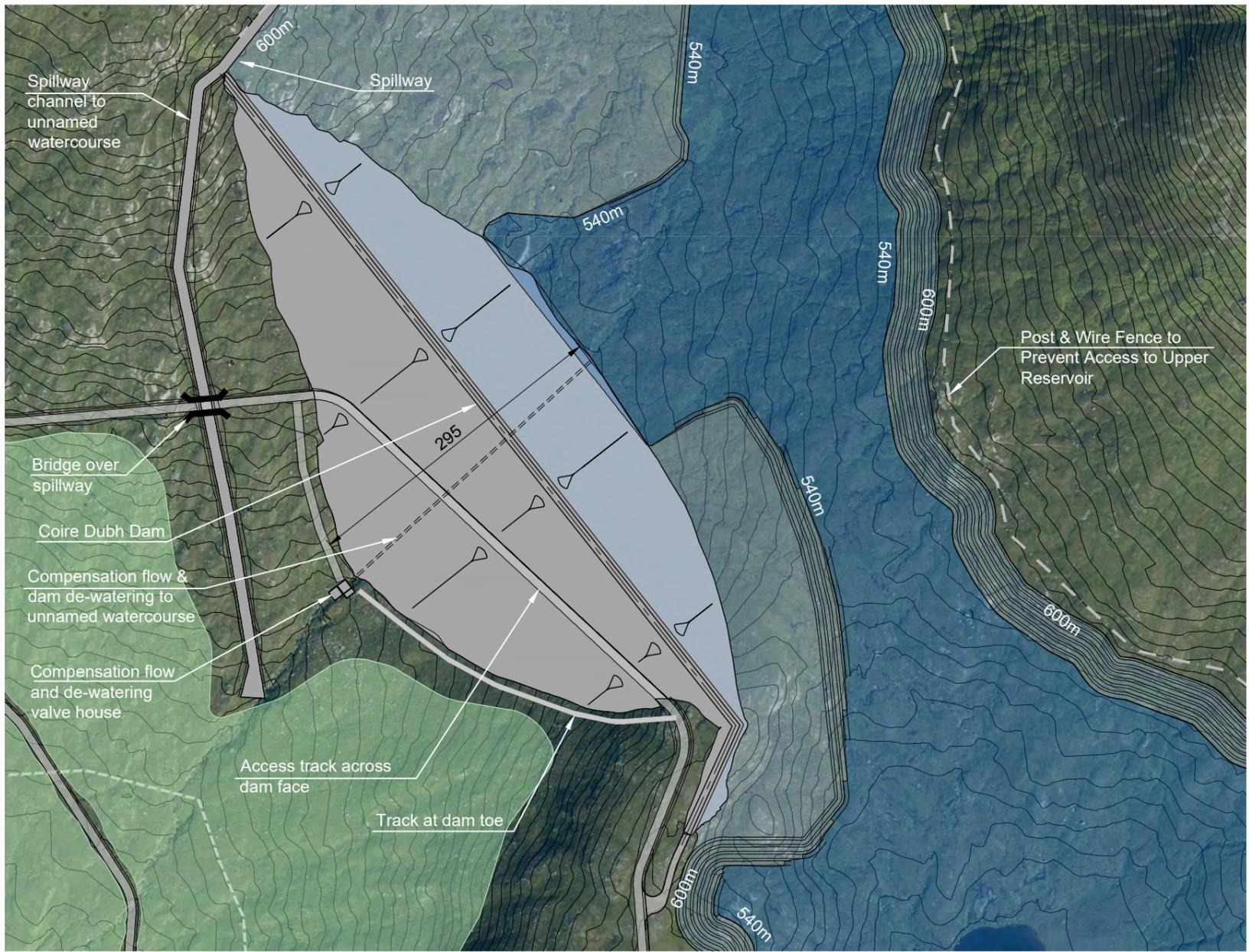
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PROJECT
PROPOSED FEARNA PSH

TITLE
FEARNA CFRD GENERAL ARRANGEMENT FIGURE 2.5

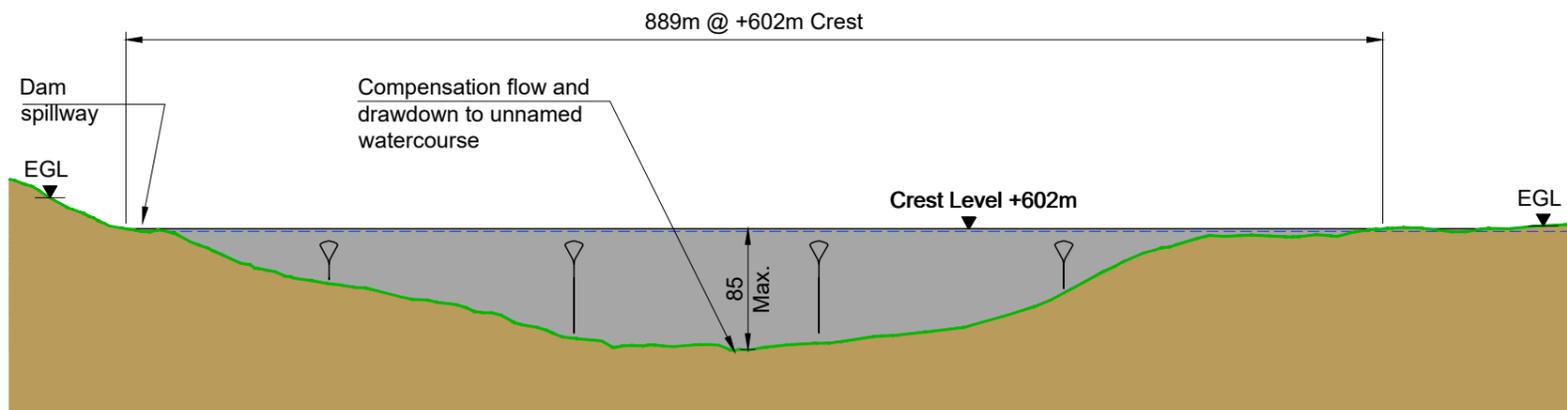
SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:5000	STATUS EIA
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/300		REVISION E2

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Plan

1:5000 @ A3



Dam Elevation

1:5000 @ A3



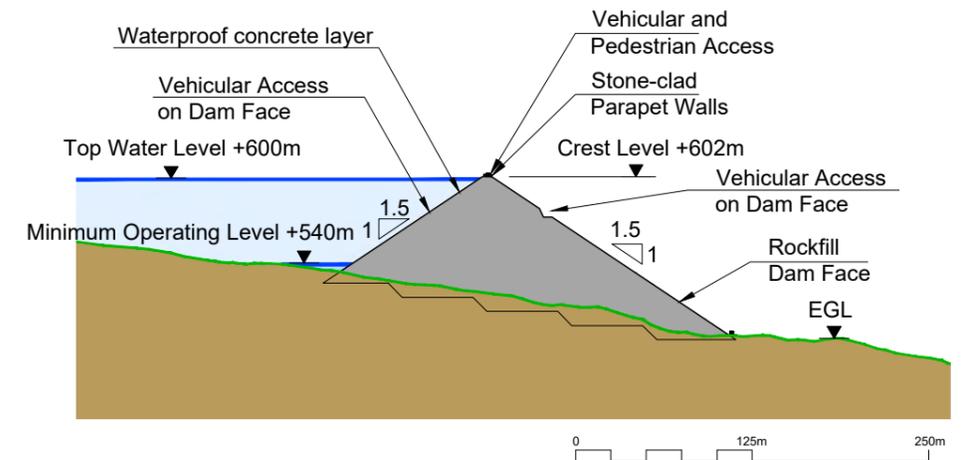
IF IN DOUBT - ASK

NOTES

- All levels are in metres above ordnance datum (mAOD).
- All dimensions are in metres U.N.O.

LEGEND

- +600m Maximum Inundation Level
- +540m Minimum Operating Level
- Dam Footprint
- Dam Valve House
- PSH Track
- Public Footpath Diversion
- Post & Wire Fence
- Native Woodland Creation



Dam Cross Section

1:5000 @ A3

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E1	17.02.25	MH	FOR PLANNING	FRA	FRA
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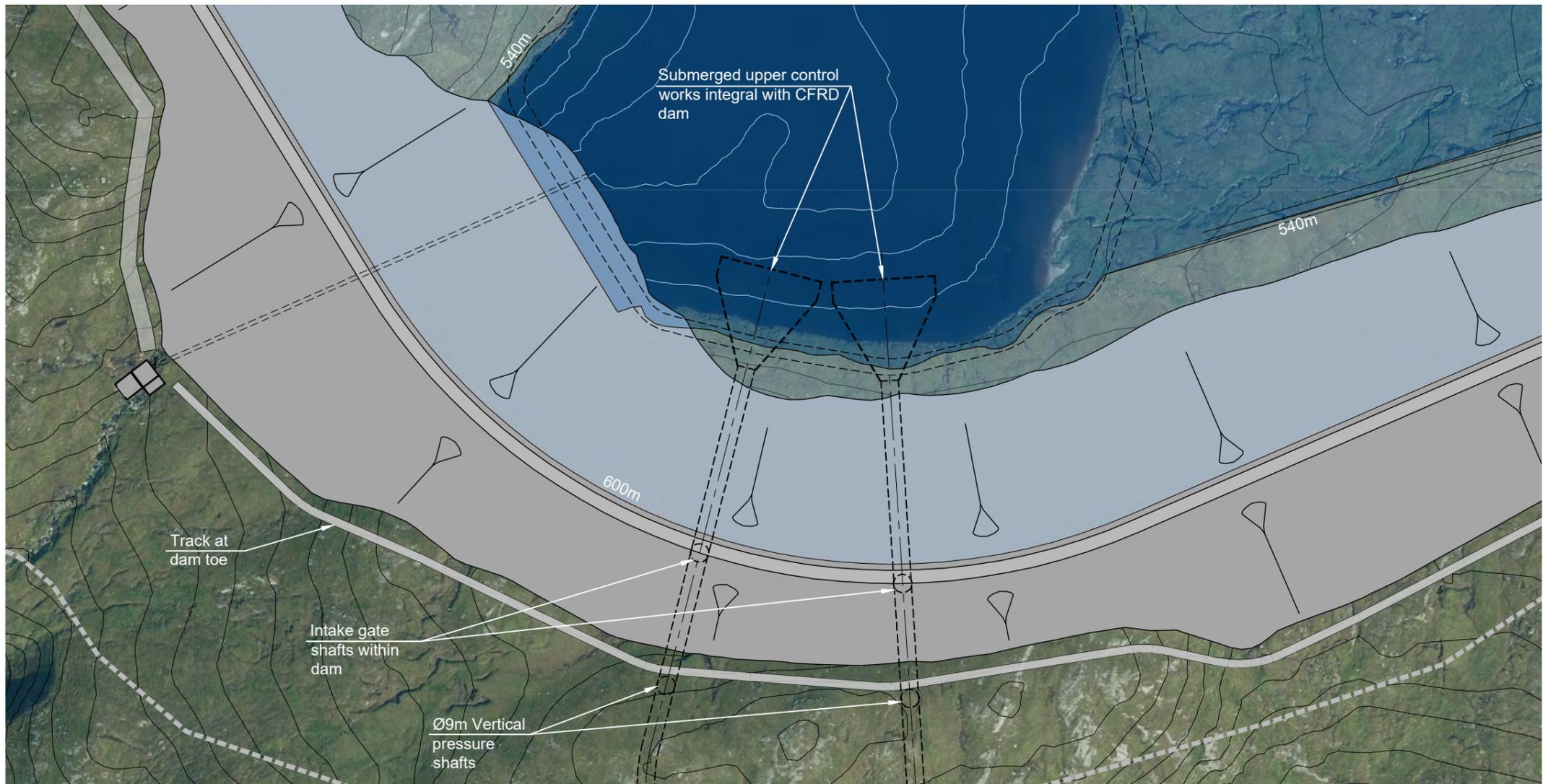
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PROJECT
PROPOSED FEARNA PSH

TITLE
**COIRE DUBH DAM
 GENERAL ARRANGEMENT
 FIGURE 2.6**

SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:5000	STATUS EIA
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/350		REVISION E2

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Plan
1:2500 @ A3



IF IN DOUBT - ASK

LEGEND

- All levels are in metres above ordnance datum (mAOD).
- All dimensions are in metres U.N.O.

LEGEND

- +600m Maximum Inundation Level
- +540m Minimum Water Level
- Dam Footprint
- Upper Inlet / Outlet
- Tunnel
- Public Footpath Diversion

E2	02.12.25	MH	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	FRA	FRA
E1	17.02.25	MH	FOR PLANNING	FRA	FRA
REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHKD	APP'D

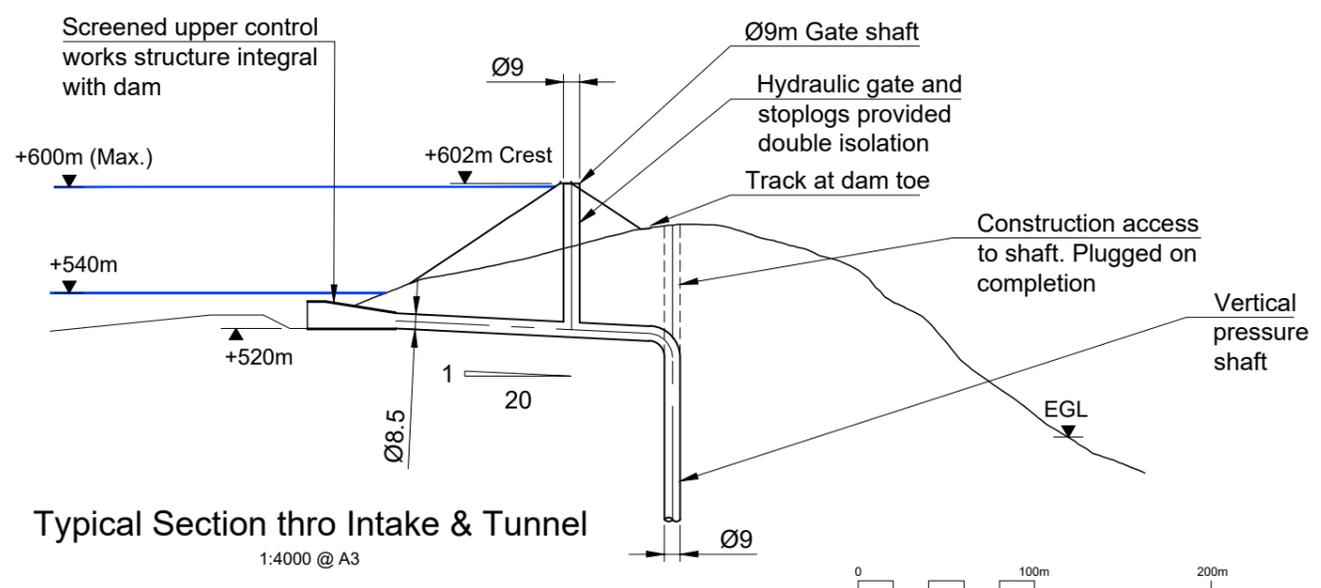
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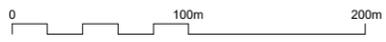
PROJECT
PROPOSED FEARNA PSH

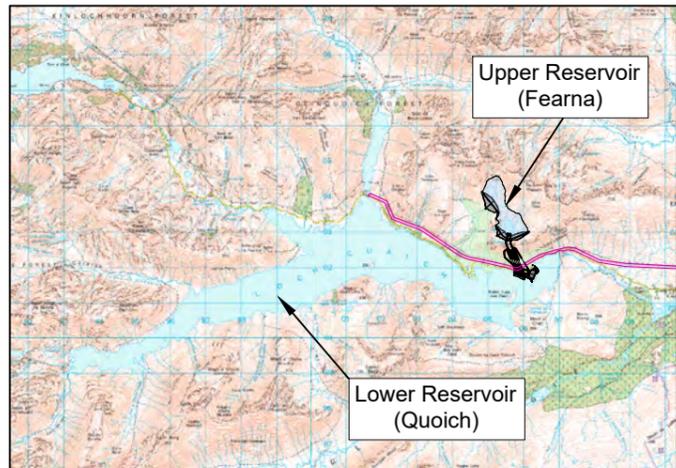
TITLE
**UPPER CONTROL WORKS
GENERAL ARRANGEMENT
FIGURE 2.7**

SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:2500	STATUS EIA
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/600		REVISION E2

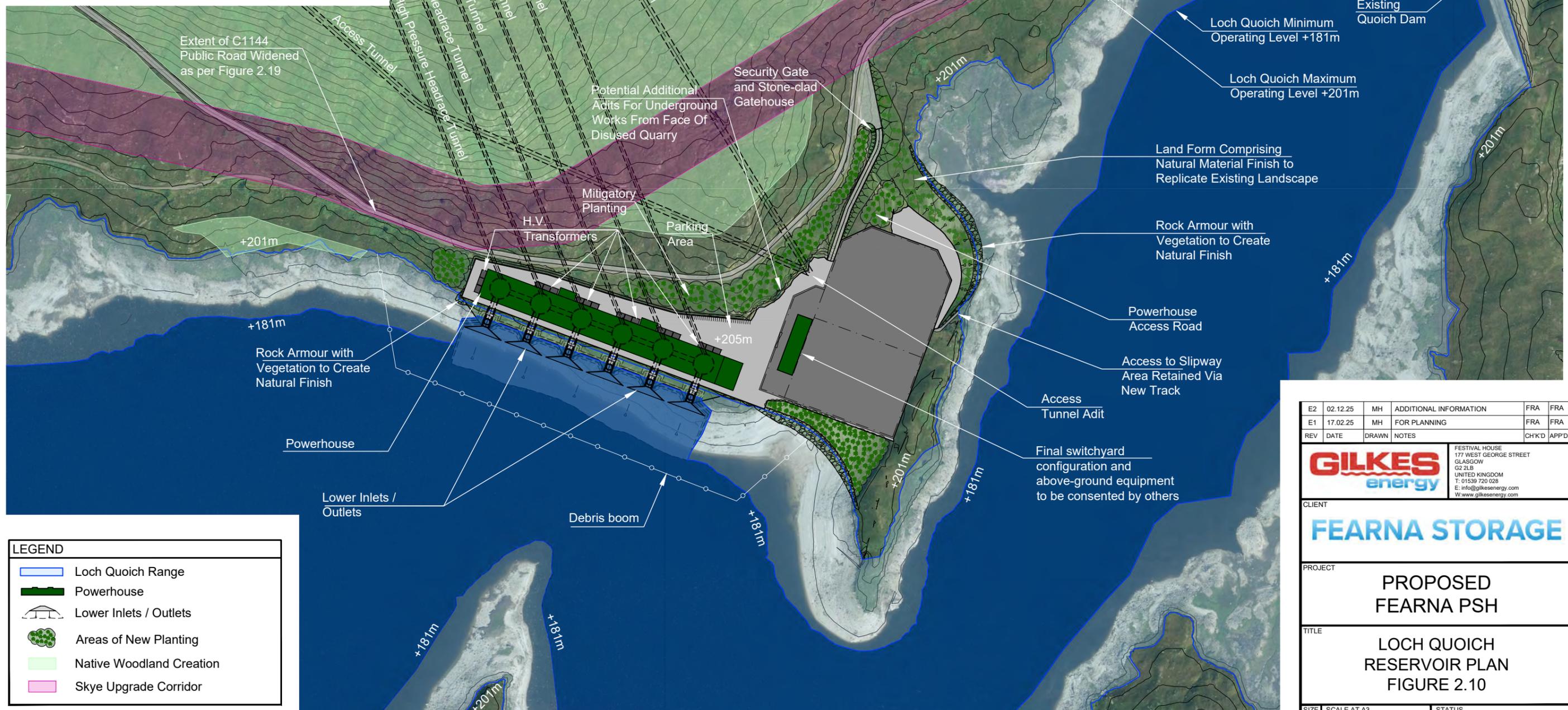


Typical Section thro Intake & Tunnel
1:4000 @ A3





Wider Plan
1:200,000 @ A3



IF IN DOUBT - ASK

NOTES

1. All levels are in metres above ordnance datum (mAOD).
2. All dimensions are in metres U.N.O.

LEGEND	
	Loch Quoich Range
	Powerhouse
	Lower Inlets / Outlets
	Areas of New Planting
	Native Woodland Creation
	Skye Upgrade Corridor

E2	02.12.25	MH	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	FRA	FRA
E1	17.02.25	MH	FOR PLANNING	FRA	FRA
REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHKD	APP'D

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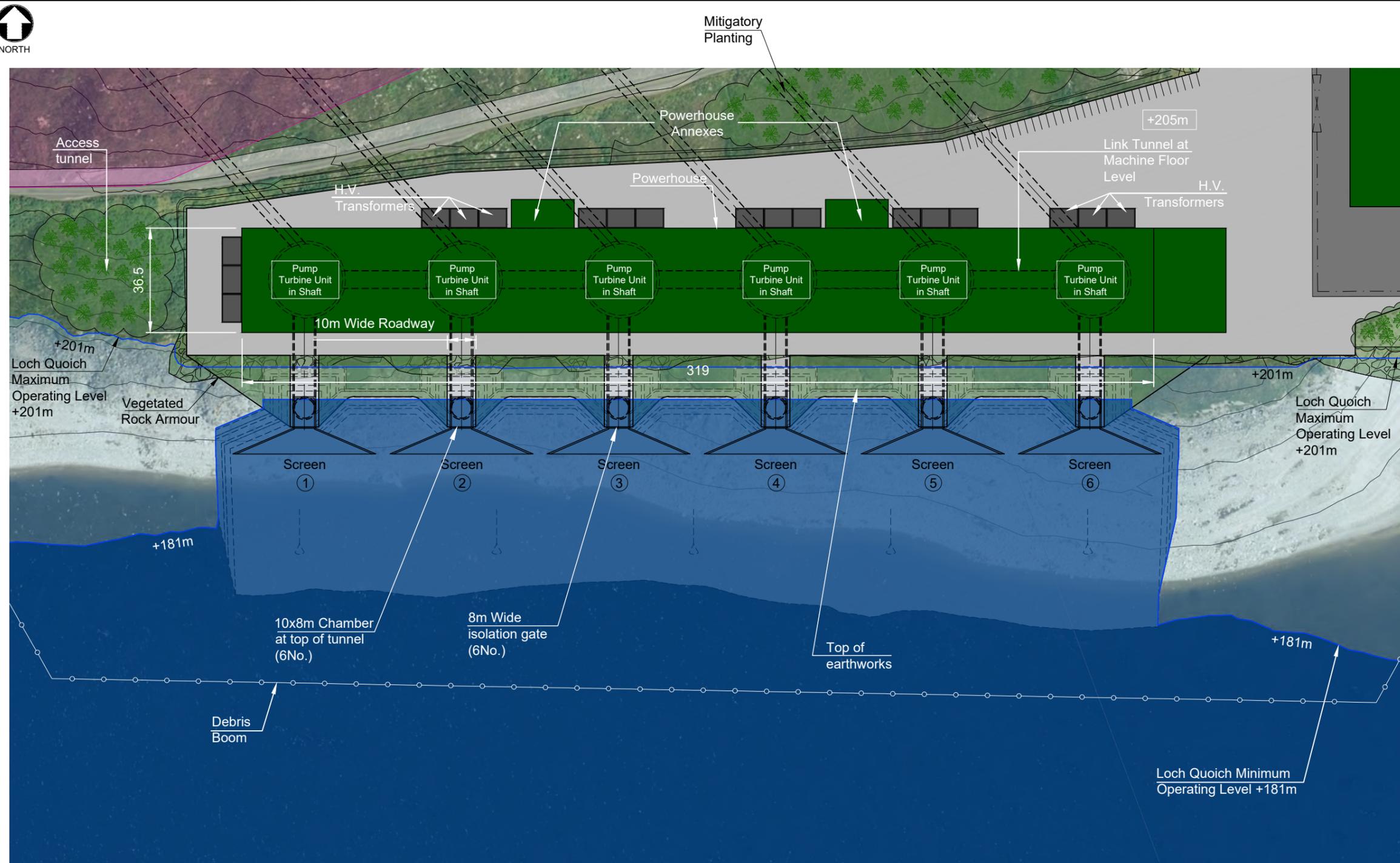
TITLE
**LOCH QUOICH RESERVOIR PLAN
 FIGURE 2.10**

SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:5000	STATUS EIA
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/200	REVISION E2	

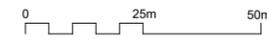
Plan
1:5000 @ A3



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Plan
1:1500 @ A3



IF IN DOUBT - ASK

NOTES

1. All levels are in metres above ordnance datum (mAOD).
2. All dimensions are in metres U.N.O.

LEGEND

- Loch Quoch Range
- Powerhouse
- Lower Inlets / Outlets
- Skye Upgrade Corridor

E2	02.12.25	MH	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	FRA	FRA
E1	17.02.25	MH	FOR PLANNING	FRA	FRA
REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHKD	APP'D

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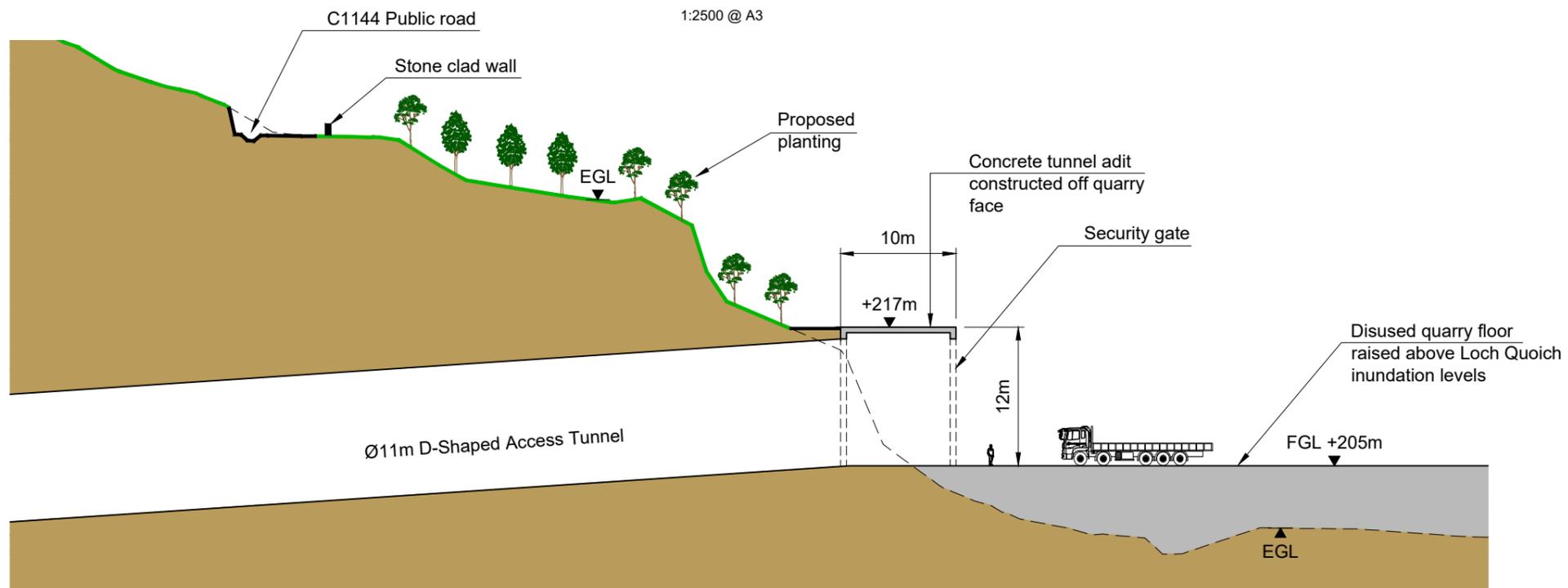
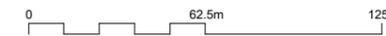
TITLE
POWERHOUSE AND LOWER CONTROL WORKS G.A. FIGURE 2.11

SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:1500	STATUS EIA
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/700		REVISION E2

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Plan
1:2500 @ A3



Section Thro Adit / Access Tunnel
1:500 @ A3



IF IN DOUBT - ASK

NOTES

1. All levels are in metres above ordnance datum (mAOD).
2. All dimensions are in metres U.N.O.

LEGEND

- Powerhouse
- Switchyard and Switchgear Building
- Areas of New Planting
- Loch Quich Range

E1	17.02.25	MH	FOR PLANNING	FRA	FRA
REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHKD	APP'D

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PROJECT
PROPOSED FEARNA PSH

TITLE
**ACCESS TUNNEL ADIT GENERAL ARRANGEMENT
FIGURE 2.9**

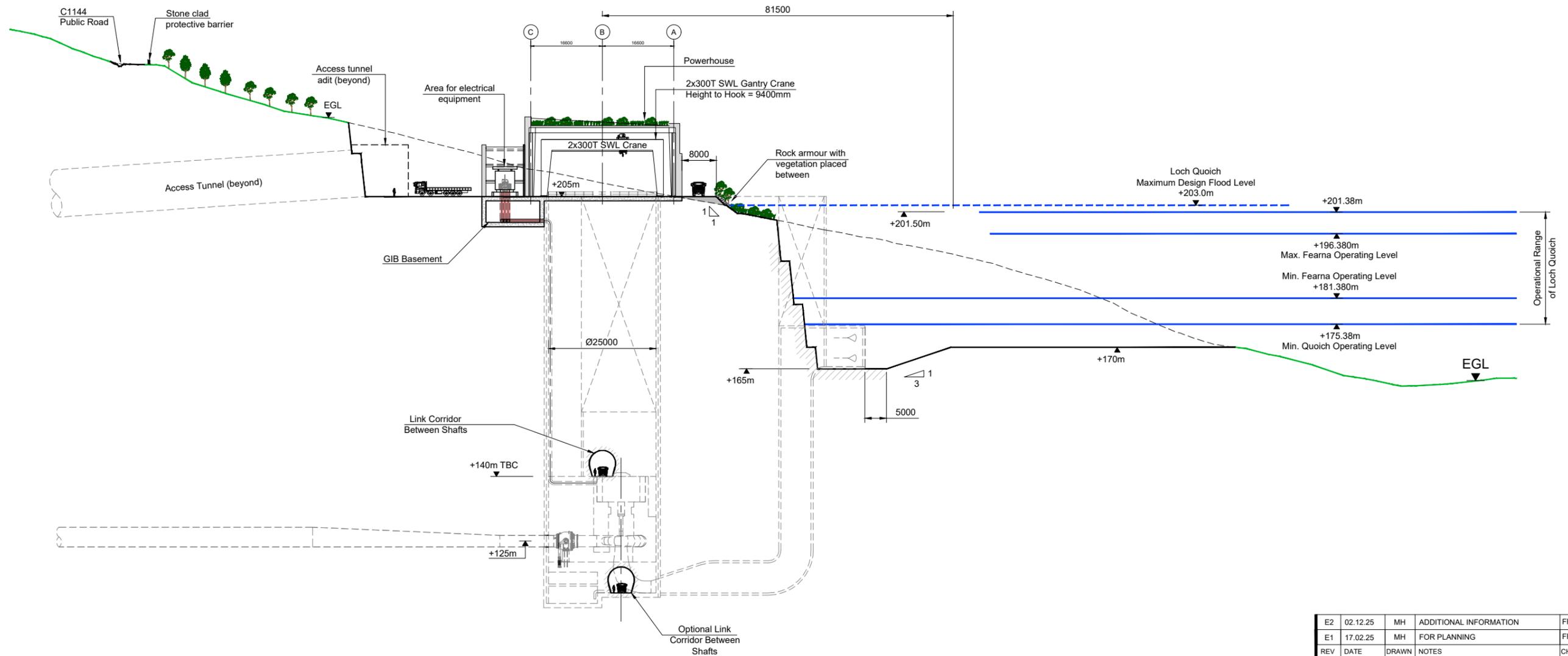
SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 AS SHOWN	STATUS EIA	REVISION E1
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/585			

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IF IN DOUBT - ASK

NOTES

1. All levels are in metres above ordnance datum (mAOD).
2. All dimensions are in millimetres U.N.O.



Powerhouse
Typical Cross Section In-Between Shafts
 1:500 @ A1, 1:1000 @ A3



E2	02.12.25	MH	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	FRA	FRA
E1	17.02.25	MH	FOR PLANNING	FRA	FRA
REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHK'D	APP'D

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PROJECT
PROPOSED FEARNA PSH

TITLE
**POWERHOUSE
 TYPICAL CROSS SECTION
 FIGURE 2.13**

SIZE	SCALE AT A3	STATUS	EIA
A3	1:1000		
DRAWING NUMBER	FEA/FC4/430	REVISION	E2



North

IF IN DOUBT - ASK

NOTES

1. All levels are in metres above ordnance datum (mAOD).
2. All dimensions are in metres unless noted otherwise.

 'No Entry' signage at each road coming off Southern Access Road



Plan
1:4000 @ A3



E1	19.02.25	SM	FOR PLANNING	MH	FRA
REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHKD	APPD

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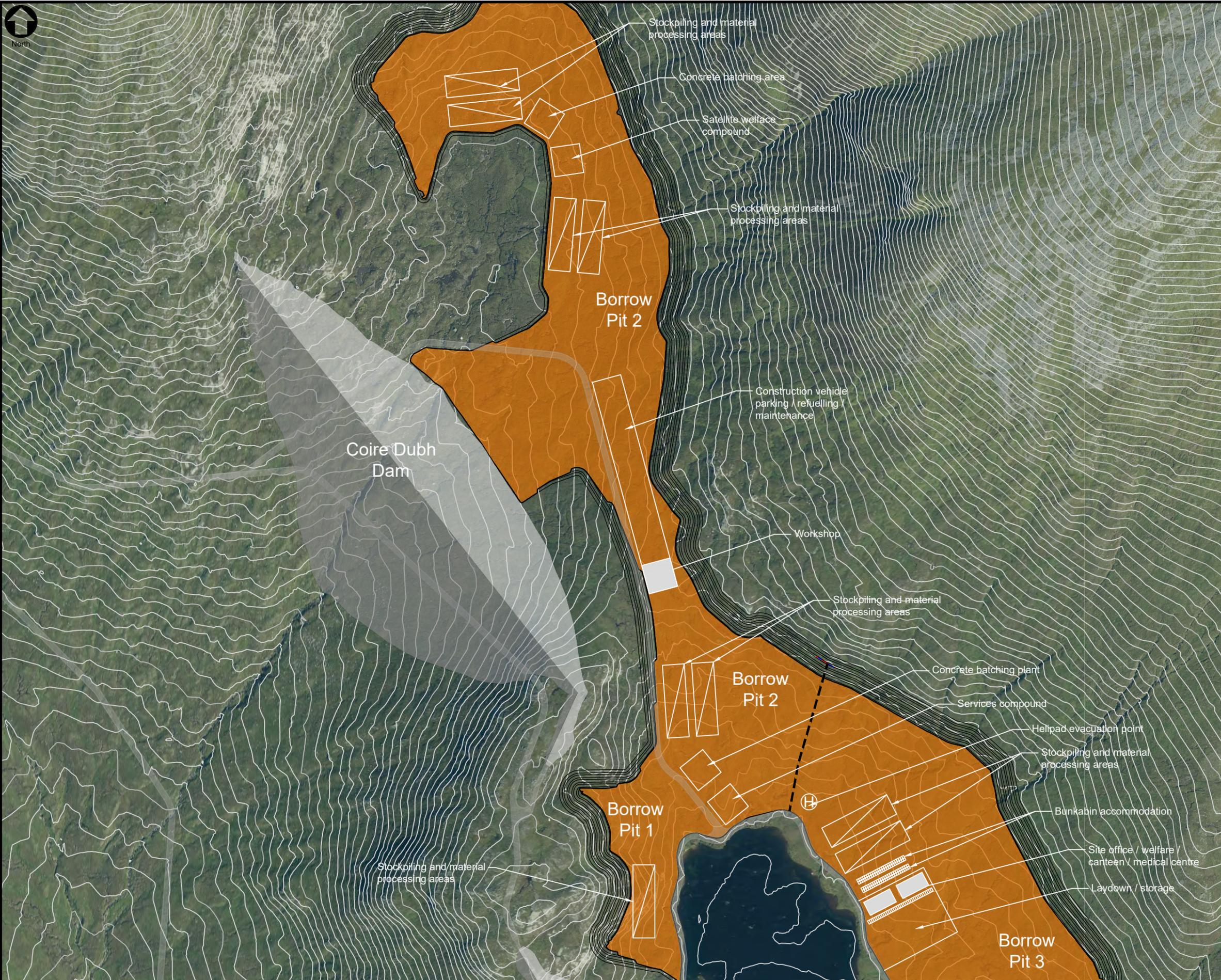
PROJECT
PROPOSED FEARNA PSH

TITLE
**SITE COMPOUND (SC1)
PLAN - FIGURE 2.30**

SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:4000	STATUS EIA	REVISION E1
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/941			

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NOTES

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REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHK'D	APP'D

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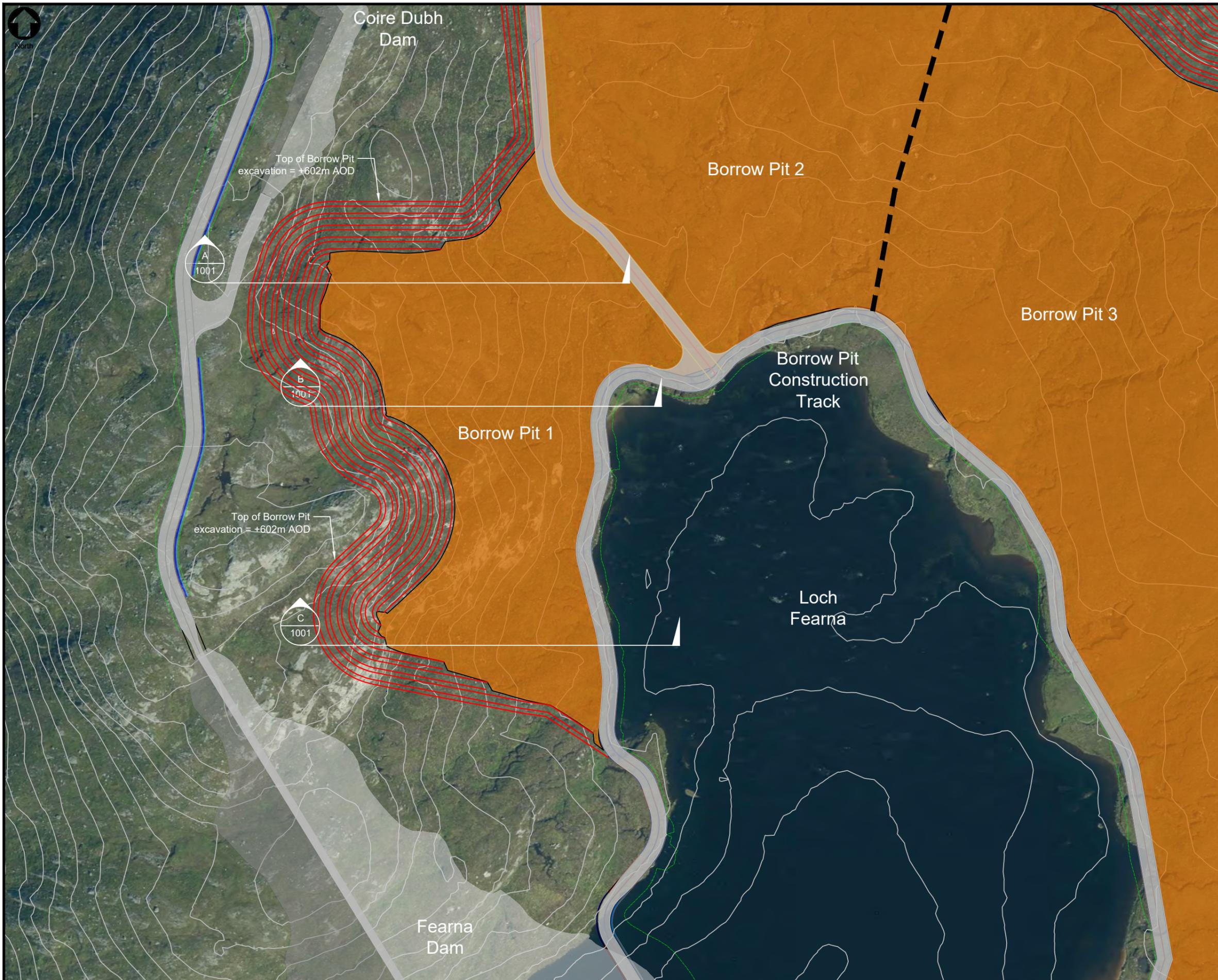
TITLE
**SITE COMPOUND SC3
FIGURE 2.41**

SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:1000	STATUS EIA
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/950	REVISION E1	

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TITLE
**BORROW PIT 1 PLAN
FIGURE 2.33**

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Plan
1:2000 @ A3



SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:2000	STATUS EIA
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/1000	REVISION E2	

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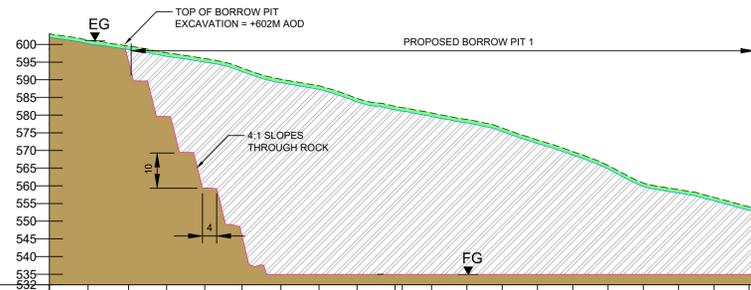
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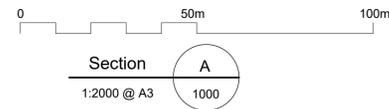
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LONGITUDINAL SECTION

(A - BORROW PIT 1 SECTION 1)
CHAINAGE: 0 TO 201
SCALE: H 1:500, V 1:500

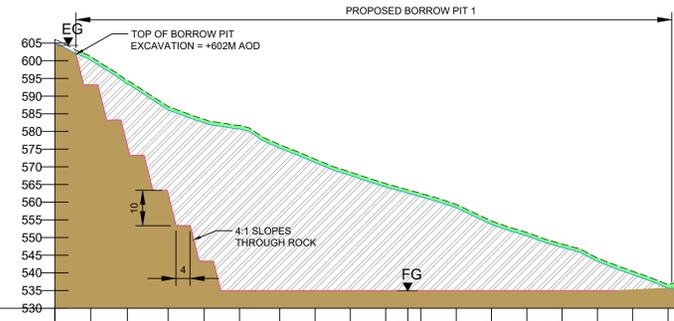


Chainage	Existing Levels	Proposed Levels
10.989	601.205	
22.454	599.544	599.710
33.242	597.599	579.581
44.030	596.001	559.356
54.596	593.329	542.284
65.005	590.143	535.000
76.392	588.310	
87.180	584.695	535.000
97.968	582.324	535.000
108.301	580.621	535.000
118.301	578.782	535.000
128.301	576.352	535.000
138.301	572.959	535.000
148.301	569.684	535.000
158.301	565.788	535.000
168.301	560.777	535.000
178.301	558.940	535.000
188.301	556.745	535.000
198.301	554.073	535.000
201.000	553.000	535.000

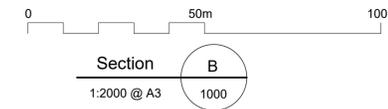


LONGITUDINAL SECTION

(A - BORROW PIT 1 SECTION 2)
CHAINAGE: 0 TO 182
SCALE: H 1:500, V 1:500

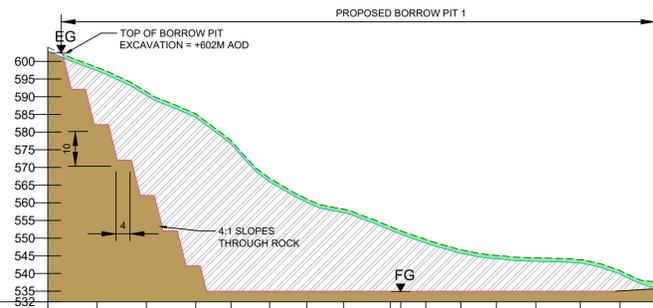


Chainage	Existing Levels	Proposed Levels
10.157	601.162	593.216
20.526	594.357	572.290
32.061	587.093	553.406
42.281	583.438	543.289
52.313	581.716	535.000
63.726	576.250	535.000
73.726	572.200	535.000
83.726	568.540	535.000
93.726	565.260	535.000
100.000	563.538	535.000
103.726	562.480	535.000
113.726	559.390	535.000
123.726	554.690	535.000
133.726	551.460	535.000
143.726	548.170	535.000
153.726	544.210	535.000
163.726	540.470	535.000
173.726	536.690	535.000

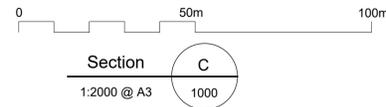


LONGITUDINAL SECTION

(A - BORROW PIT 1 SECTION 3)
CHAINAGE: 0 TO 175
SCALE: H 1:500, V 1:500



Chainage	Existing Levels	Proposed Levels
13.971	598.315	592.119
27.942	591.401	572.119
41.913	585.162	552.119
51.943	577.619	535.000
62.869	566.937	535.000
73.423	561.099	535.000
83.825	558.220	535.000
97.083	553.275	535.000
100.000	552.126	535.000
107.083	549.634	535.000
117.083	546.628	535.000
127.083	545.102	535.000
138.322	544.428	535.000
150.844	543.910	535.000
162.083	540.867	535.000
172.400	537.723	535.000



E2	02.12.25	SM	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	MH	FRA
REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHK'D	APP'D

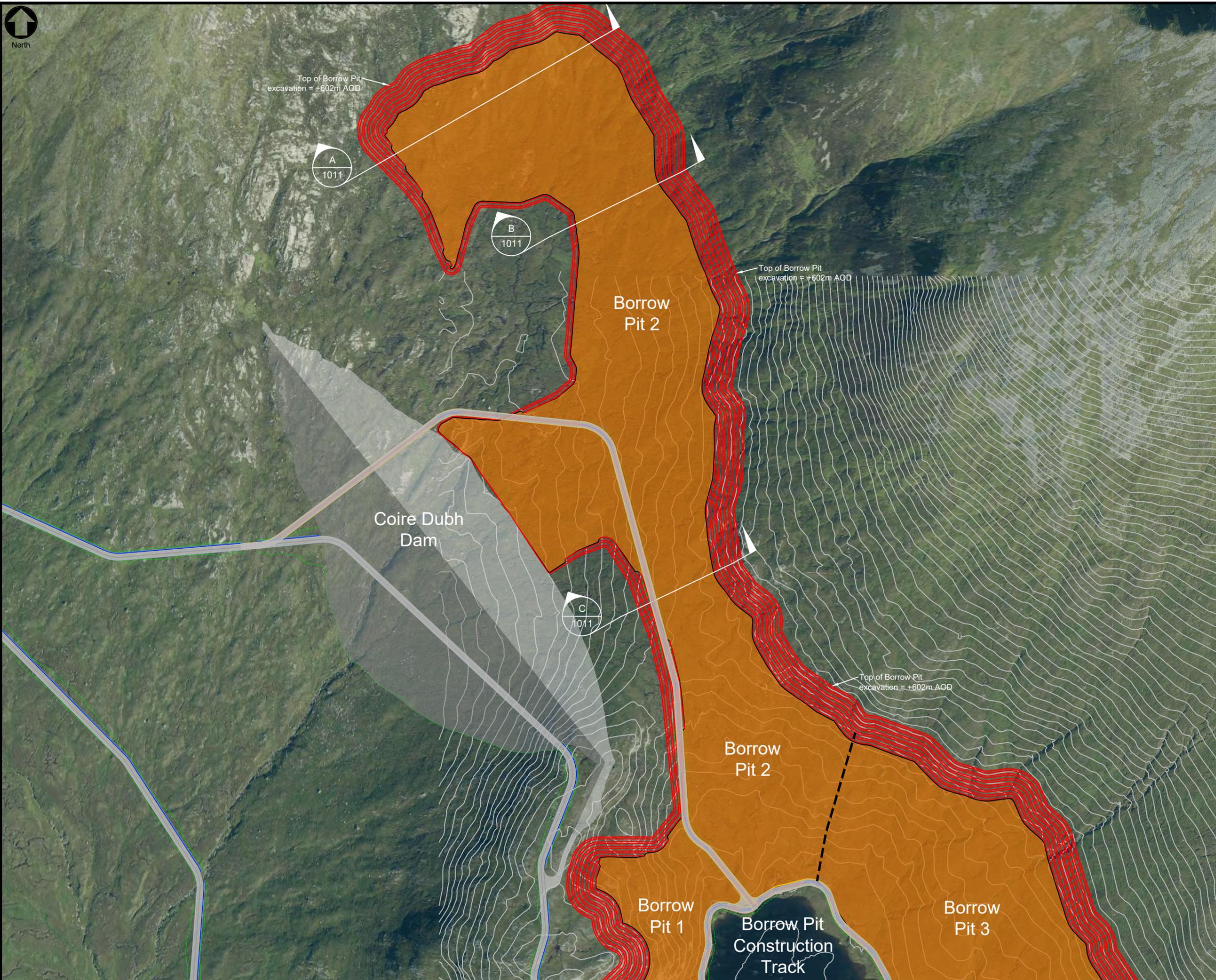
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TITLE
**BORROW PIT 1
TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS
FIGURE 2.34**

SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:2000	STATUS EIA
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/1001	REVISION E2	



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TITLE
**BORROW PIT 2 PLAN
FIGURE 2.35**

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Plan
1:5000 @ A3



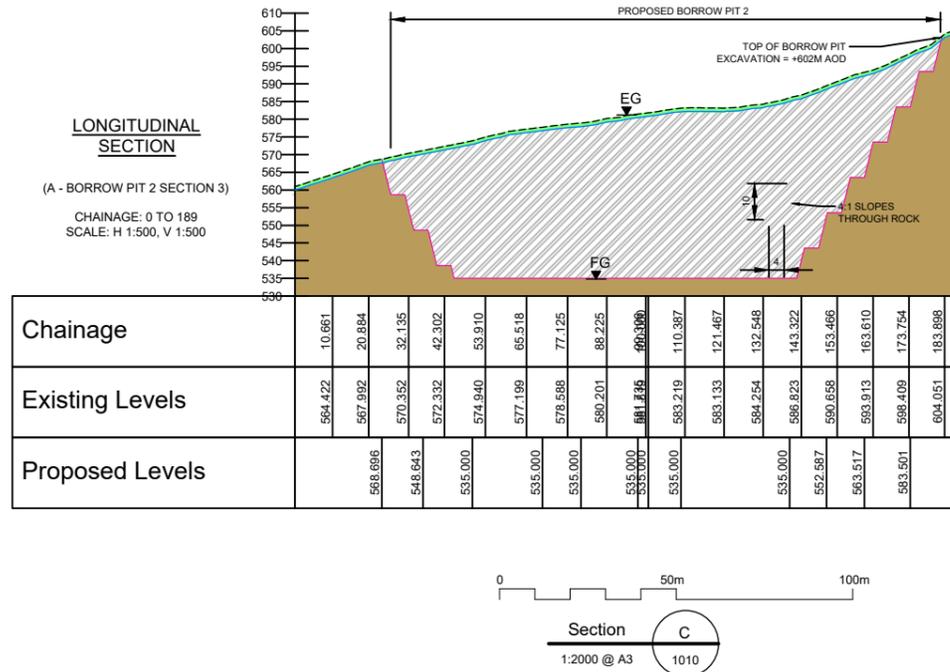
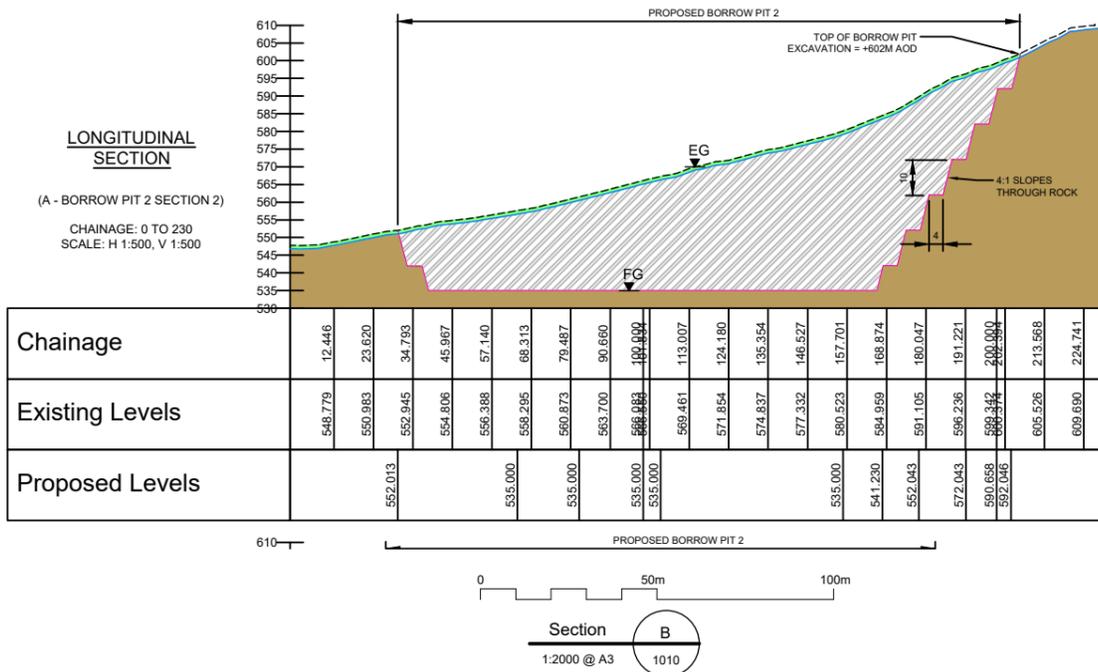
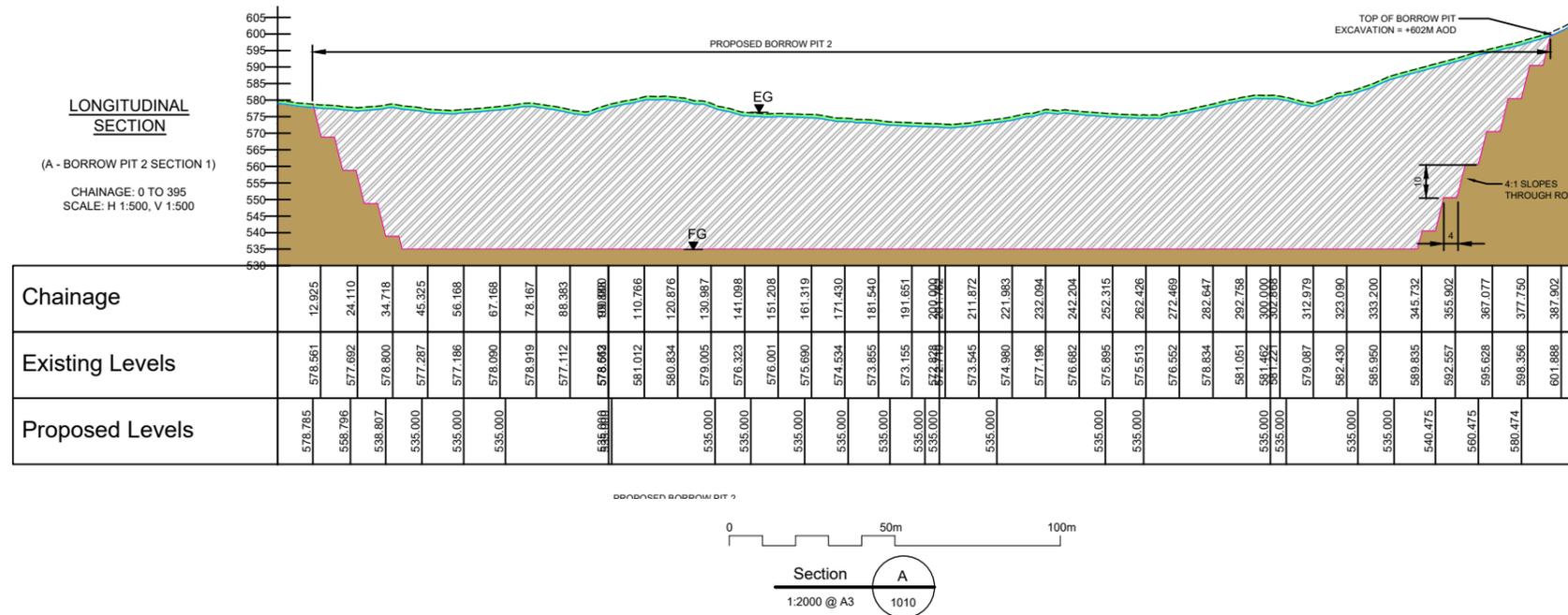
SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:5000	STATUS EIA
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/1010	REVISION E2	

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REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHK'D	APP'D

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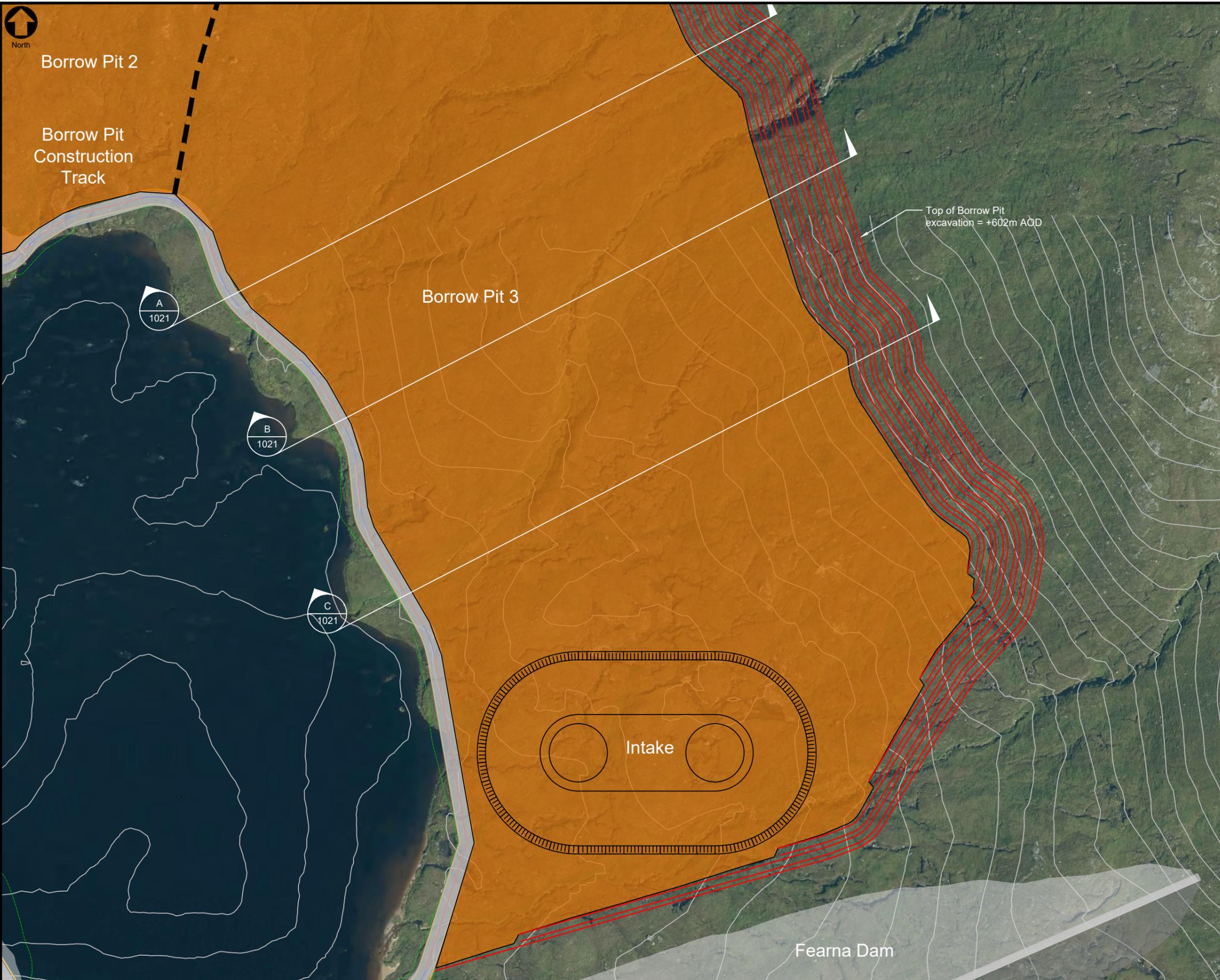
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TITLE
**BORROW PIT 2
TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS
FIGURE 2.36**

SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:2000	STATUS EIA
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/1011	REVISION E2	

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REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHK'D	APP'D
E2	02.12.25	SM	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	MH	FRA

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TITLE
**BORROW PIT 3 PLAN
FIGURE 2.37**

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Plan
1:2000 @ A3

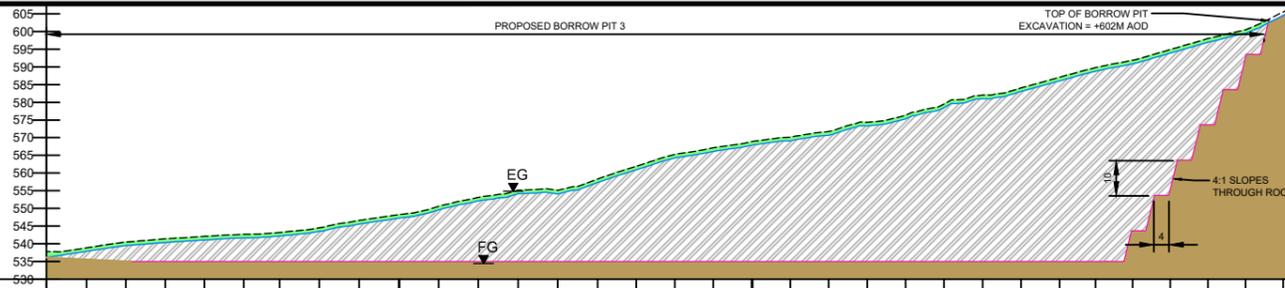


SIZE	SCALE AT A3	STATUS
A3	1:2000	EIA
DRAWING NUMBER	REVISION	
FEA/FC4/1020	E2	

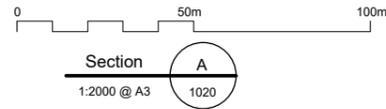
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LONGITUDINAL SECTION

(A - BORROW PIT 3 SECTION 1)
CHAINAGE: 0 TO 354
SCALE: H 1:500, V 1:500

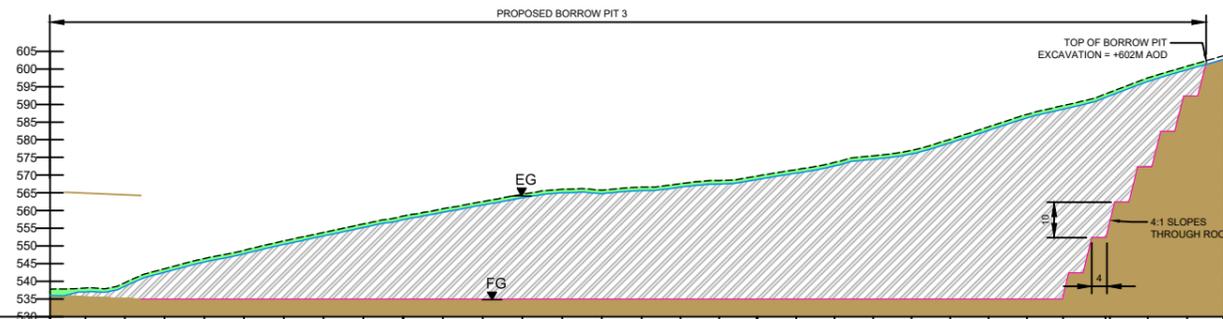


Chainage	11.370	22.503	33.635	44.768	55.900	66.019	77.275	88.530	99.786	111.041	122.296	133.552	144.807	156.062	167.317	178.572	189.827	201.082	212.337	223.592	234.847	246.102	257.357	268.612	279.867	291.122	302.377	313.632	324.887	336.142	347.397	354.000		
Existing Levels	538.855	540.464	541.373	542.073	542.649	543.185	544.506	546.596	548.286	550.576	553.115	555.168	555.072	558.307	561.916	565.267	567.118	188.835	568.830	570.106	571.696	574.351	576.356	579.513	582.011	584.053	587.076	589.818	591.901	594.912	598.006	600.492	605.539	
Proposed Levels	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000

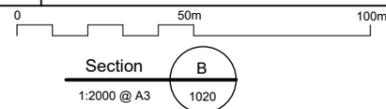


LONGITUDINAL SECTION

(A - BORROW PIT 3 SECTION 2)
CHAINAGE: 0 TO 332
SCALE: H 1:500, V 1:500

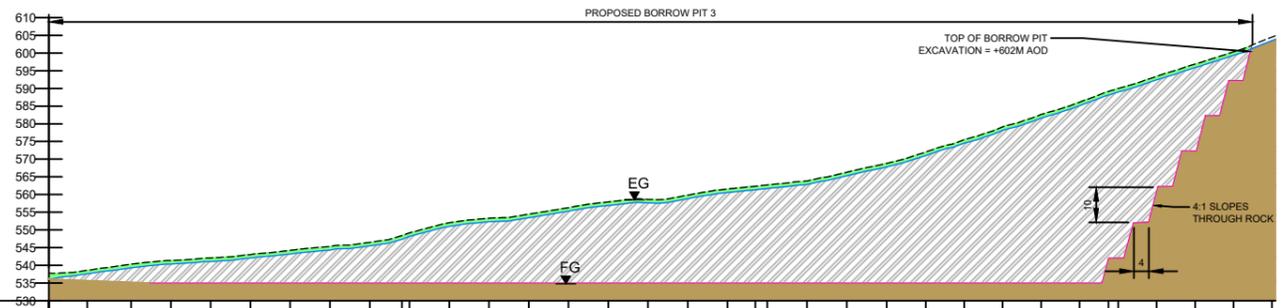


Chainage	10.017	21.162	32.418	43.673	54.928	66.184	77.439	88.694	99.949	111.205	122.461	133.716	144.971	156.227	167.482	178.737	189.992	201.247	212.503	223.758	235.013	246.268	257.523	268.778	280.033	291.288	302.543	313.798	325.053	332.125		
Existing Levels	538.982	539.566	543.520	546.389	548.744	551.391	553.789	556.184	558.423	560.496	562.531	564.615	566.005	568.730	566.618	567.600	568.496	569.708	571.554	573.600	575.475	577.012	580.128	583.566	587.176	589.650	592.832	597.893	600.805	603.716		
Proposed Levels	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000

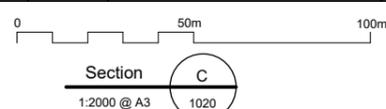


LONGITUDINAL SECTION

(A - BORROW PIT 3 SECTION 3)
CHAINAGE: 0 TO 353
SCALE: H 1:500, V 1:500



Chainage	10.878	23.324	34.580	45.835	57.090	68.346	79.601	90.857	102.112	113.367	124.623	135.878	147.133	158.389	169.644	180.899	192.155	203.410	214.665	225.921	237.176	248.431	259.687	270.942	282.197	293.452	304.708	315.963	327.218	338.473	349.728	353.000	
Existing Levels	538.590	540.319	541.320	542.051	543.049	544.191	545.308	546.475	548.378	552.016	555.297	554.438	556.276	557.906	559.606	559.831	561.589	562.364	562.705	563.818	566.291	568.892	572.012	575.515	579.127	582.623	586.113	589.147	592.289	596.894	600.332	604.542	
Proposed Levels	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000	535.000



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REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHK'D	APP'D

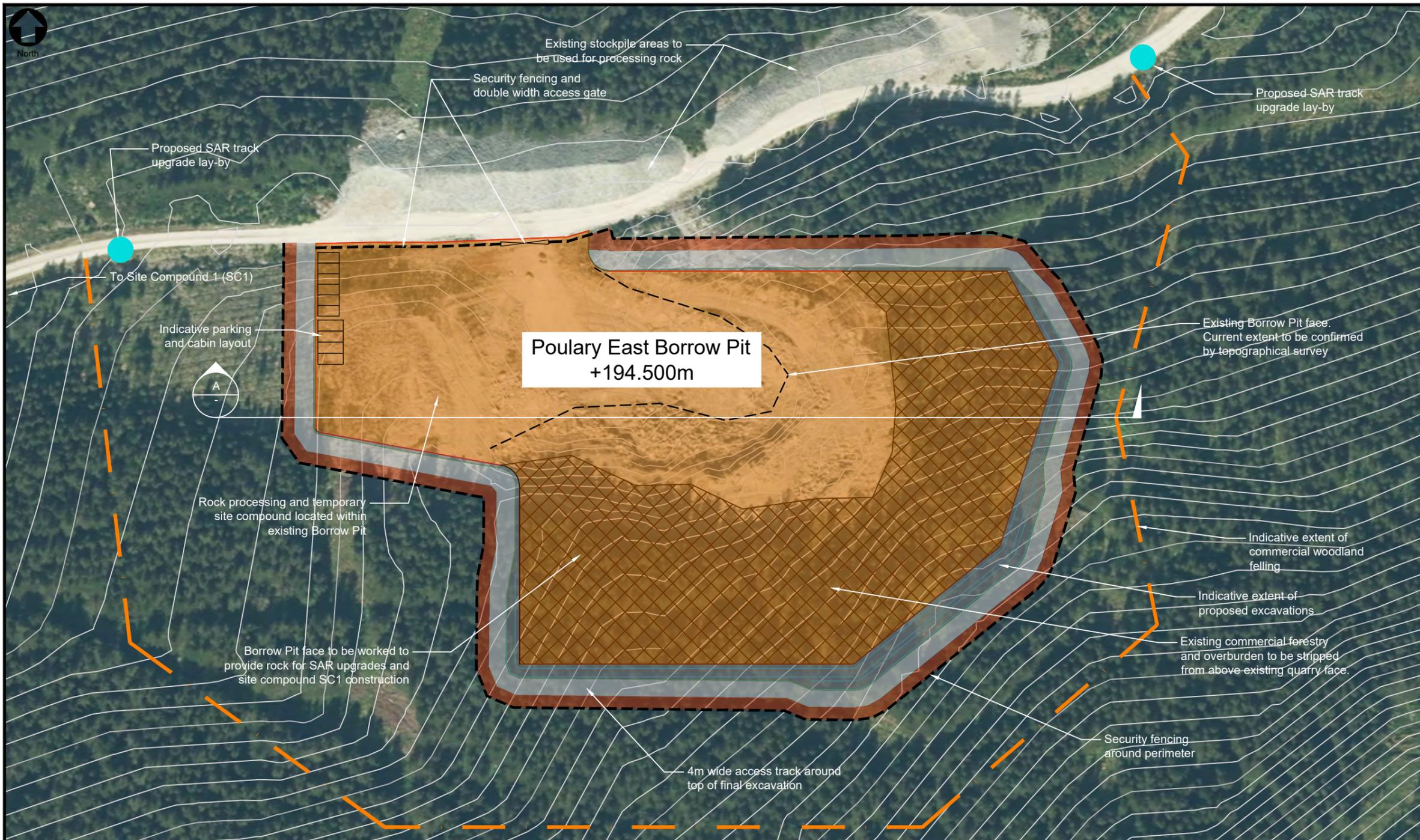
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**BORROW PIT 3
TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS
FIGURE 2.38**

SIZE	SCALE AT A3	STATUS	EIA
A3	1:2000		
DRAWING NUMBER	FEA/FC4/1021	REVISION	E2

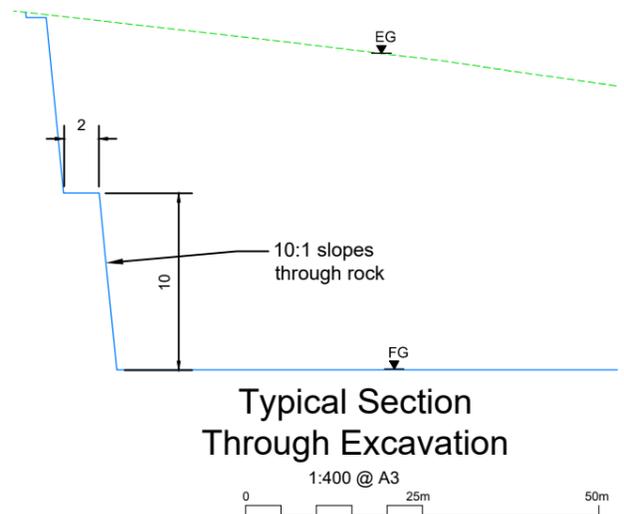
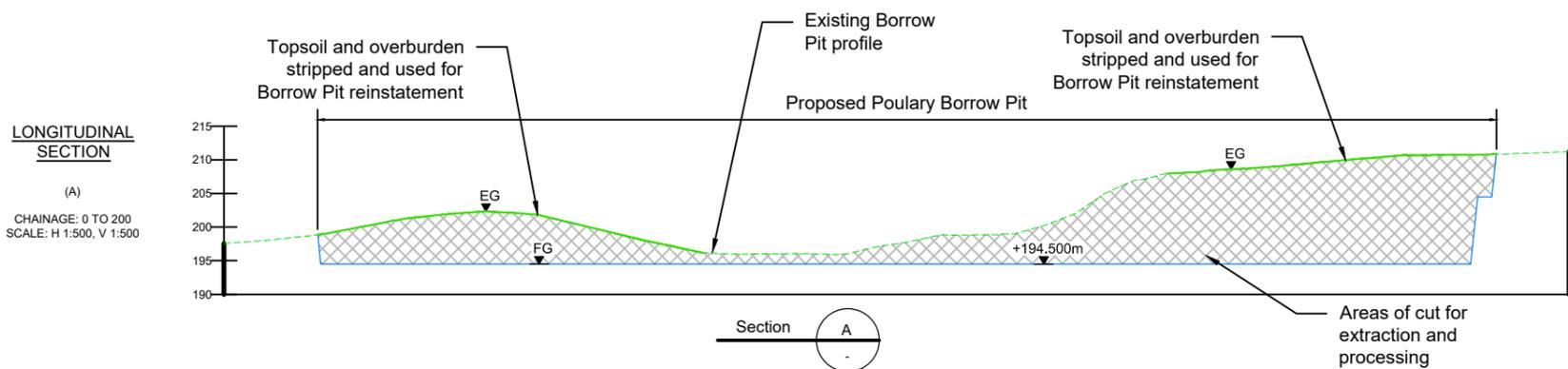


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 2. All dimensions are in metres unless noted otherwise.
 3. All quarrying operations to be in accordance with UK Quarries Regulations. Quarry to be left in a state agreed with FLS and returned to FLS control on completion of works.

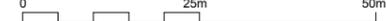
Plan

1:1000 @ A3



Typical Section Through Excavation

1:400 @ A3



REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	SM	FOR PLANNING	MH	FRA
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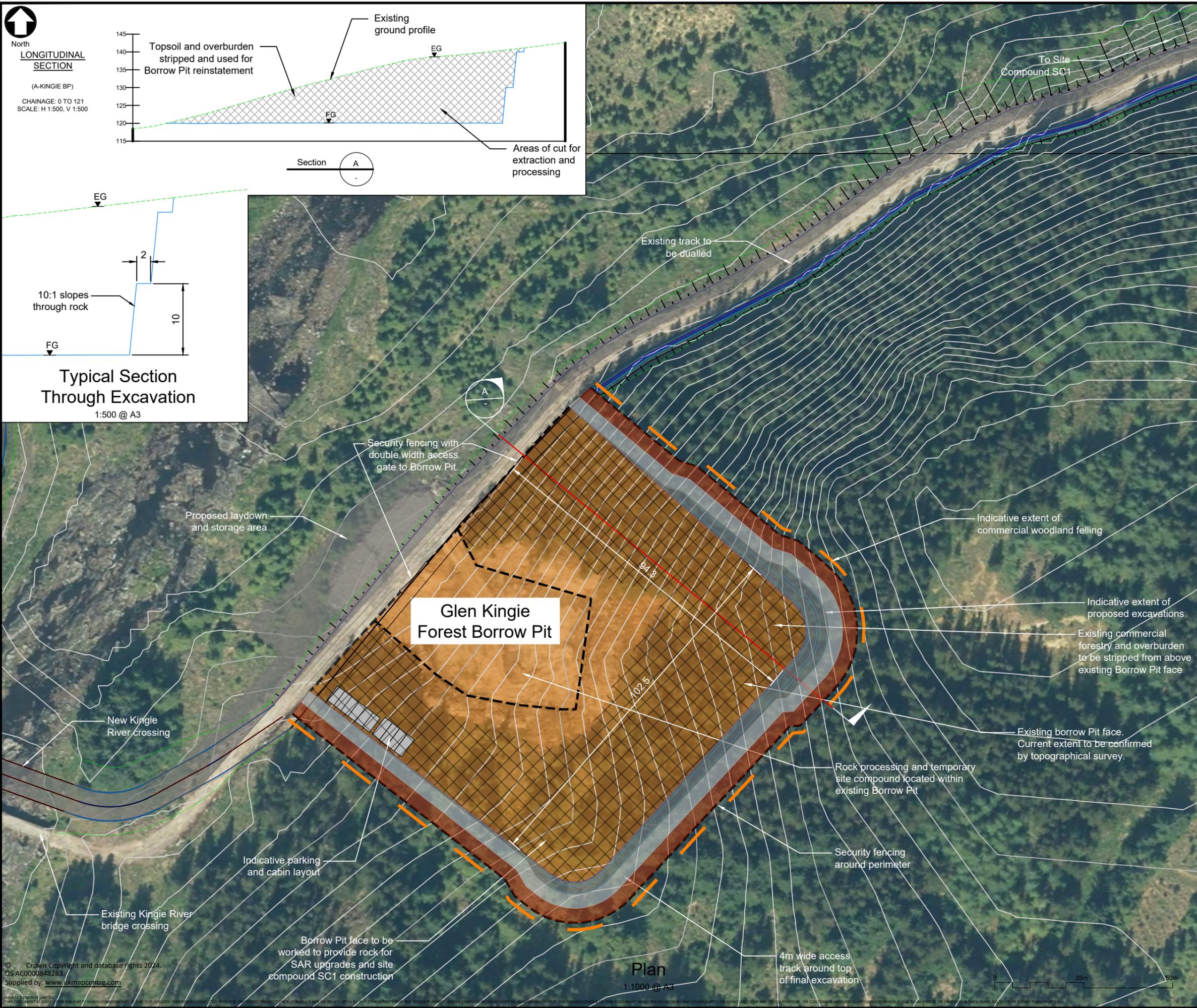
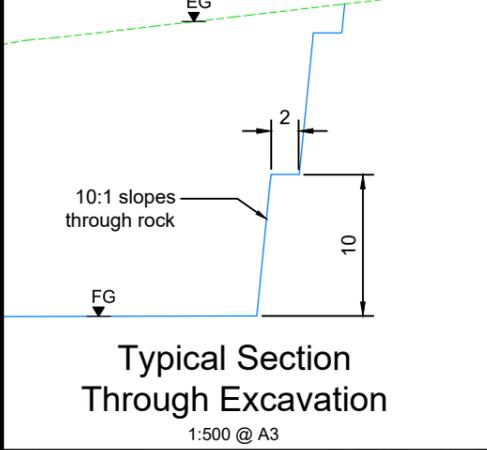
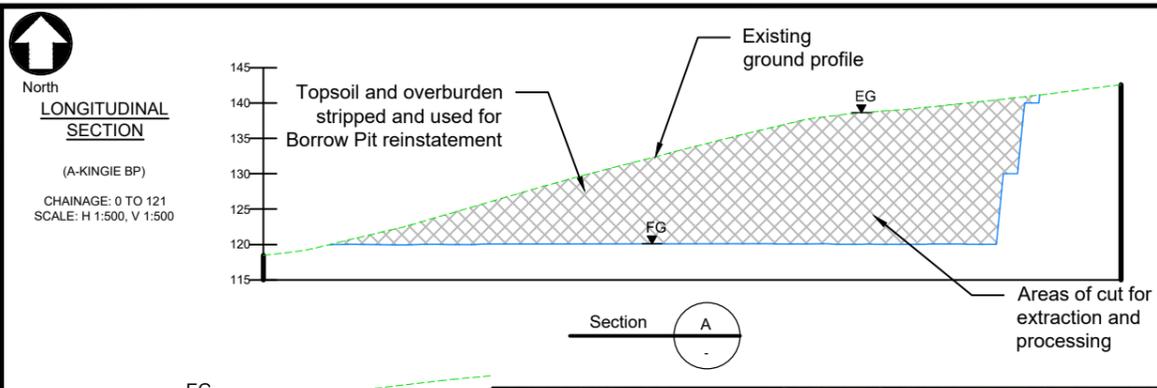
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**POULARY EAST BORROW PIT
FIGURE 2.27**

SIZE	SCALE AT A3	STATUS	EIA
A3	1:1000		
DRAWING NUMBER	FEA/FC4/1025	REVISION	E1

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REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHKD	APPD

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CLIENT
FEARNA STORAGE

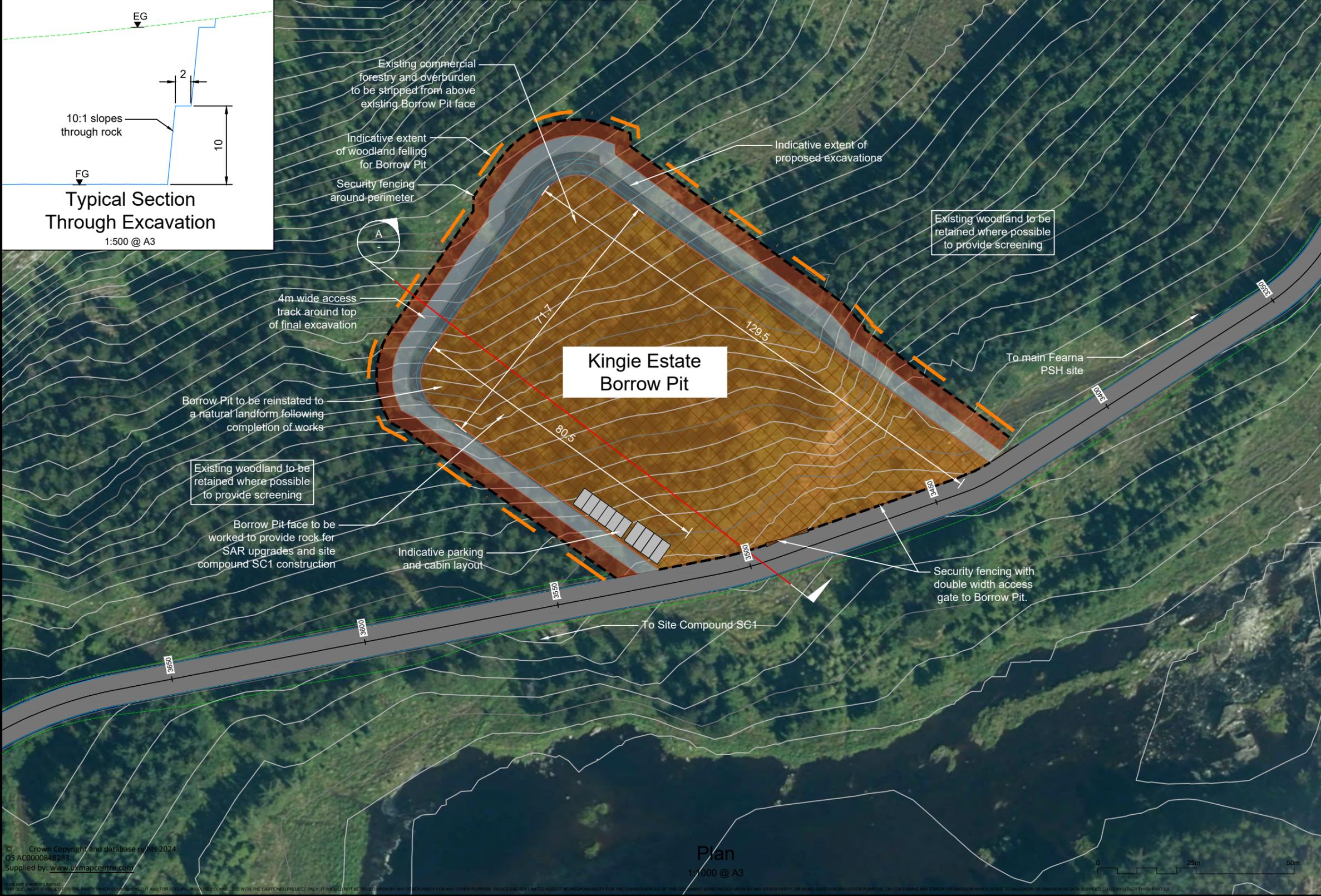
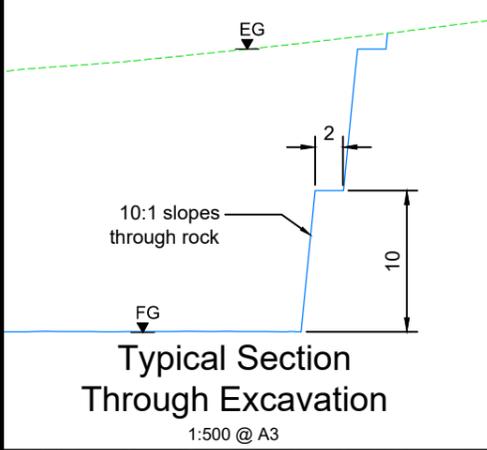
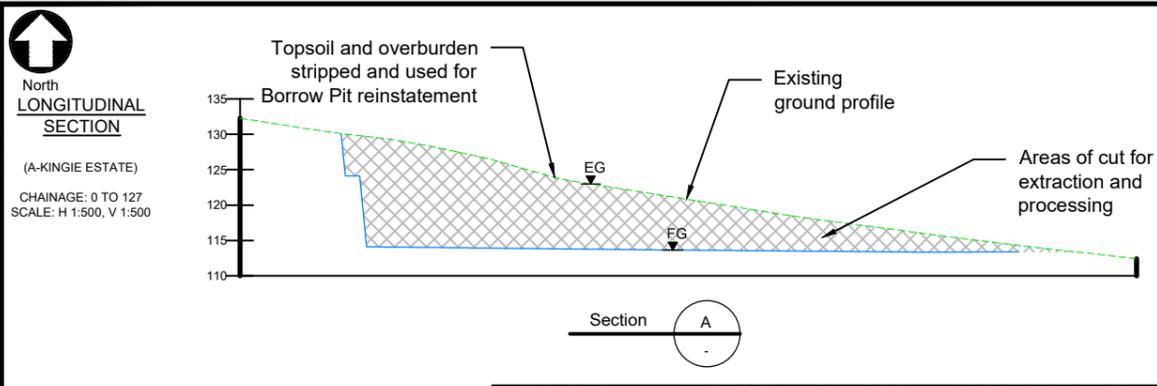
PROJECT
PROPOSED FEARNA PSH

TITLE
**GLEN KINGIE BORROW PIT
FIGURE 2.28**

SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:1000	STATUS EIA	REVISION E1
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/1030			

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IF IN DOUBT - ASK

- NOTES
1. All levels are in metres above ordnance datum (mAOD).
 2. All dimensions are in metres unless noted otherwise.
 3. All quarrying operations to be in accordance with UK Quarries Regulations. Quarry to be left in a state agreed with FLS and returned to FLS control on completion of works.

E1	19.02.25	SM	FOR PLANNING	MH	FRA
REV	DATE	DRAWN	NOTES	CHKD	APPD

GILKES energy

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CLIENT
FEARNA STORAGE

PROJECT
PROPOSED FEARNA PSH

TITLE
**KINGIE ESTATE BORROW PIT
FIGURE 2.29**

SIZE A3	SCALE AT A3 1:1000	STATUS EIA	REVISION E1
DRAWING NUMBER FEA/FC4/1035			

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