Agenda Item	6
Report No	PLN/026/26

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: North Planning Applications Committee

Date: 10 June 2026

Report Title: 25/02382/S36: S4N Spittal Limited
Land 500M West of DC Site Spittal Sub Station
Halkirk

Report By: Area Planning Manager - North

Purpose/Executive Summary

Description: Achies BESS - Construct and operate a battery energy storage system (BESS) development and associated infrastructure, with a generating capacity of approximately 162MW.

Ward: 03 - Wick and East Caithness

Development category: National Development (Section 36 Application)

Reason referred to Committee: National Development (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 all other applicable material considerations.

Recommendation

Members are asked to agree the recommendation to **RAISE NO OBJECTION** to the application 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 (as amended). The proposed development is for the installation of a battery energy storage system (BESS) and associated infrastructure. The scheme will have a capacity of approximately 162MW. Due to the installed capacity exceeding 50MW, the proposed development falls under the provisions of the Electricity Act 1989 and is classed as National Development under National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). At the same time, the Applicant is seeking deemed planning permission under Section 57 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

1.2 The proposed development comprises the following elements:

- 72 battery storage units arranged in pairs (6.1m x 2.4m and 3.2m high) (Fig. 1.7);
- 36 Medium Voltage (MV) Skid containers - 6.1m x 2.4m wide – each contain a power distribution cabinet and MV transformer (Fig. 1.8);
- A substation compound – including a control building (15m x 10m, 5.4m high and power transformer system (highest part is 7.4m);
- CCTV, lighting and permitter fencing (Fig. 1.10);
- Formation of new access track leading to the main BESS area from an existing access off the A9, which serves the existing Spittal Converter Station;
- New internal access road which provides two points of entry onto the BESS site;
- Fire water runoff tank and fire water supply tank;
- An underground cable connection to the existing Spittal Converter Station (typical trench details shown in Fig. 1.4); and
- Drainage, landscaping and biodiversity enhancement.

1.3 The BESS containers and Skid Containers will be located on the BESS compound (footprint of 9,450 m2 – Fig. 1.6). The Substation Compound (footprint of 5,000 m2) will house the Control Building and the Power Transform System, this is detailed in Fig.1.9.

1.4 BESS developments are designed to collect and store energy from the grid at times of higher generation but lower demand. Energy is then released back to the grid in times of higher or unexpected peaks in demand. This provides grid stabilisation by providing a flexible and efficient solution for storing excess power at times of low demand or excess generation from renewable sources, which would otherwise be wasted. A grid connection will be made to the adjacent Spittal Converter Station. The alignment of the cable route is yet to be confirmed, but it is anticipated to be accommodated within the red line site boundary (Fig. 1.13).

1.5 The proposal will be accessed from an existing access track from the A9 (Trunk Road) which serves the existing Spittal Convertor Station. A length of 300m of this track may need to be upgraded while a further 900m of new access track is proposed to link the BESS area with the end of the existing track.

1.6 It is anticipated that construction will take approx. 12 months. Following this, visits from staff during the operational period will be limited to maintenance vehicles. This is estimated to be one visit per week by a car/van. The applicant is seeking permission for a temporary period of 40 years from the date of final commissioning.

1.7 Whilst public consultation for Section 36 applications is not mandatory, the applicants carried out pre-application consultation. Four public drop-in events were held at Thurso Library (4th March and 1st April 2025) and Ross Institute, Halkirk (5th March and 2nd April). These events were publicised via a leaflet drop to 4,241 addresses including residential and business addresses within a 3-mile radius. Notices were published in the Caithness Courier at least 7 days before the consultation events. A dedicated project website was created and launched to coincide with the first round of public events. Further details are provided within the submitted Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) report.

1.8 Following an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening request in May 2025, Scottish Ministers confirmed in consultation with Council Officers that the proposal does not constitute EIA development and that the application does not require to be accompanied by an EIA report. It is noted that the red line application site boundary for the current application is bigger than submitted for the screening request. This is however due to the inclusion of an underground cable which does not materially alter the nature or scale of the development upon which the Screening Opinion was adopted.

1.9 The application is accompanied by a supporting Environmental Appraisal (EA). The EA chapters include: Landscape and Visual Impacts; Cultural Heritage; Biodiversity; Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Peat; Access Traffic and Transport and Noise. The application is also accompanied by a PAC report, a Socio-Economic Appraisal, an Outline Battery Fire Safety Management Plan, and a Planning and Energy Statement.

1.10 The applicant sought formal pre-application advice from the Planning Authority in November 2024 (24/03142/PREMAJ). This encompassed a substantially larger solar and BESS development, over three separate areas of land. The current application site is located within a much smaller area of one of those original parcels of land. Officers advised that in principle this type of development is supported, however, concerns were raised in relation cumulative visual impacts, particularly experienced by those using the nearby road network and scattered properties in the surrounding area. Careful consideration would be required to mitigate the landscape and visual impacts. Matters relating to construction traffic management; flood risk and drainage; impacts on the natural environment including trees and biodiversity enhancement; noise and fire risk management, were also highlighted as needing to be addressed. Officers considered it is unlikely that the substantially larger scale development proposed at pre-

application would receive support unless appropriate mitigation measures could be agreed to minimise the potential detrimental impacts detailed in the response.

1.11 No variations made to the application to date. However, further application drawings are anticipated to be submitted ahead of the Planning Authority responding to the Energy Consents Unit. These further drawings are expected to detail an amended site layout design to be implemented in event that the West of Orkney Substation (23/05353/PIP) does not progress as planned, or ahead of implementing this proposed BESS. The further application drawings are to be based on the amended visualisations provided to Officers on 2 April 2026 to specify:

a) Finished Substation Platform Level reduced by 2m – amended ground level 80m AOD, generating approximately 10,000m3 of material;

b) Finished BESS Platform Level reduced by 1m – amended ground level 78m AOD, generating approximately 10,000m3 of material;

c) Provision of a permitter bund along eastern and northern boundary measuring 3m high, with a 10m wide flat top, with 1:2 inner face and 1:5 outer face, utilising the excavated material on site to achieve a balanced cut and fill;

d) The bund to be planted with native woodland in accordance with an amended Landscape and Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan (original Figure 5.8); and

e) An amended site drainage strategy to facilitate the above.

1.2 Further information / clarification was submitted during the Officers assessment of the application to address the following:

- Statement outlining compliance with the updated NFCC guidance;
- An updated flood risk assessment relating to emergency vehicular access in the event of a fire during a flood event; and
- Updated statement in relation to cumulative traffic impacts.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The 12.2ha application site is located 3.5km south-east of Halkirk and 2.5km north-west of Spittal. It is situated 750m to the west of the A9 and 500m north-west of the existing Spittal Convertor Station. The main part of the site is located on a rectangular area of land which extends to 12.2ha of agricultural land, although no part of the site is classified as Prime Agricultural Land. The site has historically been drained and is presently used for rough grazing. The landform slopes gently from just over 85m above ordnance datum (AOD) in the south-west to just under 70m AOD in the north-east. The site is bounded to the south-west and south-east by woodland, moorland is to the north-west, and by a track and overhead line to the north-east with pasture fields beyond.

2.2 There are scattered residential properties within the area, the closest of which is located 450m to the south on the opposite side of the existing woodland forming the sites southern boundary.

2.3 The site is not located within any landscape designations or Wild Land Area (WLA). The Flow Country and Berridale Coast Special Landscape Area (SLA) is located 7.6km to the south-west and the site is located 4km from the northern boundary of the closest WLA - Causeymire-Knockfin Flows. The site is located within the Farmed Lowland Plain LCT (143). This LCT is characterised by a broad and relatively low-lying plain, gently undulating to form shallow valleys and subtle low ridges. Occasional smooth hills rise above the more low-lying plain forming local landmarks. A small area of the Sweeping Moorland and Flows (134) also lies within the 3km study area.

2.4 The site is not located within any national nature conservation designation with qualifying ecological interests. The following are within 7km:

Designation	Qualifying Features	Distance to the Development
Achanarras Quarry SSSI	Geological: Silurian-Devonian Chordata palaeontology (fossil fish) Non-marine Devonian stratigraphy.	550m
River Thurso SAC	Atlantic Salmon	2.19km
Caithness Lochs SPA and Ramsar Site	The SPA and Ramsar designated for Whooper swan Greenland white-fronted goose Migratory Waterfowl: Greylag goose	4.29km
Loch Scarmclate SSSI	Greylag goose (non-breeding). Base-rich loch.	4.29km
Loch Watten SAC and Loch Calder SSSI	SAC - Naturally nutrient-rich lakes or lochs. SSSI - Greylag goose (non-breeding), Base-rich loch, open water transition loch.	5.26km
Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA, Ramsar	The SPA is designated for Red-throated diver, black-throated diver, hen harrier, golden eagle, merlin, golden plover, wood sandpiper, short-eared owl, dunlin, and common scoter, greenshank and wigeon. The Ramsar site is designated for Freshwater pearl mussel, otter, red-throated diver, black throated diver, golden plover, wood sandpiper, dunlin, wigeon, common scoter and greenshank.	6.11km
Shielton Peatlands SSSI	Blanket bog, Breeding bird assemblage.	6.11km

Blar nam Faoileag SSSI	Blanket bog	6.27km
Loch Calder SSSI	Non-breeding Greenland white-fronted goose, Greylag goose, Whooper swan.	6.98 km

2.5 The Burn of Achanarras runs along the eastern boundary of the site. There are several small watercourses/unnamed tributaries located near the site and ditches with the site boundary. The site is located 5km upstream of the River Thurso surface Drinking Water Protected Area.

2.6 EA Appendix 6.1 outlines the cultural heritage assets within the site boundary and inner/outer study areas. There are no designated cultural heritage assets within the site boundary. The closest are the following Scheduled Monuments:

- Achanarras Hut Circle (SM2402) 120m to the north-west;
- Achanarras Cairns (SM2400, SM2401) 240m and 310m to the north-west;
- The Shean Cairn (SM 475) 450m to the south-west;
- Achies Broch (SM 2235) 800m to the north-west;
- St Magnus' Church Burial Ground and Hospital (SM 5415) 1.2km to the south-east; and
- Fairy Hillock, chambered cairn SE of Spittal Mains (SM 528) 1.8km to the north-west.

There are no other designated cultural heritage assets (Inventory Garden and Designed Landscapes; Listed Buildings; Conservation Areas; Inventory Battlefields or Word Heritage Sites) within 3km of the site. Three non-designated cultural heritage assets have been recorded within the site boundary.

2.7 The closest path to the proposed development is the Achanarras Quarry track (CA06.07) 600m south of the site boundary. The Old Quarry Path (CA06.08) is located 2km south of the site access junction. There are no cycle routes within the immediate vicinity.

2.8 Cumulative Developments: There are a number of infrastructure developments within the vicinity of the site which are either operational or at various stages within the planning system. These are summarised in Appendix 3.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1	03.03.2025	25/00844/SCRE: Screening Opinion Request for Achies Battery Energy Storage System - Construct and operate a battery energy storage system (BESS) facility with a generating capacity of approximately 162 MW along with access and associated infrastructure.	Scottish Minsters confirmed EIA not required
3.2	02.12.2024	24/03142/PREMAJ: Solar and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)	Pre-application advice issued

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4.1 Advertised: Section 36 Application

Date Advertised:

- Caithness Courier (25th June 2025/ 2nd July 2025)
- The Edinburgh Gazette (27th June 2025)
- The Herald (25th June 2025).

Representation deadline: 27 July 2025

THC representations: 0

ECU representations: 9 objections

4.2 Material considerations raised are summarised as follows:

- Impacts upon flora and fauna. Industrialisation of the landscape and visual effects from the scale of the development (including cumulative effects and effects from the A9);
- Impacts upon amenity (including cumulative effects);
- Not in accordance with the Development Plan;
- Hazard and safety of BESS technology – in relation to fire risk and hazardous chemicals. Local services could not cope in the event of a fire and there is a lack of regulation. Also, a risk to adjacent electricity transmission infrastructure, adjacent woodland and local residents. [Officer Note: This is only a material planning consideration where it affects the layout or design of the facility.]
- Effects on local watercourse and flood risk from cumulative developments;
- Water used on a fire could contaminate the adjacent burn of Achanarras which flows through farmland;
- Limited lifespan for the equipment – what is the long terms disposal strategy;
- Cumulative effects not considered or detailed in the visualisations; and
- No long term employment benefits.

4.3 Non-material considerations raised are summarised as follows:

- Assertion that BESS specific policy and guidance should be developed before BESS applications are determined;
- No justifiable need within Caithness, Sutherland the Highlands, Scotland or the UK for this additional energy storage development;
- Hazard and safety concerns, including fire safety where this is covered by other legislation and does not affect the layout or design of the facility; and

- De-population in the area, no community investment.

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

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

5. CONSULTATIONS

Consultations undertaken by The Highland Council

5.1 **Community Wealth Building Team** does not object to the application and will liaise directly with the applicant regarding the Highland Social Value Charter.

5.2 **Development Plans** does not object to the application and outlines the applicable Development Plan policies.

5.3 **Ecology Team** does not object to the application subject to conditions. These require the appointment of an Ecological Clerk of Works; the works to be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP); a Habitat Management Plan; the submission GIS shapefiles for biodiversity enhancement areas and the protection of nesting birds. An informative relating protected species is also recommended.

5.4 **Environmental Health** does not object to the application. The development is unlikely to result in a breach of legislation otherwise enforced by Environmental Health, subject to conditions to limit residential amenity impacts from construction activities and operational noise.

5.5 **Flood Risk Management** does not object to the application subject to a condition requiring its pre-approval of a finalised Drainage Impact Assessment.

5.6 **Historic Environment Team** does not object to the application but recommends a condition securing a Programme of Archaeological Works.

5.7 **Landscape Officer** does not object to the application. Largely agrees with the LVIA and it generally accords with best practice guidance. However, considers that there is an under-assessment of effects on the A9 (VP1). The proposed landscape mitigation would partially screen the proposed development by year 10. However, the applicant could have proposed more mitigation to the east to minimise the effects from the A9.

5.8 **Scottish Fire and Rescue** does not object to the application and recommends that the proposal is assessed against NFCC Best Practice guidance on BESS.

5.9 **Transport Planning** does not object to the application, subject to conditions requiring a Schedule of Mitigation plan, a Construction Traffic Management Plan with the potential requirement for a Section 96 Wear and Tear Agreement and

an Abnormal Indivisible Load Traffic Management Plan.

Consultations Undertaken by The Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU)

5.10 **Halkirk and District Community Council (Host) object** to the application. There is no accepted standard, either technical or safety, for BESS based on Li-Ion technology in Scotland and the UK. The application as submitted does not include an appropriate technical assessment or justification of the project. Large number of developments in the area and there is no overarching plan for delivery of an energy solution or a means of assessing the proposals. The application does not recognise or address the totality of developments within the area. The risk of fire (including upon the A9) with Li-Ion technology and the cumulative effects of this with other development in the area is unacceptable. The Outline Battery Fire Safety Management Plan is poor and should be support by an independently assessed Fire Safety Assessment. The risk posed by the development and other adjacent developments cannot be correctly assessed without a suitable standard. It also raises concerns that Caithness has no full time Fire and Rescue Service so has no means of dealing with any incident with this or adjacent developments.

5.11 **British Telecom (BT)** does not object to the application and advises that the project should not cause interference with their current and presently planned radio network.

5.12 **Health and Safety Executive** do not object to the application. The development area is not within any explosive licence safeguarding zones and is not within any HSE consultation zones. The proposed development does not appear to be of a type that would have hazardous substances present at or above threshold quantities.

5.13 **Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd (HIAL)** does not object to the application. The development would not infringe the safeguarding criteria and operation of Wick Airport.

5.14 **Historic Environment Scotland** does not object to the application. Although the proposal is situated close to several scheduled monuments, the development does not compromise the setting of these heritage assets.

5.15 **Ministry of Defence (MOD)** does not object to the application. The proposed development would not have any detrimental impact on the operational capability of a defence site or asset.

5.16 **National Air Traffic Services** does not object to the application and has no safeguarding concerns.

5.17 **NatureScot** does not object to the application subject to conditions and strict adherence to mitigation measures. The proposal is hydrologically connected to River Thurso Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is protected for its population of Atlantic salmon. It advises that the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the Atlantic salmon feature of the River Thurso SAC, so the

Scottish Government, is required to carry out an appropriate assessment in view of the site's conservation objectives for its qualifying interests. However, it concludes that subject to pollution prevention/mitigation measures being secured through a detailed Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP), then the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC.

In relation to fire risk management, without mitigation, it considers that the proposal has the potential to damage Atlantic salmon of the River Thurso SAC as a result of measures in place or procedures required to fight a fire. The development will need to ensure that no fire suppressant or polluted water run-off enters watercourses in the event of a fire. Consideration should be given, within the site design, to the management of water run-off (e.g. drainage systems, interceptors, bunded lagoons etc.) and detailed in the Emergency Response Plan.

5.18 **Office for Nuclear Regulation** does not object to the application and have no specific comments.

5.19 **Scottish Gas Network (SGN)** does not object to the application. Confirms there are no high pressure assets within the vicinity of the site.

5.20 **Scottish Water** does not object to the application. Confirms that there are no drinking water catchments or water abstraction sources, which are designated as Drinking Water Protected Areas under the Water Framework Directive, that may be affected by the proposed activity. Also indicate that there are Scottish Water assets in the proximity of the development area. The developer should inquire directly with Scottish Water regarding this.

5.21 **SEPA** does not object to the application and has no site specific comments. This is on the basis that the Burn of Achanarras watercourse crossing is not to be replaced.

5.22 **SSEN** does not object to the application as there are no operational or safety concerns regarding overhead lines or the operation of Spittal substation.

5.23 **Transport Scotland** does not object to the application and recommends conditions securing the proposed route for any abnormal loads, any accommodation measures required on the trunk road network, additional signage or temporary traffic control measures deemed necessary and a Construction Traffic Management Plan. Informatives relating to carrying out works within the trunk road boundary are also recommended.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

6.1 Appendix 1 of this report provides details of the documents that comprise the adopted Development Plan, including details of pertinent planning policies as well as adopted supplementary guidance, and other material policy considerations which are relevant to the assessment of the application.

7. PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.1 This application has been submitted to the Scottish Government under Section

36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended). 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 S36 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 decision maker (Scottish Ministers) 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 proposal, 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) Development Plan and Other Planning Policy
b) Energy and Socio-Economic Impacts
c) Landscape and Visual Impacts (including cumulative impacts)
d) Construction Impacts
e) Natural Heritage, including Ornithology
f) Water, Flood Risk, Drainage and Soils
g) Noise Impacts
h) Health and Safety
i) Roads, Transport and Access
j) Built and Cultural Heritage
k) Other Material Considerations

Development Plan / Other Planning Policy

7.5 The Development Plan comprises National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP), the Caithness and Sutherland

Local Development Plan (2018) (CaSPlan) and various Supplementary Guidance documents associated with these Local Development Plans.

7.6 In summary, the principle of development is established in national policy, with the proposed development being of national importance for the delivery of the National Spatial Strategy. NPF4 considers that Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure will assist in the delivery of the Spatial Strategy and Spatial Priorities for the north of Scotland, and that Highland can continue to make a strong contribution toward meeting Scotland's ambition for net zero. Alongside these ambitions, the strategy for Highland aims to protect environmental assets as well as to stimulate investment in natural and engineered solutions to address climate change. This aim is not new and will clearly require a balancing exercise to be undertaken, which is reflected throughout NPF4.

7.7 At a regional level, the key policy is HwLDP Policy 67. The Council will consider the contribution of the proposed development towards meeting renewable energy generation targets and any positive or negative effects it is likely to have on the local and national economy. It states that the Council will support proposals where it is satisfied that they are located, sited and designed such that they will not be significantly detrimental overall, either individually or cumulatively with other developments, with regard to 11 identified areas, including natural, built and cultural heritage features, species and habitats and visual and landscape impacts.

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

Energy and Socio-Economic Impacts

7.9 The proposed development will have an output capacity of 162MW and will connect to the National Grid via the adjacent Spittal Substation. Whilst the proposed development will not in itself generate renewable electricity, BESS schemes provide infrastructure which seeks to mitigate the intermittency of renewable energy, by storing excess energy when projects generate more than needed and releasing it when demand exceeds generation. This is designed to support local distribution and national transmission electricity networks with the balancing of supply and demand. This allows for a more stable and reliable electricity supply, reducing the reliance on fossil fuel-based backup power for over 40 years.

7.10 BESS proposals also reduce the losses from electricity generated by renewable schemes. At times, these sources generate more power than the grid can accommodate, resulting in curtailment. BESS technology can capture surplus renewable power and store this instead of it being wasted. As a result, the technology is considered to support government policies that seeks to end a reliance on backup electricity generation from fossil fuel reliant generators and allow the full benefits of renewables. This is where the development's intrinsic carbon saving benefits are to be realised.

7.11 Energy storage facilities are expected to be a significant component of national

energy infrastructure. As such developers of BESS facilities are therefore expected to support jobs and economic development thus contributing to the general wealth and economic wellbeing of their hosting communities.

7.12 The application is supported by a Socio-Economic Impact Assessment. This anticipates during the 12 month construction period the proposed development could support up to 30 temporary jobs on site, albeit that 21 (70%) of these could be taken by workers from outside of Highland area. Up to £1.9million of gross value added (GVA) could be generated and it is estimated that the construction workers could spend around £0.3 million in local businesses within north-west Caithness.

7.13 The operational phase (40 years) is estimated to support up to three full-time equivalent jobs (FTE) in Highland and the wider Scottish economy. This will focus on maintenance and ongoing management of the site. The GVA associated with the three FTEs is estimated to be £4.2 million over the 40-year operational life span. The decommissioning phase is estimated to support up to 15 temporary roles on-site over the anticipated 6-month decommissioning programme. Up to £0.5 million GVA could be generated and workers could spend around £0.1 million in local businesses.

7.14 The applicant's assessment states that as far as practical, workers will be sourced from within the Highlands or within Scotland. In addition, the construction contractors will be encouraged to source local workers and resources. Professional development of construction workers will be encouraged to facilitate up-skilling of all workers during the period of their employment compared to point of entry. The upskilling of workers through in-house training is identified as one of the key pathways to achieving the required skillset in Scotland to support its existing and future renewables industry.

7.15 A condition is recommended to secure details of a local employment scheme, to ensure compliance with NPF4 Policy 11c) and to maximise the local socio-economic benefits of the development to the wider community.

7.16 The Council's position on Community Wealth Building has recently been set out in the Social Values Charter for Renewables Investment (2024). The charter sets out the Highland Council's expectations with regard contributing to the success of local communities for companies wishing to invest in renewables in the area. The charter aims to:

- Embed an approach to community wealth building into Highland;
- Maximise economic benefits from our natural environment and resources;
- Engage and involve relevant stakeholders to understand how we can continually improve our impact; and
- Unlock economic opportunities for the area.

7.17 The Charter has been brought to the applicant's attention, and a statement has been submitted in response. However, Community Benefit is not considered a material planning consideration, and therefore the Planning Authority does not have the ability to compel developers to sign up to the provisions of the Charter.

As such, community benefit can only be secured by means of a voluntary arrangement between the Council and the Developer, and the Council's Community Wealth Building Team are aware of the proposal and will conduct their own discussions with the developer directly.

7.18 In addition, a recent announcement was made by the Scottish Government on 18 February 2026 regarding community benefit from renewable energy projects. These are voluntary proposals which include a recommended level of at least £150 per MW per year for battery energy storage projects. Again, although this scheme may deliver socio-economic benefits, it is also to be regarded as another form of community benefit which at the present time should be given no weight in the decision-making process. Again, as with the Councils Social Value Charter, Officers have brought this to the attention of the applicant and the Council's Community Wealth Building Team.

Landscape and Visual Impacts

7.19 An assessment of the likely landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development is outlined in Chapter 5 of the EA. The assessment focusses on a 3km study area and is supported by a number of submissions, including Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping and photomontages from five viewpoints. The EA also provides a cumulative assessment. The Councils Landscape Officer has confirmed that the methodology followed in the assessment is acceptable.

Siting, Layout and Mitigation

7.20 As detailed above this site was presented at the pre-application stage as part of a much larger solar and BESS development. This incorporated three separate areas of land. As part of the pre-application response, Officers stated that landscape and visual effects (including cumulative) were likely to be key issues, and careful consideration would be required to mitigate these effects. The current application site is situated on a much smaller area of one of those original parcels of land presented at pre-application.

7.21 The applicant has confirmed that it has secured a grid offer, so from the applicant's perspective, the sites proximity to the grid is an important design consideration. The existing Spittal Converter Station is located to the south-east of the site and will connect via an underground cable. The final route is not yet fixed with SSEN but will be contained within the application site boundary. This proximity is considered beneficial by the applicant as it reduces energy losses associated with the transport of electricity. It also minimises environmental impacts associated with longer connections.

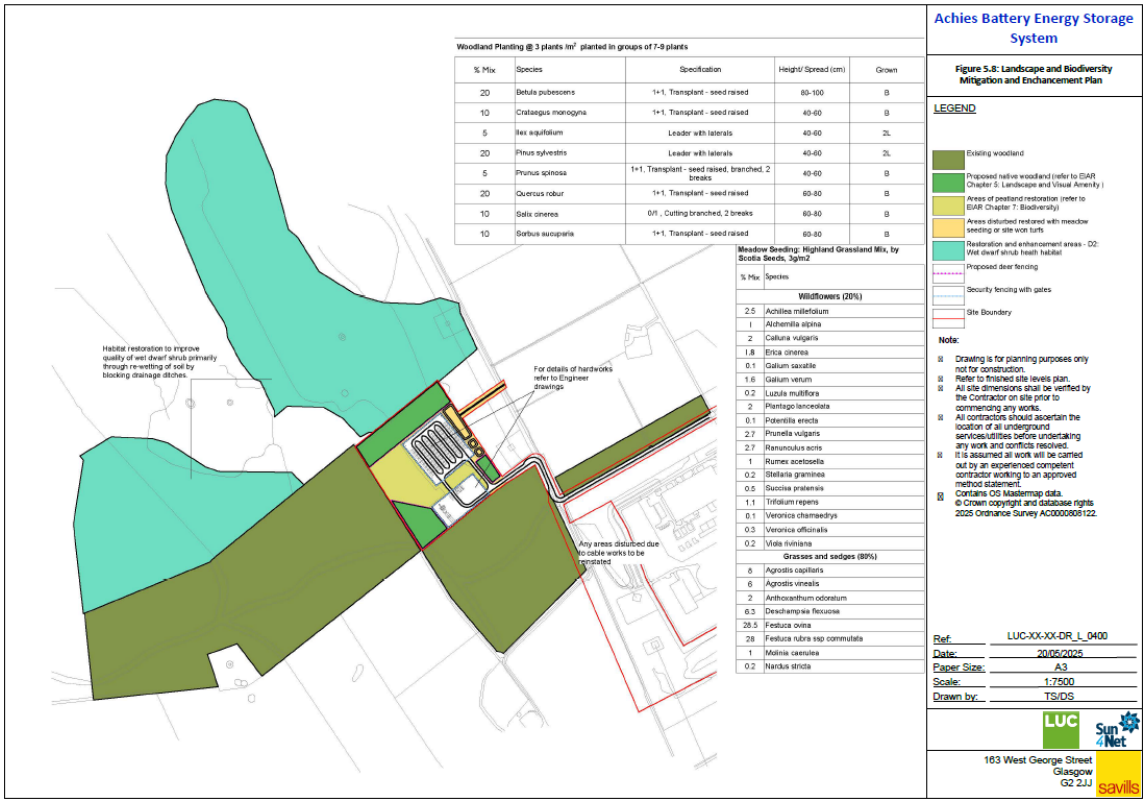
7.22 Although the site is not located within any landscape designations, it is situated within a relatively open landscape. As with other renewable energy and electrical infrastructure in the area a key concern and design aim for Officers has been to contain the visual and landscape effects of projects. This has been through the use of design and landscape mitigation measures (bunding / planting). This is particularly in relation to the impacts and exposure of developments in views obtained from the A9 Trunk Road (such as Banniskirk Substation, Spittal BESS,

West of Orkney onshore transmission infrastructure schemes). This is considered particularly important as the road is considered to be a key route for both locals and tourists visiting the area. In addition, the cumulative aspects of existing and forthcoming electrical and transmission infrastructure projects is also an important factor when assessing applications within this area.

7.23 **Proposed Mitigation**: When viewed from the east (A9 direction) the scheme benefits from the existing blocks of woodland planting and rising land to the rear. The applicant state that these areas are not commercial forestry crops and instead are areas of amenity woodland which are controlled by the owner of the application site. This existing woodland reduces / contains lower level visibility from the south, south east and west and avoids skylinning effects from the A9(T) to the east. The applicant also proposes three additional areas of mixed native broadleaf and coniferous tree planting (EA Fig 5.8 – see below). This purpose of which is to integrate the site into the wider and landscape and adjacent blocks trees, and to increase screening into the site from surrounding receptors. The key areas of planting are:

1) Southern corner of the site – this is to screen views over time from the south, as illustrated by Viewpoint (VP) 4;
2) Along the northern boundary – to reduce/ filter views from the north/north-west as illustrated by VPs 2 and 3; and
3) Along part of the eastern boundary adjacent to the substation – appears to be in order to reduce views from the east along the A9.

7.24



7.25 Whilst the mitigation proposals were welcomed, it was not considered sufficient to contain the visual effects of the site; particularly given the limited mitigation

proposed along the site's eastern boundary. Officers were particularly concerned about the development's presentation to the A9 albeit from a limited section of the route. This is evidenced by VP1 (A9 north of Spittal at entrance to quarry), both immediately and 10 years post construction. During discussions, the applicant identified that this design rationale was based on the position of the site in relation to the West of Orkney onshore transmission infrastructure development (23/05353/PIP - granted 18 June 2024). The applicant considered that as the development is situated on land between the site and the A9(T) this would limit the visual extent of the proposal.

7.26 Whilst it is appreciated that if the West of Orkney transmission infrastructure is built out, then this current site is likely to benefit from the landscaping mitigation proposals advanced under that scheme. However, Officers note that there is uncertainty around offshore wind energy projects delivery timescales for implementation. In addition, whilst this adjacent consented project is a material consideration, its build out and timescale cannot be guaranteed, especially as the scheme only benefits from a Planning in Principle consent and consequentially, the details of the final design, extent of development and landscaping mitigation measures are not yet fully known. Consequentially, Officers considered that a safeguarding position needed to be secured in the event that the West of Orkney transmission project was not advanced or significantly delayed, which resulted in the BESS scheme being built out first. It would also cover a scenario in which the West of Orkney transmission project was reduced in scope at the detailed planning stage, which could in turn could reduce the visual screening afforded to this BESS proposal. This alternative mitigation strategy is referred hereafter after as Scenario B.

7.27 **Scenario B Mitigation Measures:** Following discussions the applicant has agreed that in this scenario the following additional mitigation measures would be advanced:

a) Finished Substation Platform Level reduced by 2m – amended ground level 80m AOD, generating approximately 10,000m3 of material;

b) Finished BESS Platform Level reduced by 1m – amended ground level 78m AOD, generating approximately 10,000m3 of material;

c) Provision of a permitter bund along eastern and northern boundary measuring 3m high, with a 10m wide flat top, with 1:2 inner face and 1:5 outer face, utilising the excavated material on site to achieve a balanced cut and fill;

d) The bund to be planted with native woodland in accordance with an amended Landscape and Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan (original Figure 5.8); and

e) An amended site drainage strategy to facilitate the above.

7.28 The effects of the Scenario B mitigation would be to reduce the overall height of the development and allow the scheme to sit down within the landform more. The bunds would also screen some of the lower parts of the site which would assist in reducing visibility before the tree planting become more established. This is particularly required in relation to effects from the A9(T), however as

detailed below other VPs also benefit. Officers consider that the Scenario B mitigation strategy would mitigate the landscape and visual effects to an acceptable degree in the event that the West of Orkney substation does not progress as planned, or ahead of implementing this proposed BESS. This together with a revised drainage plan can be secured by condition.

7.29 In addition, the external materials and colour finish of the development (including boundary details) can also be secured by condition. This will ensure that the materials and colour palette are visually recessive.

Landscape Impact

7.30 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 impacts on landscape designations.

7.31 As detailed above, no landscape designations cover the site or the 3km study area (EA Fig 5.1). The closest landscape designation is The Flow Country and Berridale Coast Special Landscape Area (SLA), located approximately 7.6 km to the south-west of the site and is not considered further owing to the development proposal not having any influence on this designation.

7.32 The EA does include an assessment of the Landscape Character Types (LCTs). Landscape character is the distinctive and identifiable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape and the way that this pattern is perceived. Effects on landscape character can occur both on the site, where the pattern of elements that characterise, the landscape would be directly altered by the addition of the proposed development, and outwith the site in the wider study area, where visibility of the proposed development may alter the way in which this pattern of elements is perceived. The proposed development is located within the Farmed Lowland Plain (143). There is also a very small area of the Sweeping Moorland and Flows (134) LCT within the study area. However, there is no theoretical visibility from this portion of the LCT and is not considered further in the assessment.

7.33 The Farmed Lowland Plain LCT is characterised by a broad and relatively low-lying plain, gently undulating to form shallow valleys and subtle low ridges. Occasional smooth hills rise above the more low-lying plain forming local landmarks. The predominant land cover is agriculture. Some of the key characteristics of this LCT are:

- A generally open, low-lying plain, gently undulating to form shallow broad valleys, which are often filled with lochs and mosses, and subtle low ridges;
- Occasional smooth hills rise above the more low-lying plain forming local landmarks (such as Spittal Hill);
- Agriculture the predominant land cover;
- Distinctive Caithness flagstone fences in some parts, creating low, sharp

edges to fields;

- Sparse woodland, mainly comprising small angular coniferous plantations planted for shelter on farms;
- A number of historic environment features, including conspicuous castles, Baronial mansions and tall 'Lairds' houses, usually with broadleaf shelter woods planted around them;
- Roads reinforce the settlement pattern, often following the field and property boundaries, running straight and then swinging around sharp corners;
- Small groups of large wind turbines sited on some of the low ridges and hills and prominent visibility of larger wind farms in adjacent LCTs; and
- Extensive views due to the openness of the landscape, and the clarity of northern air and light.

7.34 The Landscape Assessment concludes that there would be some localised moderate landscape effects on the host LCT. However, it argues that the landform, mixed landcover and developed character of the LCT indicate a lower susceptibility to the type and scale of development proposed. Taking account of its low sensitivity, the landscape effects on the LCT are mainly judged to be Moderate within the application site, and Minor or Negligible beyond this.

7.35 Given the context of the site and its limited wider visibility, the Council's Landscape Officer has no objection and agrees with the applicant's assessment of the likely landscape effects on the site and the host landscape character area.

Visual Impact

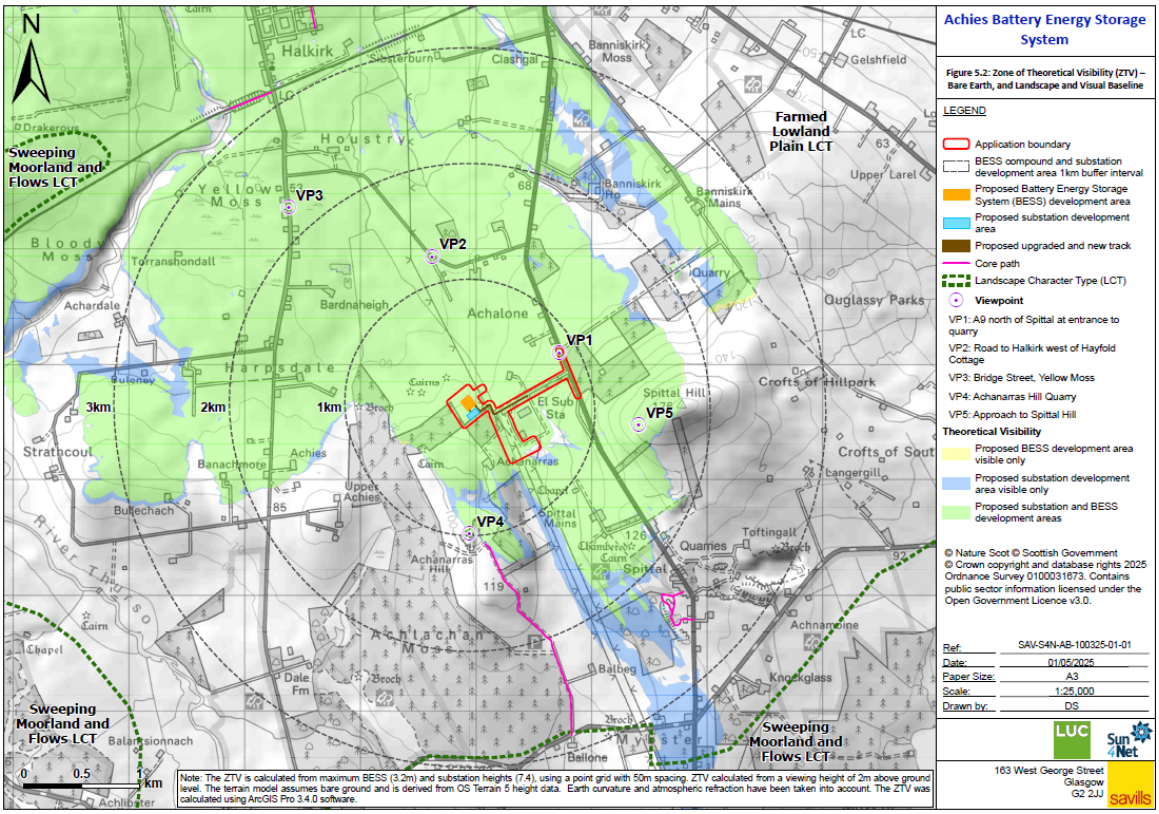
7.36 As detailed above the application is supported by photomontages and an appraisal from five viewpoints. Third parties have raised concerns as the photomontages do not show the scheme with other potential cumulative projects. Whilst beneficial, Officers consider that photomontages are only one element of the assessment material and that there is sufficient information upon which to assess the application.

VP No	Location	Reason for VP Selection	Distance to site
1	A9 north of Spittal at entrance to quarry	Represents views experienced by road users to the east of the site.	0.8km
2	Road to Halkirk west of Hayfold Cottage	Represents views experienced by residential receptors and road users to the north.	1.5km
3	Bridge Street, Yellow Moss	Represents views experienced by residential receptors and road users to the north-west	2.3km
4	Achanarras Hill Quarry	Represents views experienced by recreational receptors from a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Nature Reserve to the south	1km

5	Approach to Spittal Hill	Represents views experienced by recreational receptors from local landmark hill to the east	1.4km

7.37 Theoretical Visibility: as outlined in the EA, within 3km the ZTV (EA Fig. 5.2 – see below) indicates widespread visibility to the north and west, across the open farmed plain. This is a bare earth ZTV, so doesn't take into account any screening effects afforded by existing forestry (detailed above) or buildings. To the east and south-east there is widespread visibility from within 1.7km, but visibility is largely absent beyond this distance owing to screening by Spittal Hill. However, there is also theoretical visibility from the shallow ridge near Banniskirk Mains 2.5km from the site, and up to 2.5km in the south-east of the study area near the eastern side of the Burn of Achanarras. To the south and south-west, visibility is mainly limited to within less than 1km due to the screening effect of Achanarras Hill.

7.38



7.39 The EA identifies the following residual operational effects immediately after construction and 10 years after construction. No significant visual effects are identified within the EA. Visual effects on views from each of the representative viewpoints, views from settlements and views experienced from routes considered in the appraisal are judged to be minor for the operational (solus) effects. In some cases, the applicant considers that the proposed landscape mitigation planting detailed on Figure 5.8 (see above) will reduce the level of effect to negligible (VPs 2, 3 and 4) as the tree planting establishes and matures.

7.40 **Residential Receptors:** Represented by VPs 2 and 3. VP2 (1.5km to the north west of the site) is located beside the minor road between the A9 and Halkirk, as it runs westbound near Hayford Cottage. VP3 (2.3km to the site) is located

beside Bridge Street at Yellow Moss south of Halkirk. The effects from these VPs are similar, albeit VP3 is at a greater distance from the development. The main settlement of Halkirk is out with the study area, with views towards the site only available from the southern and south-eastern edges of the settlement. Where views of the site are available, they are broadly similar to but more distant than those obtained from VP3.

7.41 Residential receptors are considered to be of high susceptibility to changes in the view. Overall, the EA reports minor effects on residential receptors during the operational (solus) assessment, with the proposed landscape mitigation reducing this to negligible after 10 years. Officers consider whilst the effects are not significant the effect of the scheme, even with the proposed mitigation measures will not be negligible.

7.42 From these VPs, the site is seen to the right of the operational Spittal Converter Station and to the rear of the existing OHL. The full extent of the site is available and is open to views from this direction. However, the site is set against the existing woodland and rising land. Whilst this does not assist in screening the development (like VP4), it does help to visually contain the scheme. This together with the rising land ensures that the development will not break the skyline, unlike the existing Spittal Converter Station. In addition, the tree planting blocks proposed on the northern and part of the eastern boundaries will reduce the openness of the site as the planting matures. The use of a dark external material palette will also assist in visually de-emphasising the development.

7.43 Although not shown on the submitted photomontages, the EA notes that the consented West of Orkney Wind Farm Substation will be located south-east of these viewpoints and close to the north-east side of this proposed BESS. Although it is only at planning permission in principle, it envisages that most components of the substation will be screened by tree planting and landscaped bunding, which will appear closer and larger in scale than the proposed development, and extend over a larger area. As such this is likely to restrict views of the BESS site.

7.44 Whilst not key viewpoints for Officers when developing the Scenario B mitigation strategy (site is advanced ahead of the West of Orkney substation), it is envisaged that the effect of the Scenario B mitigation will be to reduce the visibility of the development further than detailed in the application, and as shown on the submitted photomontages. This will be particularly evident with the introduction of planted/landscaped bunds will be along the northern and eastern boundary.

7.45 **Road Receptors:** Represented by VPs 1 (A9 north of Spittal at entrance to quarry), VP2 (Road to Halkirk west of Hayfold Cottage) and VP3 (Bridge Street, Yellow Moss). Overall, the EA reports minor effects on road based receptors during the operational (solus) assessment, with the proposed landscape mitigation reducing this to negligible for VPs 2 and 3. Officers consider that there is an under-assessment of effects particularly on the A9 (VP1). The proposed development would be more visible and noticeable than stated in the applicant's EA. The visual effects would result in Moderate effects rather than Minor at Year 0. By Year 10, the effect would reduce to Moderate to Minor once the mitigation

planting has matured. The Councils Landscape Officer concurs that that effects have been underestimated and considers that further mitigation along the eastern boundary would assist the visual integration of the proposal.

7.46 As noted above, a key visual concern pertinent to the determination of this application is the developments exposure in views obtained from along the A9. The A9 runs broadly north to south through the study area. When travelling north, the bare earth ZTV indicates no theoretical visibility until Spittal, with full views possible thereafter. However, in reality existing vegetation and development punctuates and filters views towards the site from this direction. Consequentially, views of the site are more likely to be obtained by southbound travellers.

7.47 When travelling southbound from the Georgemas Junction the site is almost straight ahead but is too low lying to be discernible. Approximately 1 km further south along the road, the site becomes more clearly visible beyond fields and an OHL to the south-west, appearing as moorland largely back clothed by two areas of coniferous forestry with a gap between them. To the south-east of the road, views open up towards Spittal Hill on the skyline. As the road curves round to the south south-east, views towards the site become more oblique, but are still available. As the road continues and turns more towards the south-east, views towards the site are partially screened by blocks of coniferous forestry near the site, and a substation outbuilding.

7.48 As detailed above, although visibility is only from part of the A9 route, Officers were still concerned about the exposure and presentation of the development to the A9. Even 10 years post construction, the proposed mitigation measures identified by the applicant would leave the majority of the eastern boundary open. This would afford full views of the battery units and partial views of the substation. Whilst acknowledging that the consented West of Orkney transmission infrastructure once developed may eventually limit views of the BESS site from the A9, Officers are not sufficiently certain as to the final design details and implementation date for this intervening adjacent development. So, whilst a material consideration, this current BESS project should be appropriately designed and mitigated for, without reliance of a third party scheme under which they have no control over.

7.49 As detailed above, the Scenario B mitigation plan has been secured by Officers. This includes the reduction in the finished ground level of the infrastructure by 1-2 metres, the creation of landscaped bunds and tree planting. The new photomontages illustrate the effect of this mitigation. By year 10, the development will be substantially screened from this VP. This will be further assisted by the use of dark external materials and controls of the external lighting scheme. All of these can be secured by conditions. In the event that Scenario B is required, the bunding along the eastern boundary is outwith the current application site red line boundary but is within the control of the applicant. It is therefore anticipated that this will be amended to incorporate these elements with updated application drawings to be submitted.

7.50 **Recreational Receptors** are represented by VPs 4 (Achanarras Hill Quarry) and 5 (Approach to Spittal Hill). Overall, the EA reports minor effects on

recreational receptors during the operational (solus) assessment, with the proposed landscape mitigation reducing this to negligible after 10 years for VP4.

7.51 VP4 (1km to site) is located within the Achanarras Hill Quarry nature reserve and SSSI and is located just beyond the end of a core path (CA06.07). As demonstrated by the bare earth ZTV there is no theoretical visibility from this core path and views to the south of this VP are restricted due to the existing landform. Whilst recreational users are usually considered to have a high susceptibility to changes in the vie, the applicant argues that from this VP, receptors are not located on the core path and are most likely to be focused on their immediate surroundings in the quarry, which is an important geological site for fossil fish. However, they are also likely to appreciate the wider views as a secondary quality, and as such they are considered to be of medium susceptibility to changes in the view.

7.52 Immediately post construction, the wireframe/ photomontage (year 0) identify that the proposed development will be largely screened by woodland and sloping landform south of the site. However, some battery containers will be partially visible, along with some CCTV and lighting columns. The EA considers that this will result in small scale change in views north from this location and are localised in its extent, reporting a minor level of overall effect. At year 10 when the proposed tree planting within the southern corner of the site has established, views towards the proposed development from this location will be screened. This screening is considered to reduce the overall effect to negligible as the woodland develops.

7.53 Although not shown on the submitted photomontage, the consented West of Orkney Wind Farm Substation site is located adjacent to the application site. If built out this will not however obscure or restrict views to the proposed BESS site from this location. This was not a key viewpoint for Officers when developing the Scenario B mitigation strategy, however, it is envisaged that the reduction in the finished ground level of the proposed battery units identified will allow the planting to restrict views of the development quicker than identified in the application.

7.54 Views from recreational users of the local landmark of Spittal Hill, are provided by VP5 (1.4km to site). These receptors are considered to have a high sensitivity to changes in the view. This VP provides an elevated vantage point from the western slope of Spittal Hill with long and expansive views across the landscape. The application site is viewed to the rear of the existing Spittal Converter Station and OHL in the middle distance views towards the west. Unlike other VPs, this is a higher vantage point, consequentially, the majority of the interior of the site will be seen with the rows of battery units and the substation building sitting closer to the existing woodland along the southern boundary. From here, the development will appear as relatively low lying and will be partially back clothed by the existing blocks of mixed woodland. This provides some visual containment of the site and helps to reduce its scale within the context of the wider expansive views. This is further assisted by the proposed tree planting along the northern boundary, which will provide some additional back clothing for the development at year 10.

7.55 The consented West of Orkney Wind Farm Substation site will be located to the north-west of this viewpoint, close to the north-east side of the proposed development. Given the elevation of the VP, if built out this is unlikely to obscure views to the proposed BESS site. Although no additional photomontage has been submitted, it is envisaged that the effect of the additional mitigation measures identified for the Scenario B are likely to be less evident than from VPs at a lower level, however, the reduction in finished ground level of 1-2m, together with the planted bunds is likely to quicken the back clothing afforded along the northern boundary and soften the development along the eastern boundary.

7.56 As detailed above, there are two core paths within the study area Achanarras Quarry core path (CA06.07- 600m south of the site boundary), and Spittal Old Quarry core path (CA06.08 - 2km south of the site). Neither of these have theoretical visibility of the proposal nor would be affected by any closure or diversion as a result of the proposed development. There are also no cycle routes within the immediate vicinity of the site.

Cumulative Effects

7.57 The Applicants assessment also considers the cumulative effects from other operational/ consented developments within the 3km study area. The EA considers two scenarios:

- Scenario 1: considers the effects of the proposed development under a future theoretical baseline where all operational and consented schemes are assumed to be built.
- Scenario 2 appraisal of cumulative effects considers the effects of the proposed development under a future theoretical baseline where all operational, consented, and proposed schemes are assumed to be built.

7.58 The EA baseline is April 2025 and includes the following BESS or electrical transmission schemes:

Operational

- Spittal Substation – 500m to the site
- 132 kV and 275 kV Overhead Lines – 25m to the site

Consented or at the application stage

- **25/00498/S36** Field Spittal BESS **-** Construction and operation of Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) of up to 300MW. Located 700m from the site, with Scottish Ministers for determination. NPAC raised no objection. Located 700m from the proposed BESS compound.
- **24/02020/SCRE** Achannarras BESS up to 200MW. Located 80m from the proposed BESS compound. Screening opinion issued by Scottish Minsters 13 Nov 2024 – EIA not required.

  23/05353/PIP West of Orkney Wind Farm - onshore transmission infrastructure. Located 250m from the proposed BESS compound.

Planning Permission in Principle granted 18 June 2024.

- **24/04898/FUL*** Banniskirk Substation - Erection and operation of an Air Insulated Switchgear 400kV substation and HVDC converter station. Located 1.3km from the proposed BESS compound.

  *Noted as under consideration in the Achies BESS EA baseline date (April 2025). NPAC has since resolved to grant consent subject to a s75 legal agreement.

- **25/03311/S37** Spittal to Beauly 400 kV OHL. Located 890m from the proposed BESS compound. Under consideration – Council Officers have raised an objection under delegated authority pending the application to be reported to committee.

- **24/02827/FUL** Spittal Mains Quarry 49.9 MW BESS. Located 1.8km from the proposed BESS compound. Planning Permission Granted 28 March 2025.

- **25/02964/PIP****: Ayre Offshore Wind Farm Onshore Connection. Located 1.8km from the proposed BESS compound.

  **Noted at the PAN stage in the Achies BESS EA baseline date (April 2025). This development has since been granted Planning in Principle consent – 26th March 2026.

- **24/00902/SCOP** Ouglassy Wind Farm - Up to eight wind turbines with a blade tip height of up to 180m. Located 2.3km from the proposed BESS compound. EIA Scoping opinion issued 11 June 2024.

7.59 Officers have also identified the following scheme which is close to the site. However, this application is only at the EIA Screening stage. The cumulative effects of this with Achies BESS will be considered if this site comes in as a formal planning application:

- **25/02189/SCRE**: BESS, Land adjacent to Banniskirk Quarry. Located 1.2km from the site and to the south of the proposed Banniskirk substation site. Scottish Ministers have determined that EIA is not required - 7 August 2025.

7.60 In terms of cumulative operational landscape effects, the proposed scheme would increase the amount of energy related infrastructure within the host LCT. This change would be particularly noticeable from elevated areas (VP5). Also, from the A9 (VP1) as energy developments are experienced sequentially by receptors moving through the landscape. In this instance it is likely that the consented West of Orkney Windfarm substation and Banniskirk substation will contribute most towards the cumulative operational landscape effects within this LCT. This would limit the additional cumulative landscape effect the proposal would have on the LCT. The extent of landscape impacts from the proposed development in this context would be further limited by the bunding and planting that is proposed. Therefore, the additional cumulative impact produced by the proposed development is not considered significant.

7.61 In terms of cumulative visual effects (operational), views from the north/north-west as represented by VP2 and VP3, the operational Spittal Converter station

and OHL are also visible. However, as reported in the EA, the consented West of Orkney Wind Farm Substation will be located south-east of the viewpoint, close to the north-east side of the proposed development. This is also likely to screen views toward the operational Spittal Converter Station. Views south-east towards the consented BESS at Caithness Flagstone Ltd, Spittal will be screened by intervening landform. Banniskirk Substation will introduce substation buildings and associated infrastructure in the middle distance of views to the east. The consented Ayre Offshore Wind Farm Substation will be partially screened in views by Banniskirk Substation.

7.62 Achanarras BESS (screening stage) beyond the proposed development site and is likely to be extensively screened by existing and proposed planting around and at the current application site. Towers of the Spittal to Beauly 400kV OHL (under consideration) and turbines of Ouglassy Wind Farm (scoping stage) will appear on the horizon in views to the east. For both cumulative scenarios, the EA reports that the magnitude of visual change due to the introduction of the proposed development will remain barely perceptible, resulting in a negligible visual effect from these VPs.

7.63 From the south (represented by VP4), under Scenario 1, the consented West of Orkney site will be viewed beyond the site to the north. Views towards the consented BESS at Caithness Flagstone Ltd, Spittal will be screened by intervening forestry. Banniskirk Substation will introduce substation buildings and associated infrastructure in the distance of views to the north-east. However, views of this development will be partially screened by intervening forestry, mitigation earthworks around the West of Orkney Wind Farm Substation, and the operational Spittal Converter Station. The consented Ayre Offshore Wind Farm Substation is likely to be largely screened in views by Banniskirk Substation.

7.64 Scenario 2: The Spittal BESS scheme (under consideration) will be located north-east of the viewpoint but will be extensively screened in views by intervening forestry. Achanarras BESS (screening) will be located north of the viewpoint adjacent to the south-west corner of the proposed development. It will be visible across open moorland and rough pasture, but this together with the existing woodland will screen views of the proposed development. The proposed Towers of the Spittal – Loch Buidhe – Beauly 400kV Connection (under consideration) and turbines of Ouglassy Wind Farm (scoping) may appear on the horizon in views to the north-east. For both cumulative scenarios, the EA reports that the magnitude of visual change due to the introduction of the proposed development will remain barely perceptible, resulting in a negligible visual effect from this VP.

7.65 From elevated positions to the south east, as represented by VP5 (Approach to Spittal Hill), under Scenario 1, combined views with the existing Spittal Converter Station, the consented West of Orkney Wind Farm Substation are afforded. Banniskirk Substation will be seen in the distance in views to the north-west but is partially screened by forestry and landform. However, views of the consented BESS scheme at Caithness Flagstone Ltd to the south and Ayre Offshore Wind Farm Substation will be screened by existing landform.

7.66 Under Scenario 2: Spittal BESS (under consideration) will be located west of this viewpoint and will be visible adjacent to the operational Spittal Converter Station. Beyond to the west, Achanarras BESS (screening) will be located to the north-west of the viewpoint, but it will be partially screened in views by intervening forestry. The towers of the Spittal - Beauly 400kV Connection (under consideration) will be visible towards Banniskirk. Ouglassy Wind Farm (scoping) will be screened to the north-east. For both cumulative scenarios, the EA reports that the magnitude of visual change due to the introduction of the proposed development will remain barely perceptible, resulting in a negligible visual effect from this VP.

7.67 From the east (represented by VP1 on the A9) under Scenario 1, the consented West of Orkney Wind Farm Substation will be located between the viewpoint and the proposed development. Substantial landscaped bunding is envisaged along the A9 which will mitigate views. Banniskirk Substation is located immediately across the A9 to the north of this VP. The development will be very prominent in views north, although the approved landscaping will mitigate the visual effects. Ayre Substation is largely screened by Banniskirk. In addition, views south-east towards the consented BESS at Caithness Flagstone Ltd will be screened by intervening landform.

7.68 Under Scenario 2, Spittal BESS (pending determination) will be located to the south of the viewpoint. However, this development will be largely screened by the operational Spittal Converter Station and surrounding vegetation. Achanarras BESS (screening) will also be partially screened by intervening forestry. Towers of the Spittal –Beauly 400kV Connection (pending determination) to the north-east of the viewpoint. However, turbines of Ouglassy Wind Farm (scoping) to the east will be screened in views by intervening landform and forestry. For both cumulative scenarios, the EA reports that the magnitude of visual change due to the introduction of the proposed development will remain barely perceptible, resulting in a negligible visual effect from this VP.

7.69 Overall, whilst the addition of the proposed development would increase the amount of energy infrastructure visible, it would be concentrated within part of the view where there is already existing infrastructure. The cumulative influence of the proposed development would also be limited in the context of the larger schemes of Banniskirk and West of Orkney substations. As such, the addition of the proposal therefore is not considered to be significant in terms of its contribution to the cumulative picture in the wider area and should the site not benefit form the screening envisaged by the West of Orkney substation, the proposed Scenario B design ensures this BESS proposal will be suitably mitigated and fit to be seen.

Construction Impacts

7.70 The applicant anticipates a 12 month construction period. Some adverse impacts are anticipated in terms of construction traffic and disruption. The applicant states that wherever reasonably possible, local suppliers such as quarries, and concrete works are proposed to help minimise traffic levels on the network.

7.71 A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) can also be secured by condition to manage the impacts upon the A9 Trunk Road and wider local road network. EA chapter 9 outlines a series of measures which would be implemented through this CTMP during the construction phase. This includes:

- A contractual requirement to only use the agreed access route;
- direction signage signposting traffic on the agreed access route;
- identification numbers of HGVs and vans to allow easy recognition;
- providing the public with details of how to report use of unapproved routes or driving issues of concern;
- trackers to allow the monitoring of bulk delivery vehicle movements;
- vehicles will feature 'white noise' reversing warning devices;
- all dry materials delivery lorries will be sheeted;
- site induction, training and staff disciplinary measures; and
- wheel cleaning facilities.

7.72 It is considered that the CTMP should be reviewed throughout the works and informed by feedback from ongoing engagement with the community, through a Community Liaison Group. This will ensure that the community council and other stakeholders are kept up to date during the construction period.

7.73 The applicant also proposes an Abnormal Load Transport Management Plan; this will ensure that abnormal load deliveries will be undertaken at appropriate times with the aim to minimise the effect on the local and trunk road networks. It will also ensure appropriate signage and stakeholder and community notification is undertaken.

7.74 In addition, a Section 96 Wear and Tear Agreement can be required, this will address concerns about possible damage to the public road, verges and structures. It will be based upon condition surveys of the road to ensure that the condition of the road does not deteriorate as a result of the construction works.

7.75 Construction Method Statements and a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) would also be in place during the construction phase and secured by a condition. The CEMP would control potentially polluting activities and prevent adverse environmental impacts. It will establish a framework to ensure that health and safety and environmental best practice are adopted and will include a Surface Water Management Plan and Pollution Prevention Plan.

7.76 If concrete batching is proposed on-site, specific measures will be put in place to manage run-off from these operations, which is highly alkaline and can cause pollution if it gets into watercourses. During construction, temporary construction SuDS will be put in place at the watercourse crossings to ensure no sedimentation from construction works or pollution from plant or machinery can enter the watercourses. Watercourses within close proximity to the proposed development that may be impacted by construction activities will be buffered by

a minimum of 10m, in line with the SEPA riparian buffers.

7.77 In addition, pre-construction surveys will be secured this will ensure the protection of protected species during the construction phase. Implementation of the CEMP would be managed on site by a suitably qualified and experienced Environmental Clerk of Works (ECoW).

7.78 Developers and constructors must comply with reasonable operational practices regarding construction noise so as not to cause a statutory nuisance. This is required by Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 which is regulated by Environmental Health and not Planning. The applicant has confirmed that the construction hours are expected to be in line with standard construction hours in Highland which are 07:00-19:00 Monday to Friday, 08:00-13:00 on Saturdays and no working on Sundays or Bank Holidays. Hours of construction can be secured through the CEMP.

7.79 Whilst not objecting, Environmental Health recommend that a construction noise assessment is required under certain circumstances; a) where work is undertaken which is audible at the curtilage of any noise sensitive receptor, and outwith the Councils standard construction hours, or b) when noise levels during the above periods are likely to exceed 75dB(A) for short term works or 55dB(A) for long term works. Regardless of whether a construction noise assessment is required, it is expected that the developer/contractor will employ the best practicable means to reduce the impact of noise from construction activities. Attention should be given to construction traffic and the use of tonal reversing alarms.

7.80 During the construction phase, the site will feature a temporary laydown and site compound area within the proposed site boundary. As such, there is no requirement for an offsite set down area. Security lighting will be required during the hours of darkness at the temporary site cabins and construction compounds. However, it is not expected that lighting will be required outside of the intended working hours for the construction phase. Details of the temporary construction compound, lighting and restoration can be secured by planning conditions.

Natural Heritage, including Ornithology

7.81 The applicant's assessment is outlined in Chapter 7 of the EA and is supported by several surveys: including a protected species, bird and habitat surveys. The EA does not identify any significant effects relating to ecology, ornithology or nature conservation interests either individually or cumulatively with other developments.

7.82 The applicant is committed to ensuring that construction practices will be in line with best practise guidance. Environmental protection measures will be fully detailed through the finalised CEMP and works will be overseen by an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW). NatureScot and the Councils Ecology Team have no objection to the application, subject to planning conditions.

Designated Sites – Natural Heritage

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

River Thurso Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

7.84 This SAC is situated 2.19km north of the site and is designated for its population of Atlantic salmon. The site is hydrologically connected to the River Thurso SAC albeit through a series of long interconnected burns and wet ditches. NatureScot advise that the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the qualifying interests and consequentially Scottish Ministers are required to carry out an appropriate assessment. The risk from the development is in the form of sedimentation and potential pollution. NatureScot however advises that if the development is carried out in accordance with the following mitigation the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the site. A detailed Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) is required to be secured by condition. This is required to include the Technical Appendix 8.3 Drainage Strategy provided by the applicant, A Pollution Prevention Plan; a plan to detail emergency procedures in the event of spillages or any other breach; a plan to detail monitoring and inspections of the water quantity and quality of sensitive watercourses.

7.85 In relation to fire management, NatureScot advise that fire at the site has the potential to damage Atlantic salmon of the River Thurso SAC. This is due to the Fire retardant/water run-off entering watercourses may pollute Atlantic salmon habitats (this will depend on the fire suppression system/firefighting methods used on site in the event of a fire). To ensure that no fire suppressant or polluted water run-off enters watercourses in the event of a fire, the applicant has included measures to combat this within Technical Appendix 8.3 Drainage Strategy. This includes an additional containment tank of equal volume to store used fire water which may contain chemical contaminants used in fire suppression. In the event of a fire, a cut-off valve will divert contaminated runoff from the BESS hardstanding to the east, towards a dedicated storage tank. The cut-off valve prevents this water flowing to the SuDS and subsequently to the watercourses. Following a fire, contaminated water would be pumped out by specialist waste removal services.

Caithness Lochs SPA and Ramsar

7.86 Caithness Lochs SPA / Ramsar site; and component SSSIs; Loch Calder, Loch Scarmclate and Loch Watten, are located within 5 km of the site so within the documented core foraging ranges for the qualifying species. The application site is open habitat which has the potential to be used by wetland species, and

qualifying species. However, no non-breeding greylag goose, Greenland white-fronted goose or whooper swan were recorded within the survey area. Therefore, there is no evidence that any of the survey area is used by these SPA, Ramsar site and SSSI qualifying species. No impacts are anticipated on these designations. NatureScot makes no direct comments in relation to these designations and does not object to the scheme.

The Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA and Ramsar

7.87 These designations are located 6.11 km south-east from the site boundary at its nearest point. The EA reports that this distance is greater than the core range for qualifying species, with the exception of the red-throated and black-throated diver. However, the habitats within the site are considered in the assessment to be unsuitable for divers and the proposed development would also not constitute a notable collision risk for any commuting divers. No impacts are anticipated on these designated sites. NatureScot makes no direct comments in relation but have no objection to the scheme.

Species Protection

7.88 The EA reports that the site is degraded open habitat which is considered of limited extent and of low quality for protected species. No evidence of protected species was found during the surveys, and it is considered that the habitats provide very little potential, other than occasional foraging. No potential bat roosts were identified. There was also no evidence of reptiles was observed; however, the habitat may be suitable for various reptile, amphibian and invertebrate species. NatureScot and the Councils Ecology Team have no objection.

7.89 The Councils Ecology Team are content that the ornithology surveys (breeding and non-breeding) showed very little bird activity within the site or at a distance where disturbance from the development would likely occur. No qualifying species of the SPA and Ramsar site were recorded within the Site and out to 600m. A single mallard pair were noted, and habitat restoration works detailed below are considered likely to improve habitats for nesting birds in the long term. Breeding species like curlew and skylark would benefit from peatland restoration works, while other species (breeding and non-breeding) would benefit from the riparian tree planting. The EA also outlines that the removal of nesting bird habitats should be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season.

Habitat and Biodiversity Enhancement

7.90 The surveys found no evidence of protected habitats, plants or any invasive non-native species within 1km of the site. The habitats onsite and adjoining the site to the north, are highly modified through the extensive drainage system, which has acted to make the site more favourable for grazing, through drying out effects. The habitat is mainly grazed wet dwarf shrub heath, bounded by mixed plantation woodland on two sides. The proposal would result in the loss of 3.26ha of amount of heathland mosaic. The EA notes that this habitat is heavily degraded but is considered restorable. The habitat is common at the locality with a large swath of similar degraded heathland mosaic extending north from the

site.

7.91 Biodiversity Enhancement: Due to the climate and biodiversity emergency and the provisions of NPF4 Policy 3, the Council seeks to ensure that developments will deliver a positive effect for biodiversity. As a result, this project is expected to contribute towards the delivery of biodiversity enhancements. The application is supported by a Biodiversity Net Gain calculation (Technical Appendix 7.3) and a Landscape and Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan (EA Fig. 5.8). The calculation quantifies the biodiversity impact of the scheme, the predicted resultant change of biodiversity value, and provides recommendations for biodiversity enhancement (net gain).

7.92 The applicant proposes to enhance this habitat through the restoration of up to 1.53ha heathland mosaic onsite. This will largely be through the blocking of artificial ditches to re-wet the site. The EA anticipates that this would result in the enhancement to the heathland mosaic onsite from 'poor' to 'moderate' condition. In addition, 5.26 ha of wet dwarf shrub heath would be enhanced offsite from poor to good condition. The planting of native trees and scrub for visual mitigation (outlined above) would also provide biodiversity benefits. The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculation results show that the proposed development would result in a biodiversity net gain of 10.03 % in Habitat Units. As the proposals can deliver 10% enhancement, the Councils Ecology Team have no objection and confirm that this complies with the requirements of NPF4 Policy 3.

7.93 The 10% BNG will however not be met within the boundary of the application site and instead, as detailed on the landscape and biodiversity mitigation plan (EA Fig. 5.8 included above), the enhancement measures to achieve at least 10% enhancement will be delivered on land adjacent to the site and within the site owner's wider landholding. The Ecology Team are content with this to be secured by condition but note that this area is within the restricted range of the Great Yellow Bumblebee, a UK BAP species, and recommend that suitable forage flowering plants is added to the neutral grassland habitat enhancement. In addition, consideration should be given to using "nanny trees": hardy, pioneer species used to provide early shelter for more vulnerable, slower-growing plants in a new shelterbelt, particularly in exposed locations where trees do not naturally grow. These matters can be secured through the final Habitat Management Plan.

Water, Flood Risk, Drainage and Soils

7.94 The results of the applicant's assessment are outlined in EA Chapter 8 and is supported by a number of Technical Appendices: Peat Survey Report (Appendix 8.1); Flood Risk Assessment (8.2); and Drainage Strategy (8.3). Following survey work several matters were scoped out of further assessment. These include Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems and effects on Private Water Supplies. Although part of the site is classed as potential peat (Class 3) by the NatureScot (2016) carbon and peatland mapping, field surveys showed there was less than 50cm of peat depth, with 90.9% of the 232 probes recording a depth of less than 30cm. So, effects on peat were also scoped out.

7.95 In terms of flood risk, for the purposes of NPF4 Policy 22 (Flood risk and water management) part a), the proposal is considered essential infrastructure as described in NPF4 Part 3 -Annex E. That means that there may be some flexibility in supporting the proposal if it is at risk of flooding. The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).

7.96 SEPA's future flood maps indicate that there is fluvial flood risk along the route of the Burn of Achanarras. There are also some very minor indicative extents of surface water flood risk along the line of the drainage ditch within the proposed development boundary (Figure 8.3). The FRA indicates that the flood risk area estimated for the fluvial 200-year plus climate change event is constrained to the area immediately surrounding the Burn of Achanarras channel. The BESS and substation development areas are sited outwith the flood risk area.

7.97 However, the FRA suggests that part of the existing access track which crosses the Achanarras Burn from the A9 may flood during a 200 year plus climate change storm event. The flood risk from the Achanarras Burn is quantified in the FRA using a 100% blockage scenario of all four culverts under the existing road crossing. The Councils Flood Risk Management (FRM) Team consider that the site is classed as 'essential infrastructure' under SEPA's guidance. The FRA also suggests that the development will require minimal on -site supervision once in operation (once a week). Consequentially, the FRM Team consider that such a potential access restriction would be unlikely to halt site operation during a 200 year plus climate change storm event. However, the FRM Team recommends that the applicant considers this scenario in any management plan. SEPA also have no objection to the application.

7.98 New watercourse crossings have been minimised through the use of existing tracks and crossings where possible, including the existing crossing over the Burn of Achanarras. However, as detailed on Figure 8.1, the new access track to the site will require the crossing of a small, artificial drainage ditch (shown as ID2 on the plan). A typical bottomless arch culvert design is detailed on Figure 1.5. The underground cable connection to the substation will cross underneath the Burn of Achanarras (ID3), this will be installed via Horizontal Directional Drilling. On the basis that the Burn of Achanarras watercourse crossing is not to be replaced, SEPA has no objection to the application.

7.99 The drainage strategy is such that local hydrological patterns and surface water run-off flow rates will be attenuated to existing 'greenfield' rates. An outline drainage strategy is provided in Technical Appendix 8.3 and includes a diversion bund to allow water outside of the developed areas to be diverted around the platforms, flowing into the burn as in pre-development conditions. Runoff generated by the impermeable areas will flow into a drainage network consisting of filter drains, discharging to a surface water storage area. The storage area will then drain to the Burn of Achanarras via an outfall restricted to the 2-year greenfield runoff rate. The Councils FRM team have no objection subject to a finalised Drainage Impact Assessment being secured by condition.

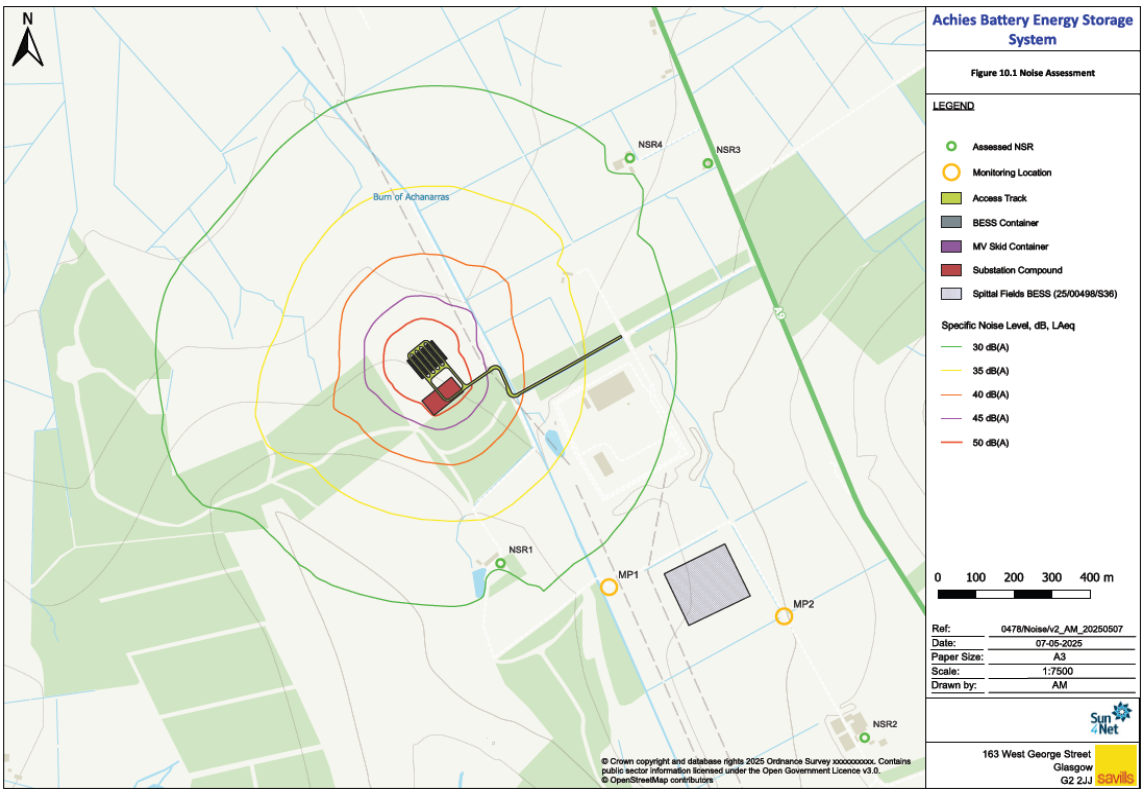
7.100 There are several embedded measures to ensure fire safety protocols do not affect the surrounding water environment during operation. The outline Drainage

Strategy identifies that the inclusion of a water tank for firefighting use and an additional containment tank of to store used fire water which may contain chemical contaminants used in fire suppression. As detailed above, in the event of a fire, a cut-off valve will divert contaminated runoff towards a dedicated storage tank and will be emptied by specialist waste removal services. This strategy will stop contaminated water flowing to the SuDS and into the watercourses.

Noise Impacts

7.101 EA chapter 10 outlines the applicant's assessment in relation to the potential construction and operational noise effects on receptors. Within the study area, the assessment identifies four noise sensitive receptors (NSRs). NSR 1– Achanarras, NSR 2– Spittal Mains, NSR 3– The Cottage and NSR 4– Achalone Farm. Monitoring locations were used at two locations representative of the closest NSRs. These are detailed on the following plan (EA Figure 10.1).

7.102



7.103 **Construction Noise:** The EA considers that for NSRs beyond a distance of 500m there is no reasonable prospect of unacceptable construction noise impacts. The closest NSRs to the construction works are NSR1 and NSR4, which are 480m from the site. Whilst this is 20m closer than the suggested 500 m study area, the assessment highlights that difference in construction noise level between 480m and 500m would approximately 0.5 dB, and therefore imperceptible.

7.104 The assessment also notes that NSR1 and NSR4 benefit from screening from agricultural buildings. This is considered to reduce construction noise levels at those NSRs by approximately 5 – 10 dB; the effect of this screening will

therefore negate the 0.5 dB increase in noise levels arising from the slightly shorter separation distance. Consequentially, the applicant contends there would be no significant noise effects from construction works.

7.105 As detailed in the 'Construction Impact' section above, Environmental Health have no objection but identify that a noise construction assessment is required in certain circumstances. These matters can be secured through the CEMP.

7.106 **Operational Noise:** The proposed scheme consists of the following operational noise sources; battery container cooling plant; medium voltage (MV) skids (integrated inverter and transformer); and a power transformer system. As a worst-case scenario, the assessment assumes that all plant is operating simultaneously, during both daytime (0700 – 2300) and night-time (2300 - 0700).

7.107 Environmental Health Team require that BESS developments comply with strict noise criteria: the Rating Level of noise arising from the development shall not exceed the measured background at the curtilage of any NSR. In addition, in areas with low background noise, the noise rating level shall not exceed background plus 5dB or 30dB whichever is lowest.

7.108 The following table (EA Table 10.5) highlights the difference between the Rating Levels and the background noise levels for daytime and night-time periods. This identifies that the rating levels are under background noise levels.

NSR	Specific Noise Level, dB(A)	Rating Level, dB(A)	Background Noise Level, dB, LA90		Difference, dB	
			Day	Night	Day	Night
NSR1	21	21	34	32	-13	-11
NSR2	19	19	36	34	-17	-15
NSR3	28	28	34	32	-6	-4
NSR4	20	20	34	32	-14	-12

7.109 EA Table 10.7 below, highlights the predicted cumulative noise levels when Spittal Fields BESS is taken into account. This is located approximately 800m southeast of the proposed site and is currently with Scottish Ministers for determination, no objection was raised by the Council. This identifies that cumulative noise levels are equal or below 5dB above the representative background noise levels. These are considered to be worse-case scenarios as the assessment assumes that the two NSRs are downwind of both developments simultaneously, which as identified in the location plan above cannot occur in reality.

NSR	Specific Noise Level, dB(A)	Rating Level, dB(A)	Background Noise Level, dB, LA90		Difference, dB	
			Day	Night	Day	Night
NSR1	32	32	34	32	-2	0
NSR2	29	29	36	34	-7	-5

7.110 Environmental Health have no objection to the proposed development as the assessment indicates that the Council's noise criteria will be met at all NSRs. However, it is recommended that operational noise limits are secured by a planning condition. Owing to the assessment undertaken by the applicant omitting the adjacent planning in principle consent for West of Orkney substation, the wording of this condition will require an updated noise assessment to be undertaken, once the detailed specification/ layout of the BESS development is known which must also take account of the finalised design for the West of Orkney substation and any other cumulative development. This updated cumulative assessment will include any necessary mitigation measures.

Health and Safety

7.111 As outlined in the Scottish Government's new BESS planning guidance (March 2026), when managed correctly, BESS can be operated safely, and the likelihood of problems is low. However, the chemical nature of lithiumion batteries used at many BESS sites can give rise to specific health and safety considerations, such as fire risk due to thermal runaway (para 4.25). It is therefore essential that BESS are developed in line with appropriate health and safety standards and that regulations are adhered to. Halkirk and District Community Council and several third parties raise health and safety concerns including the risk of fire, with the site's layout being a material planning consideration.

7.112 This application is supported by an Outline Battery Fire Safety Management Plan (OBFSMP). This sets out the measures to minimise the risk of fire, along with the specific design specifications of the BESS facility and procedures to address fire containment and firefighting. At the request of Officers, the applicant has provided a further statement (March 2026) to take account and demonstrate compliance with the updated National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Grid-Scale BESS Planning Guidance (December 2025). This provides guidance on matters such as distance to buildings / vegetation, access and water volume and supply rates.

7.113 The applicant states that the proposed BESS units are likely to use Lithium Ferrous Phosphate (LFP) chemistry cells, which have a high thermal stability which reduces the risk of thermal runaway. The final chemical composition of the units will be subject to advances in technology. Each battery cell will be continuously monitored and controlled by a Battery Management System (BMS). The main function of the BMS is to protect the battery cells from any form of electrical or thermal stresses that may happen during normal operation of the battery, and which might lead to thermal runaway. This is accomplished by the continuous monitoring of variables such as voltage, temperature and current of each battery cell. If a fault is detected corrective action can automatically be taken by the BMS, this includes temperature regulation and the isolation and shutdown of an individual battery to the entire site. In the event of a fire involving electrical components within the BESS enclosure, an automated fire detection and suppression system will release a dry chemical agent to extinguish the fire. In addition, to accommodate potential defensive firefighting operations, on-site

firewater storage tanks will be incorporated, along with dedicated firewater retention and drainage systems.

7.114 The technical details of these aspects are not controlled through the planning system. An established principle is that planning does not seek to duplicate matters which are controlled by other regulatory regimes. This principle is reinforced in the Governments new BESS guidance, which states that in "addition to…planning permission, there are a range of other regulatory regimes and requirements which also apply to the construction and operation of BESS, in particular around health and safety, fire risk, and pollution control" (para 5.1).

7.115 Developers and operators of BESS have a legal responsibility to comply with all relevant and applicable health and safety legislation which applies outwith the planning system. This includes the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 which require that fire safety benchmarks are met and that reasonable measures used to ensure that employees /members of the public are not harmed. As detailed in para 5.2 of the Government BESS guidance, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is the UK regulator of health and safety matters. This includes process fire precautions which are special, technical or organisational measures required to prevent the risk of fire. In addition, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) also have a role in the regulation of fire safety and general fire precautions. In the regard, the OBFSMP highlights the Applicants commitment to liaising with SFRS prior to commencement of development, and to providing full details of the chosen BESS and its safety features within a detailed BESS Report.

7.116 Although fire safety is not typically a material consideration in planning decision making, fire safety considerations relating to site layout, emergency access or appearance are material planning considerations. The Governments BESS guidance also highlights that "features of development relevant to fire safety requirements (e.g. water storage, containment barriers, access points) should be included within the planning application and clearly marked" (para 4.31). These matters are detailed below.

7.117 Careful consideration of a sites layout and design can contain and restrict the spread of fire. In particular, the updated NFCC guidance (Dec 2025) identifies required separation distances between individual BESS units and distances to occupied buildings (minimum 30m from site boundary). The applicant identifies that the scheme can comply with these requirements. However, it is recognised that BESS technology is evolving fast, the applicant is content with a pre-commencement condition that secures further details of the BESS layout. This approach ensures that any technology advances are captured in an updated site layout and that layout also ensures that relevant safety measures have been factored into the final design where necessary.

7.118 With regards to potential defensive firefighting operations, on-site firewater storage tanks have been incorporated, along with dedicated firewater retention and drainage systems. The updated NFCC guidance identifies requirements for firewater supply and storage. The applicant proposes a fire water supply tank with 228m3 capacity (equivalent to 228,000 litres) is proposed to provide a water supply for 1,900 litres per minute (equivalent to 31 litres per second) flow for at

least 2 hours. A second tank is also proposed which would hold contaminated water used on site in the event of a fire. This is in excess of the NFCC December 2025 guidance for sites without a hydrant supply, which requires a smaller supply tank and a slightly slower flow rate. The applicant further states that the final firewater supply and storage details will be submitted for approval prior to works commencing on site as part of purifying the proposed detailed site layout condition. The strategy relating to environmental protection from firewater run-off is outlined elsewhere in this Report on Handling.

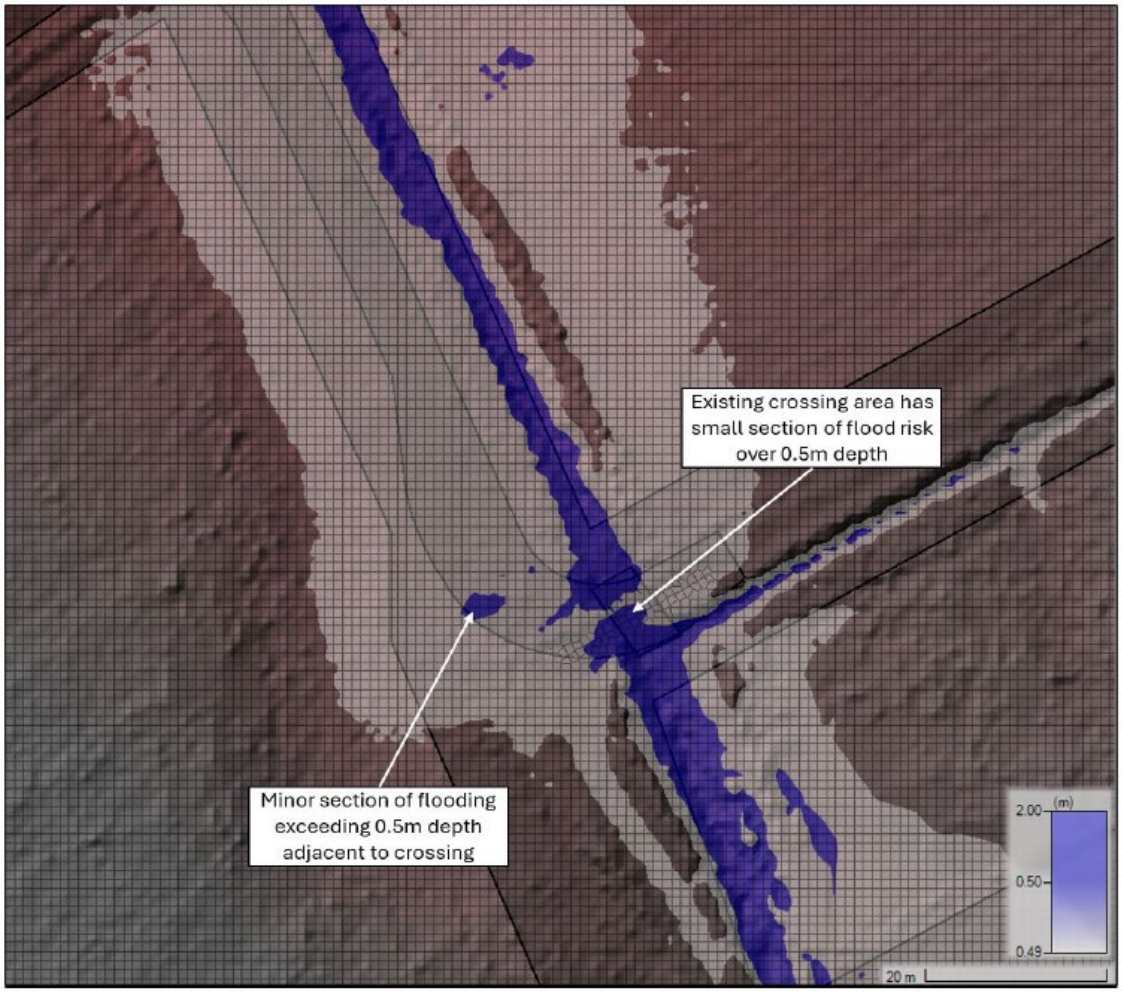
7.119 In relation to emergency access, the updated NFCC guidance provides specific advice in relation to utilising dual accesses and taking into account the prevailing wind direction. The application details two accesses to the BESS compound from the south and based on the prevailing wind direction (south-west), emergency vehicles approaching the BESS compound are not anticipated to be impacted by a vapour or gas cloud. Whilst Transport Planning have no objection to this arrangement, it notes that no information has been provided regarding the design specifications of the access tracks, including their capacity to accommodate vehicle swept paths and the provision of passing places suitable for fire appliances. The applicant considers that the final emergency access details will be submitted for approval prior to works commencing on site as part of purifying the proposed detailed site layout condition highlighted above.

7.120 Although there are dual access points within the site, the main route back to the A9 is via the single access point which is currently shared with Spittal substation. However, as detailed above, the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) identified that part of the existing access track may be at risk of flooding during a 200 year plus climate change storm event. The NFCC guidance provides no specific details regarding flood depths for access, nor is a dry vehicular access stipulated. However, it does highlights that designs should be developed in close liaison with the local fire and rescue service, as specific requirements may apply due to variations in vehicles and equipment'.

7.121 The FRA suggests that in parts this could be in excess of 0.5m which the applicant suggests that most Fire Services suggest is the maximum operational flood water depths for vehicles. On this basis, Officers sought further information in relation to the potential risk of this for emergency vehicles gaining access to the site during a flood event. In response, the applicant has submitted a Technical Note (March 2026) which updates the flood risk modelling at the site access and presents this over a 10 hour period.

7.122 As with the original FRA, the updated modelling assumes a worst case scenario in which all four culverts under the crossing are blocked. The assessment also uses phase 2 Lidar data which is likely to underestimate the channel capacity. Based on this conservative scenario, the assessment highlights the absolute maximum flood depths are modelled to be up to 0.63m. However, flood depths exceeding 0.5m are limited to two small sections at the existing crossing over the Burn of Achanarras and are at maximum around 5-7m wide, during the 200 year plus climate change event. The period of flood risk with depths exceeding 0.5m in this small area is only approximately 3 hours. These areas are identified below.

7.123 **Figure 6: 200-year plus climate change maximum flood depth map, highlighting depths over 0.5m (blue) and showing these are only present at the existing crossing and a minor pocket adjacent to the crossing**



7.124 In the highly unlikely event of a fire during a high level flood event, the applicant's assessment concludes that whilst there is no dry access to the site at the existing crossing during the 200-year plus climate event, safe access for emergency services is possible through the majority of the flood event. Again, this updated flood modelling maintains a conservative approach and assumes full blockage of the four culverts, however, the assessment notes that in reality this scenario is highly unlikely as the four existing culverts will probably continue to pass some flows even when partially blocked, which will reduce these maximum levels further. Subsequently, flood depths are likely to be lower than those represented in the model results and the duration of flood depths exceeding 0.5m is likely to be less than 3 hours. Officers therefore sought further advice from SFRS and the Councils Flood Risk Management (FRM) team.

7.125 As detailed in the Goverenment new BESS guidance, SFRS are not a statutory consultee for planning applications. However, when the application was originally submitted in 2025 SFRS had no objection to the application and recommends that the proposal is assessed against NFCC Best Practice guidance on BESS. Officers requested further comment specifically in relation to the risk of flooding to emergency vehicles. SFRS have confirmed that they do not wish to make specific comment. Informal advice has been from a local SFRS

Fire Safety Enforcement Officer, who considers that based on a risk assessment perspective, the likelihood of a BESS fire and a climate event of this nature actually coinciding so that access becomes an issue, is actually so small that the response offered by the applicant is reasonable.

7.126 FRM whilst not making formal comment on the fire risk, consider that the methodology used in the assessment would appear to be conservative and that the joint probability of a major storm event such as near a 200 year plus climate change storm event and a serious fire would seem to be extremely low.

7.127 Given the extremely limited probability of both events coinciding, the short duration of potentially restricted access, and that high rainfall events would help mitigate fire risk for vegetation surrounding the site, Officers are content with the proposal's access arrangements from a health and safety perspective.

Roads, Transport and Access

7.128 Chapter 9 of the EA assesses the expected impact of this development on the road network, particularly through the construction period. The assessment is supported by a Transport Assessment (TA). As detailed above, the applicant is committed to using a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) to manage the traffic impacts of the development. Transport Scotland and the Councils Transport Planning do not object to the application, subject to conditions.

7.129 The study area (EA Figure 9.1) encompasses the preferred abnormal load and general construction traffic routes to the site; this involves the A9(T), between the site access junction and Thurso; the A9(T), between the site access junction and its junction with the A99; and the A882 (Council adopted road), between its junction with the A9(T) and the A99. However, it is noted that the study area only relates to those roads likely to be subject to the biggest increase in construction traffic. It does not include all roads used in the movement of construction materials and AIL traffic. Traffic count locations are shown on EA Figure 9.3.

7.130 Transport Scotland raise no concerns with regards to this approach. However, the Councils Transport Planning Team consider it disappointing that the assessment excludes roads serving quarries and other suppliers from the study area, highlighting that these minor Council roads can experience significant strain due to extraordinary increases in HGV traffic, far beyond their typical usage, and should have been considered in the assessment.

7.131 Access to the proposed development will be taken from an existing access junction on the A9(T), to the east of the site, which is shared with the existing Spittal Converter Station. A short section of new access track will be provided to the site as an extension to the existing access track. Parking for staff and visitors will all be contained within the site boundary. Transport Scotland have no objection to this access arrangement.

7.132 The EA highlights that Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AILs) will be required to serve the development, this will be for the site transformer and for the movement of the cranes. It is likely that the AIL will access from Scrabster Harbour. Full details of the load and access route would be provided once the transformer

model has been selected. Transport Scotland are content with this, but request that the proposed final AIL delivery route and any required accommodation measures is secured by condition. This is also requested by Transport Planning.

7.133 Construction generated traffic is outlined in Table 9.6 of the EA. This presents a forecast of two-way HGV trips for each month of construction based on key activities. However, Transport Planning note that the assessment lacks a detailed breakdown of the volumes of aggregates and sand required, focusing solely on concrete. As a result, Transport Planning consider the estimates to be broad and lacking in accuracy.

7.134 The EA details that peak activity will occur during months 2 and 3 of the construction programme. During which there will be a total of 78 vehicle movements per day comprising 56 two-way HGV movements and 22 car / LGV movements. This would equate to approximately 7 two-way total movements or 5 two-way HGV movements per hour.

7.135 The EA makes the following assumptions regarding the distribution of construction traffic during the peak months:

- Deliveries associated with concrete materials, such as cement powder and water, will be sourced from concrete suppliers, which for the purpose of this assessment will originate along the A882;
- Sand and aggregates will be sourced from local quarries. For the purposes of the assessment, it is assumed that all material will be sourced from quarries located to the east of the site, routing via the A882 and A9, which leads through to the access junction on the A9. The final quarry and material sourcing will be outlined in the CTMP;
- HGV deliveries associated with the HV electrical installation, control buildings, batteries, etc will arrive from the south via the A9;
- Staff working at the Site are likely to be based locally. It is assumed that 40% will come from the north via the A9, 40% along the A882 before linking onto the A9, while the remaining 20% will arrive from the south via the A9; and
- General Site deliveries will be via the A9 from the north and south. These are generally smaller rigid HGV vehicles.

7.136 The impact of this on the road network is outlined in Table 9.8 of the EA. This identifies that the maximum trunk road impact will occur on the A9(T) between its junction with A882 and the B870, where there will be an increase in total traffic of 5.3%, with an associated increase in HGVs of 56.9%. The EA states that the traffic impact associated with the peak construction phase is considered minimal within the wider road network, with the level of trips generated considerably below the daily variation in traffic flows. As such, it is not considered that this temporary increase in traffic will have a significant impact on the road network, or its users.

7.137 The EA also includes a cumulative assessment. As the cumulative impact of construction traffic could be substantial, posing risks to road infrastructure and

affecting other road users through increased delays, congestion, and potential safety concerns. The assessment proposes that an overarching traffic management plan could be used to mitigate these impacts, with the peak HGV traffic movements for each surrounding infrastructure project to be staggered. This is to be conditioned.

7.138 Overall, Transport Scotland are content with the assessment and request that a CTMP to mitigate any impact is secured by condition. In addition, any additional signage or temporary traffic control measures deemed necessary for the movement of components and/or construction materials should also be conditioned.

7.139 Transport Planning consider that due to the lack of accurate information regarding the volume of aggregates required for the project and the absence of clarity on the source locations for imported materials, it is not currently possible to assess the potential impact of this development on the Councils fragile rural road network that serves local suppliers. Transport Planning do however acknowledge that the bulk construction traffic will be on the Trunk Road which is the responsibility of Transport Scotland. Therefore, they have no objection to this application subject to conditions requiring the quantification and assessment of the impact that material importation will have on Highland Council roads.

7.140 A Schedule of Mitigation Plan is also required to address impacts on locations identified in the Road Assessment on Highland Council roads in poor condition where there will be an increase in HGV traffic of more than 10%. As outlined in the 'Construction Impact' section above the mitigation could include carriageway strengthening, strengthening of bridges and culverts, carriageway widening and/or edge strengthening, provision of new and/or improved passing places and road safety measures.

7.141 In addition, the Transport Planning Team also requests that the CTMP includes but is not limited to the following elements:

- Traffic management including measures to be taken to ensure that development traffic does not use routes other than the approved routes.
- Robust measures to ensure that construction traffic passing through any settlements in the area adheres to posted speed limits and avoids peak times, particularly during school opening and closing periods.
- The requirement for pre and post construction, GPS enabled dashcam surveys of any Council roads used in the delivery of materials or components related to this development. The surveys must be carried out to the satisfaction of the Roads Authority. Within three months of the submission of the post construction survey, any extraordinary wear and tear on Council roads must be repaired by the developer, at their expense to the satisfaction of the Council.
- Subject to information provided regarding construction routes and accurate forecasts of HGV trips, the applicant may be required to enter into a Section 96 agreement with the Council to protect the integrity of any Council maintained roads identified within the HGV construction route

plan.

- A procedure for the regular monitoring of road conditions and the implementation of any remedial works required during the construction period.
- Measures to ensure that all affected roads are kept free of mud and debris arising from the development.
- Details of any major projects to be constructed at the same time as the development that could give rise to significant cumulative traffic and transport impacts and measures to mitigate such impacts as required.
- A timetable for the implementation of the measures detailed in the CTMP. Identification of a nominated person to whom any road safety issues can be referred and measures for keeping the Community Council informed and to deal with queries and any complaints regarding construction traffic.

7.142 Individually, construction traffic impacts do not pose any insurmountable issue, with Officers seeking to coordinate the build out of developments in this locality through each project's CTMP, seeking to stagger cumulative peak construction traffic flows on the network.

Built and Cultural Heritage

7.143 EA Chapter 6 considers the archaeological and historic environment value of the site and assesses the potential both for direct and setting effects on archaeological features and heritage assets. The assessment is supported by a walkover survey, wireframes and visualisations (Figures 6.4 – 6.7). The Councils Historic Environment Team and Historic Environment Scotland have no objection to the application. No significant effects are reported.

7.144 Direct effects: No designated heritage assets are located within the site boundary, but there are three non-designated heritage assets (EA Figure 6.1). These features are associated with historic agricultural activities, and form elements of the local historic landscape. These are assessed in the EA to be of heritage value at the local level and of low sensitivity. The Councils Historic Environment Team is content that the assessment provides an appropriate level of information and assessment. The non-designated heritage assets lie outwith the proposed development layout and will not be affected so no specific mitigation is required.

7.145 However, there remains the potential for unrecorded buried features or deposits to survive within the area, and these would be impacted or removed by the development. As such it is recommended that a condition requiring a Programme of Archaeological Works be added to any grant of permission to ensure that direct impacts on unrecorded features are addressed.

7.146 Indirect effects can occur when the development results in a change to the setting of a heritage feature. EA Figures 6.2 and 6.3 outline the heritage assets within the inner (1km around the site) and outer (3km) study areas. As detailed above, there are several Scheduled Monuments near to the site. As Scheduled Monuments these assets are of heritage value at a national level and are assets

of high sensitivity.

7.147 The closest is Achanarras hut circle (SM2402) which is situated 120m to the north-west of the development. This hut circle sits above the broad, shallow valley of the River Thurso and is intervisible with a number of nearby prehistoric monuments including two scheduled cairns (Achanarras Cairns SM2400 and SM2401, 240m and 310m to the north-west) and Achies broch (SM2235, 800m to the north-west). The EA reports that the proposed development would have negligible magnitude on the setting of SM2402 and SM2235. With an adverse impact of low magnitude on the setting of SM2400 and SM2401. A negligible effect is also recorded for The Shean, cairn ((SM 475), which is located 480m to the south of two possibly contemporary Achanarras cairns and 540m to the north-east of Achanarras, hut circle.

7.148 Historic Environment Scotland have no objection and contend that despite the proximity of the proposals to Achanarras hut circle the development would not impede on views to the north over the valley of the River Thurso or on the intervisibility the monument shares with its neighbouring monuments, which comprise an important element of its setting. In the context of the NPF4 Policy 7(h) test, it is considered that the ability to understand, appreciate and experience the siting of these Scheduled Monuments and the key characteristics of their setting would be retained. Therefore, the integrity of their setting would not be significantly affected.

7.149 The proposed development would also be in relatively close proximity to St Magnus Church, Burial Ground and Hospital (SM5413 1.2km to the south-east). The EA reports that the proposed development would have negligible magnitude on its setting. Historic Environment Scotland again have no objection and consider that in views from the monument the proposed development would be likely to be read as an expansion of the existing Spittal substation and, in the medium-term, would be screened by existing forestry. In summary, build and cultural heritage impacts are well within acceptable limits.

Other Material Considerations

7.150 The Proposed development is expected to have a 40-year lifespan. It is not considered necessary to apply a time limit condition to the permission, which is not standard practice for applications for BESS, however it is considered appropriate to require a Decommissioning and Reinstatement Plan, as required by NPF4 Policy 11 and HwLDP Policy 67. It is also recommended that a condition be added requiring the operator to keep record of the power stored and generated to ensure that end of life decommissioning of the site takes place at the appropriate time. A condition requiring a financial guarantee to cover the decommissioning and reinstatement of the site is also recommended.

Non-Material Considerations

7.151
- Assertion that BESS specific policy and guidance should be developed before BESS applications are determined.

There is no prohibition on this type of development, as such Planning Authorities

are duty bound to assess applications of this type against policies and guidance available at the time. Nevertheless, the Scottish Government has now published BESS guidance and other legislation outwith the remit of planning also covers this type of development.

- No justifiable need within Caithness, Sutherland the Highlands, Scotland or the UK for this additional energy storage development.

The principle of this type of development is established in national policy, with the proposed development being of national importance for the delivery of the National Spatial Strategy. NPF4 considers that Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure will assist in the delivery of the Spatial Strategy and Spatial Priorities for the north of Scotland, and that Highland can continue to make a strong contribution toward meeting Scotland's ambition for net zero.

- Fire safety concerns.

The Governments new BESS guidance makes it clear that health and safety aspects including fire risk are not material planning considerations where this is covered by other legislation and does not affect the layout or design of the facility.

- De-population in the area, no community investment.

The applicant has committed to a voluntary community benefit payment however this is not material to the determination of this application. This matter will be advanced with the Councils Community Wealth Building Team. A planning condition is however, proposed to secure a local employment scheme.

8. Matters to be secured by Legal Agreement

8.1 There are no matters required to be secured by legal agreement prior to the determination of the application. A financial guarantee to secure decommissioning can be secured by condition. Transport Planning advise that a Section 96 agreement may be required to cover any excessive damage to the local road network. This is expected to be referenced and secured through the satisfaction of the Construction Traffic Management Plan condition.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The proposed development has the potential to support the electricity transmission network by addressing supply and demand fluctuations through the storage of excess energy, including that generated from renewable sources. In doing so, it contributes to national climate change objectives and carbon net-zero targets. This type of development is supported by National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), including Policy 11 (Energy).

9.2 In terms of impacts on residential amenity, roads, natural heritage, cultural heritage, flood risk, drainage and health and safety, the proposed development is acceptable, subject to the application of the recommended conditions to secure appropriate environmental mitigation. Statutory and other consultees responding to this application have not raised any fundamental concerns and there are no outstanding consultee objections, other than from the host

Community Council.

9.3 In relation to landscape and visual impacts, no significant effects are anticipated. Enhanced mitigation measures have also been secured in the event that this development is advanced ahead of the West of Orkney substation. Subject to conditions controlling this, the proposed development is expected to result in limited adverse effects on visual amenity and landscape character due to the application of appropriate mitigation through design, meaning all landscape and visual impacts will be localised. Over time, it will become increasingly integrated into the landscape, with the surrounding landform and mitigation measures helping to reduce its visual impact.

9.4 The development has also attracted several public objections. Whilst all concerns raised have assisted with the assessment of the application, and considering the adequacy of the mitigation measures proposed, overall, it is considered that there are no insurmountable issues that merit an objection to the application.

9.5 All relevant matters have been taken into account when appraising this application. It is considered that the proposal accords with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and is acceptable in terms of all other applicable material considerations. It is recommended that the Council Raises No Objection to the application.

10. IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Resource: There are significant staffing and financial resource implications if the application is to be subject to a Public Local Inquiry.

10.2 Legal: If an objection is raised to the proposal, the application may be subject to a Public Local Inquiry.

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

10.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever: The Proposed development will make a meaningful contribution to the low carbon energy transition.

10.5 Risk: Not applicable

10.6 Gaelic: Not applicable

11. RECOMMENDATION

11.1 **Action required before consultation response issued to Scottish Ministers:**

- Yes – Submission and assessment of finalised Scenario B application drawings.

11.2 Subject to the above, it is recommended to **RAISE NO OBJECTION** to the application subject to:

A. The Committee granting delegated authority to the Area Planning Manager – North to agree the finished condition wording, with any

substantive amendments to be subject to prior consultation with the Chair of the North Planning Applications Committee;

B. The Committee granting delegated authority to the Area Planning Manager – North to agree the Scenario B application drawings, with any substantive amendments to the photomontage plans appended to this report to be subject to prior consultation with the Chair of the North Planning Applications Committee; and

C. The following conditions and reasons.

CONDITIONS

Recommended Conditions and Reasons to be attached to any Section 36 consent which may be approved.

1. **Notification of Date of First Commissioning**

Written confirmation of the Date of First Commissioning and the Date of Final Commissioning shall be provided to the Planning Authority and the Scottish Ministers no later than one calendar month after those dates.

Reason: To allow the Planning Authority and Scottish Ministers to calculate the date of expiry of the consent.

2. **Commencement of Development**

(1) The Commencement of development shall be no later than 5 years from the date on which this consent is granted, or in substitution, such other period as the Scottish Ministers may hereafter direct in writing.

(2) Written confirmation of the intended date of Commencement of development shall be provided to the Planning Authority and the Scottish Ministers no later than one calendar month before that date.

Reason: To ensure that the consent is implemented within a reasonable period and to allow the Planning Authority and the Scottish Ministers to monitor compliance with obligations attached to this consent and deemed planning permission as appropriate.

3. **Non-assignation**

(1) This consent shall not be assigned without the prior written authorisation of the Scottish Ministers. The Scottish Ministers may authorise the assignation, with or without conditions.

(2) The Company shall notify the Planning Authority and the Scottish Ministers in writing of the name of the assignee; principal named contact and contact details within fourteen days of the consent being assigned.

Reason: To safeguard the obligations of the consent if transferred to another company.

4. **Serious Incident Reporting**

In the event of any breach of health and safety or environmental obligations

relating to the Development during the period of this consent, the Company will provide written notification of the nature and timing of the incident to the Planning Authority and the Scottish Ministers, including confirmation of remedial measures taken and/or to be taken to rectify the breach, within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

Reason: To keep the Scottish Ministers informed of any such incidents which may be in the public interest.

Conditions to be attached to any deemed Planning Permission

5. **Commencement of Development**

(1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of 5 years beginning with the date of this permission.

(2) Written confirmation of the intended date of Commencement of development shall be provided to the Planning Authority and the Scottish Ministers no later than one calendar month before that date.

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

6. **Accordance with Provisions of the Application**

1) Permission is hereby granted for the erection and operation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility, with the following elements approved under this permission:

- Approximately 72 battery containers;
- Approximately 36 invertor and transformer modules;
- One Distribution Network Operator (DNO) room;
- One private side room;
- Welfare and control room;
- Storage room;
- CCTV cameras;
- Security perimeter fencing;
- Formation of a section of new access track leading to the main BESS area from an existing access off the A9, which serves the existing Spittal Converter Station;
- Fire water runoff tank and fire water supply tank;
- An underground cable connection to the existing Spittal Converter Station;
- Drainage proposals; and
- Areas of soft landscaping and environmental enhancements with associated protective deer fencing.

2) Prior to the final commissioning of the development hereby approved, all elements of the development that relate to Part (1) above, and as approved in

writing by the Planning Authority under Condition 3 below, along with site drainage and flood mitigation infrastructure, site security measures, and fire safety measures including the means of containment of fire suppressant materials shall be constructed and installed in full, made available for use, and thereafter maintained for this use for the lifetime of the development.

3) In the event of the Development not storing and supplying electricity on a commercial basis to the grid network for a continuous period of 12 months from 50% or more batteries installed and commissioned from time to time, the Company shall immediately notify the Planning Authority in writing of that situation and shall, if the Planning Authority direct in writing, decommission the development and reinstate the site to the specification and satisfaction of the Planning Authority in accordance with an approved Decommissioning, Restoration, and Aftercare Plan, which shall be based on the principles of the Decommissioning, Restoration, and Aftercare Strategy approved under Condition 4 of this permission and updated according with the relevant guidance and best practice at the time. The Planning Authority shall have due regard to the circumstances surrounding the failure to store electricity.

4) At the time of the development's decommissioning, the development shall be decommissioned, the site restored, and aftercare undertaken in accordance with the approved Decommissioning, Restoration, and Aftercare Plan.

Reason: In order to clarify the terms of the planning permission and ensure the development proceeds as approved. To secure the decommissioning and removal of the development in an appropriate and environmentally responsible manner along with the restoration of the site in the interests of safety, amenity, and environmental protection.

7. **Final Layout, Design and Specifications**

1) No development shall commence unless and until full siting and design details of the development including all proposed battery cabinets, buildings, and ancillary infrastructure hereby permitted, have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. These details shall include:

a) the make, model, design, power rating, sound power level of the batteries, the dimensions of the battery storage cabinets and ancillary infrastructure, control building, storage and office facilities to be installed, and show separation distances between battery storage units which shall comply with the prevailing fire safety legislation and best practice guidelines at the time of installation;

b) final details of the access and water supply for emergency vehicles;

c) the external colour and/or finish of the storage containers, buildings, and ancillary infrastructure on site, which shall have a dark-neutral, non-reflective, semi-matte finish and;

d) details and materials of all external fencing and enclosures.

(2) No element of the development shall have any text, sign or logo displayed on any external surface, save those required by law under other legislation.

(3) The submission shall explain and demonstrate how the proposed BESS layout satisfies the Health and Safety Guidance for Grid Scale Electrical Energy Storage Systems and National Fire Chiefs Council's Guidance - Guidance on Grid Scale Battery Energy Storage System Systems and/or any or any superseding guidance prevailing at the time.

Thereafter, the storage cabinets, buildings, and ancillary infrastructure shall be installed and operated in accordance with these approved details and, with reference to part (c) above, the storage containers, buildings, and ancillary infrastructure shall be maintained in the approved colour, free from rust, staining or discolouration until such time as the development is decommissioned.

All cables between the storage containers, buildings, and ancillary infrastructure shall be installed and kept underground.

Thereafter, the Development shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority

Reason: To ensure the Planning Authority is aware of the development details and to protect the visual amenity of the area.

8. **Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare**

(1) No development shall commence unless and until a Decommissioning, Restoration, and Aftercare Strategy has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The strategy shall outline measures for the decommissioning of the development along with the restoration and aftercare of the site, and shall include proposals for the removal of individual components of the development as well as the development as a whole as well as the treatment of ground surfaces, and, the management and timing of the works and environmental management provisions which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

a) site waste management plan (dealing with all aspects of waste produced during the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases);

b) details of measures to be taken to prevent loose or deleterious material being deposited on the local road network, including wheel cleaning and lorry sheeting facilities, and measures to clean the site entrances and the adjacent local road network;

c) a pollution prevention and control method statement, including arrangements for the storage and management of oil and fuel on the site;

d) details of measures for soil storage and management;

e) a surface water and groundwater management and treatment plan, including details of the separation of clean and dirty water drains, and location of settlement lagoons for silt laden water;

f) temporary site illumination;

g) management and timing of the works; and

h) a traffic management plan to address any traffic impact issues during the decommissioning period.

The Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare Strategy shall thereafter be complied with in full in accordance with the timeline approved therein.

Reason: To ensure the decommissioning and removal of the development, along with the site's restoration in an appropriate and environmentally responsible manner in the interests of safety, amenity, and environmental protection.

9. **Financial Guarantee**

No development shall commence until:

(1) Full details of a guarantee, bond or other financial provision to be put in place to cover all of the decommissioning and site restoration measures outlined in the Decommissioning and Restoration Plan approved under Condition 8 of this permission have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt the bond must be able to be called upon by The Highland Council and be enforceable against the operator and landowner and/ or leaseholder; and

(2) Confirmation in writing by a suitably qualified independent professional that the amount of financial provision proposed under part (1) above is sufficient to meet the full estimated costs of all decommissioning, dismantling, removal, disposal / recycling, site restoration, remediation and incidental work, as well as associated professional costs, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority; and

(3) Documentary evidence that the guarantee, bond or other financial provision approved under parts (1) and (2) above is in place has been submitted to, and confirmation in writing that the financial provision is satisfactory has been issued by, the Planning Authority.

(4) Thereafter, the Operator, and Leaseholder and/or Landowner, shall:

a) Ensure that the guarantee, bond or other financial provision is maintained throughout the duration of this permission; and

b) Pay for the guarantee, bond or other financial provision to be subject to a review five years after the commencement of development and every five years thereafter until such time as the development is decommissioned and the site restored.

(5) Each review shall be:

a) conducted by a suitably qualified independent professional; and

b) published within three months of each five year period ending, with a copy submitted upon its publication to both the landowner(s) and the Planning Authority; and

c) approved in writing by the Planning Authority without amendment or, as the case may be, approved in writing by the Planning Authority following amendment to their reasonable satisfaction.

Where a review approved under part (c) above recommends that the amount of the guarantee, bond or other financial provision should be altered (be that an increase or decrease) or the framework governing the bond or other financial

provision requires to be amended, the Operator, and Leaseholder and/or Landowner shall do so within one month of receiving that written approval, or another timescale as may be agreed in writing by the Planning Authority, and in accordance with the recommendations contained therein.

Reason: To ensure that there are sufficient funds to secure the implementation of the Decommissioning, Restoration, and Aftercare Plan at the time of the development's decommissioning.

10. **Drainage**

No development shall commence until details of the final surface water drainage design have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The submitted details shall also include the provision of a finalised Drainage Impact Assessment (DIA) and take into account the landscaping mitigation approved under Conditions 26 and 27. Thereafter, the development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to ensure the site is adequately drained in accordance with the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.

11. **External Lighting**

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

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity, to prevent permanent lighting and minimise light pollution and to ensure the development does not have an adverse impact on residents and nocturnal animals.

12. **Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMP)**

(1). No development shall commence on site until a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

(2). The HMP shall set out proposed habitat management of the site during the period of construction, operation, and decommissioning, restoration and aftercare, and shall provide for the maintenance, monitoring and reporting of habitat on site.

(3). The HMP shall provide provision and details for regular monitoring and review to be undertaken against the HMP objectives and reasonable measures for securing amendments or additions to the HMP if the HMP objectives are not being met.

(4) GIS Shapefiles must be supplied of the offsetting and enhancement areas to the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of works.

(5) Until otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Planning Authority, the approved HMP (as amended from time to time with written approval of the

Planning Authority) shall be implemented in full in line with the timescales set out in the approved plan.

Reason: In the interests of good land management and the protection of habitats and to allow the compensation and enhancement areas to be mapped to ensure no developments occur on these sites for a minimum of 30 years.

Pre-Construction Survey

13. 1) No development or site enabling works shall commence until pre- construction ecological surveys are undertaken, which shall be undertaken at the appropriate time of year and no more than 3 months prior to works commencing on site, and a report of the survey has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The surveys shall cover the application site including an appropriate buffer from its boundary and the HMP areas with the report including mitigation measures where any impact, or potential impact, on protected species, including but not limited to birds and bats, and their habitats have been identified.

(2) In the event that works are intended to be carried out within the main bird breeding season, March through August inclusive, surveys for ground nesting birds shall be undertaken no more than 24 hours prior to any works commencing on site including site clearance works.

(3) Development and work shall progress in accordance with any mitigation measures contained within the approved report of survey and the timescales contain therein.

Reason: In the interest of protecting ecology, protected species including bats and nesting birds, and their habitats.

14. **Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)**

(1) No development shall commence on site until a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) containing site specific details of all on-site construction works, post-construction reinstatement, drainage and mitigation, together with details of their timetabling, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority. The CEMP shall be informed by the site and ground investigation works and best practice guidance.

(2) The CEMP shall provide:

a) details of the phasing of construction works;

b) details of the location, layout, formation of the temporary construction compound, welfare facilities, any areas of hardstanding, turning areas, internal access tracks, car parking, material stockpiles, oil, fuel and chemical storage, lighting columns, and any construction compound boundary fencing required for the construction period;

c) site specific details for management and operation of any concrete batching plant (including disposal of pH-rich wastewater and substances);

d) details of measures to be taken to prevent loose or deleterious material being deposited on the local road network including wheel cleaning and lorry sheeting facilities, and measures to clean the site entrances and the

adjacent local road network;

e) a Pollution Prevention and Incident Plan incorporating a Pollution Prevention Plan, Pollution Incident Plan and a Pollution Control Monitoring Plan, this shall provide measures to protect watercourses, groundwater, management of natural surface hydrological flows (flushes, springs, etc.) and protection of peatland/soils, arrangements for the storage and management of oil and fuel and other chemicals on the site and sewage disposal and treatment;

f) details of soil storage and management including outline quantities, locations (other than peat and other carbon rich soils) management of long-term storage of construction generated to facilitate future site restoration;

g) a drainage management strategy, demonstrating how all surface and wastewater arising during and after construction is to be managed and prevented from impacting on the water environment and to mitigate flood risk;

h) a surface water and groundwater management and treatment plan, including details of the separation of clean and dirty water drains, and location of settlement lagoons for silt laden water;

i) details of temporary site illumination, including measures to ensure light spill/pollution is minimised and avoids habitats within the site and does not extend beyond the immediate working area, and not beyond the site boundary;

j) Protected Species Plan. The Plan(s) shall be informed by preconstruction surveys carried out by a suitably qualified person, within 3 months prior to works commencing onsite. The surveys shall inform the mitigation measures required to protect any protected species found during construction of the Development. The Plan shall provide mitigation measures, as required, and a timetable for implementation.

k) Site-specific Construction Method Statements for the following:

    i. working cable trenches;

    ii. Energy storage compound formation and installation of energy storage equipment;

    iii. Substation compound formation, erection of associated buildings and ancillary infrastructure;

    iv. details of post-construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas not required during the operation of the Development;

l) Construction Method Statements for all roads/tracks to be altered/formed within the development site including their width, likelihood of widening or passing places, means of drainage (which shall have regard to SUDS principles), means of construction, and edge reinstatement including verge width. The specification shall be accompanied by relevant plans at a scale sufficient;

m) the cable trenches;

n) details of working practices and mitigation measures for protecting nearby residential dwellings, including best practicable measures to control noise and vibration arising from on-site activities, to be adopted as set out in British Standard 5228 Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites;

o) Emergency Response Plans; and

p) Soil Management, with details of soil placement and measures to utilise the soils' existing seed base in the finalised landscaping plan;

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

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

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

Reason: To ensure that all construction operations are carried out in a manner that minimises the impacts on road safety, amenity and the environment, and that the mitigation measures contained in the Supporting Environmental Appraisal Report accompanying the application, or as otherwise agreed, are fully implemented.

15. **Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW)**

(1) No development shall commence until the terms of appointment of a suitably qualified, experienced, and independent Ecological Clerk of Works ("ECoW") by the applicant, have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority.

The terms of appointment shall:

a) impose a duty to monitor compliance with the ecological and hydrological commitments provided in the application, the Construction and Environmental Management Plan, the Habitat Management Plan, and any species protection plans;

b) require the ECoW to report to the nominated construction project manager any incidences of non-compliance with the ECoW works at the earliest practical opportunity;

c) require the ECoW to submit a quarterly report to the Planning Authority summarising works undertaken on site; and

d) require the ECoW to report to the Planning Authority any incidences of non-compliance with the ECoW works at the earliest practical opportunity, and no later than 5 working days following the incidence of non-compliance.

(2) The ECoW shall thereafter be appointed on the terms approved throughout the period from pre-construction works, Commencement of Development to

completion of construction works and post-construction site reinstatement works.

(3) Prior to the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development or the expiration of the operational period of the consent (whichever is the earlier), details of the terms of appointment of a suitably qualified, experienced, and independent ECoW by the Company throughout the decommissioning, restoration and aftercare phases of the Development shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Planning Authority.

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

Reason: To secure effective monitoring of and compliance with the environmental mitigation and management measures associated with the Development during the construction phase.

16. **Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP)**

No development shall commence on site, until the applicant has submitted a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) to manage all construction traffic on Council maintained roads and this approved in writing by the Planning Authority in consultation with the local Roads Authority and Transport Scotland. The CTMP shall include but not be limited to:

- Traffic management including measures to be taken to ensure that development traffic does not use routes other than the approved routes.
- Robust measures to ensure that construction traffic passing through any settlements in the area adheres to posted speed limits and avoids peak times, particularly during school opening and closing periods.
- The requirement for pre and post construction, GPS enabled dashcam surveys of any Council roads used in the delivery of materials or components related to this development. The surveys must be carried out to the satisfaction of the Roads Authority. Within three months of the submission of the post construction survey, any extraordinary wear and tear on Council roads must be repaired by the developer, at their expense to the satisfaction of the Council.
- Subject to information provided regarding construction routes and accurate forecasts of HGV trips, the applicant may be required to enter into a Section 96 agreement with the Council to protect the integrity of any Council maintained roads identified within the HGV construction route plan.
- A procedure for the regular monitoring of road conditions and the implementation of any remedial works required during the construction period.
- Measures to ensure that all affected roads are kept free of mud and debris arising from the development.
- Details of any major projects to be constructed at the same time as the development that could give rise to significant cumulative traffic and

transport impacts and measures to mitigate such impacts as required, with peak construction trip periods to be staggered.

- A timetable for the implementation of the measures detailed in the CTMP.
- Identification of a nominated person to whom any road safety issues can be referred and measures for keeping the Community Council informed and to deal with queries and any complaints regarding construction traffic.

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

17. **Abnormal Loads**

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

a) the proposed routing on the local and trunk road network;

b) accommodation measures, including the removal and replacement of street furniture, junction widening and traffic management required on the on the local or trunk road network;

c) any additional signing or temporary traffic control measures deemed necessary on the local or trunk road network due to the size or length of any loads being transported must be undertaken by a recognised Quality Assured traffic management consultant; and

d) A detailed delivery programme for abnormal load movements.

Thereafter, the approved details shall be adhered to in full.

Reason: To ensure that the transportation of abnormal loads will not have any detrimental effect on the trunk road and local road networks.

18. **Road Mitigation Schedule of Works**

No development shall commence until a Schedule of Mitigation Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, and the proposed mitigation measures have been implemented on site. The plan should include but not be limited to:

a) A location plan showing the proposed HGV routing on Highland Council adopted roads;

b) Sources of the bulk materials required, i.e. existing quarries and/or whether a borrow pit might be available within or close to the site;

c) An indicative site layout showing all of the hardstanding and access tracks;

d) An estimate of the length and area of new and upgraded access tracks and

platforms required to construct the development;

e) Related to this an estimate of the volume of bulk materials required (roadstone and concrete) with details of how the estimate has been calculated;

f) Provide an accurate forecast of the additional two-way HGV movements associated with the proposed development and calculate the percentage increase compared to current HGV volumes on the affected roads Provide a Road Assessment to establish the current condition of Highland Council roads on the proposed HGV routing plan. This work which shall be undertaken by a consulting engineer acceptable to the Council and will involve an engineering appraisal of the routes including the following:

I. An assessment of the structural strength of the carriageways including construction depths and road formation including non-destructive testing and sampling as required;

II. Road surface condition and profile;

III. Assessment of structures and any weight restrictions;

IV. Road widths, vertical and horizontal alignment and provision of passing places

g) Provide mitigation proposals to address impacts on locations identified in the Road Assessment on Highland Council roads in poor condition where there will be an increase in HGV traffic of more than 10%. The mitigation may include but not be limited to:

I. Carriageway strengthening

II. Strengthening of bridges and culverts

III. Carriageway widening and/or edge strengthening

IV. Provision of new and/or improved passing places

V. Road safety measures

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

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

19. **Operational Maintenance**

No delivery requiring any significant HGV or abnormal load movements shall take place during the operational phase of the development unless full details of the significant HGV or abnormal load movements have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Council, in consultation with Transport Scotland and affected Community Councils. For the avoidance of doubt, ‘significant increase of HGV traffic’ shall be defined as a 10% increase of HGV movements on sensitive (evolved) roads and an increase of 30% on designed roads. Thereafter, the

approved details shall be implemented in full.

Reason: To ensure that the transportation of HGVs and abnormal loads will not have any detrimental effect on the trunk road and local road networks.

20. **Operational Noise**

(1) Prior to the commencement of development an updated Noise Impact Assessment that takes into account the cumulative impact of permitted development within the vicinity, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, in consultation with Environmental Health. The Noise Impact Assessment shall include detailed design and mitigation measures and will demonstrate that the operational development can comply with the following noise specifications.

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

b) The Rating Level of noise arising from the development shall be determined in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 Methods for Rating and Assessing Industrial and Commercial Sound shall not exceed current background levels at noise sensitive properties.

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

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

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

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

21. **Record Keeping**

The Operator shall, at all times after the first commissioning of the development, record information regarding the details of power stored and generated, inclusive of dates and times of any failures, and retain the information in perpetuity. The

information shall be made available to the Planning Authority within one month of any request by them.

Reason: To ensure end of life decommissioning of the site.

22. **Programme of Archaeological Works**

No works in connection with the development hereby approved shall commence unless an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority and a programme of archaeological works has been carried out in accordance with the approved WSI. The WSI shall include details of how the recording and recovery of archaeological resources found within the application site shall be undertaken, and how any updates, if required, to the written scheme of investigation will be provided throughout the implementation of the programme of archaeological works. Should the archaeological works reveal the need for post excavation analysis the development hereby approved shall not be occupied or brought into use unless a Post-Excavation Research Design (PERD) for the analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. The PERD shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved details.

Reason. In order to protect the archaeological and historic interest of the site.

23. **Local Employment Scheme**

Prior to the Commencement of Development, a Local Employment Scheme for the construction and operation of the development shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by The Highland Council. The submitted Scheme shall make reference to the supporting Environmental Appraisal (May 2025) submitted with the application. The Scheme shall include the following:

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

b) details of how sustainable training opportunities will be provided for those recruited to fulfil staff/employment requirements including the provision of apprenticeships or an agreed alternative;

c) a procedure setting out criteria for employment, and for matching of candidates to the vacancies;

d) measures to be taken to offer and provide college and/or work placement opportunities at the development to students within the locality;

e) details of the promotion of the Local Employment Scheme and liaison with contractors engaged in the construction of the development to ensure that they also apply the Local Employment Scheme so far as practicable having due regard to the need and availability for specialist skills and trades and the programme for constructing the development;

f) a procedure for monitoring the Local Employment Scheme and reporting the results of such monitoring to The Highland Council; and

g) a timetable for the implementation of the Local Employment Scheme.

Thereafter, the development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In order to ensure compliance with NPF4 Policy 11c) and to maximise the local socio-economic benefits of the development to the wider community. To make provision for publicity and details relating to any local employment opportunities.

24. **Community Liaison Group**

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

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

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

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

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

25. **Tree Protection Measures**

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

Reason: To ensure the protection of adjacent trees during the construction phase and thereafter.

26. **Landscaping – Scenario A**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

27. **Landscaping – Scenario B**

(1) If, at the time of commencing works on the Development, the planning permission for the West of Orkney Wind Offshore Farm Substation (reference 23/05353/PIP or any follow on more detailed permissions) has not been implemented, or its finalised site layout and landscaping does not afford the same degree of screening for this proposed Development, as envisaged in the planning permission in principle consent, no development shall commence until a revised scheme of hard and soft landscaping works have been submitted to and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority.

(2) Details of the revised scheme shall include:

a) All matters set out within Landscaping - Scenario A, Condition 26;

b) A Revised site landscaping based on the principles set out in application **drawing no. TBC - 'Revised Landscaping Plan',** and unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority, shall comprise:

i) Finished Substation Platform Level reduced by 2m – amended ground level 80m AOD;

ii) Finished BESS Platform Level reduced by 1m – amended ground level 78m AOD;

iii) Provision of a permitter bund along eastern and northern site boundary measuring 3m high, with a 10m wide flat top, with 1:2 inner face and 1:5

outer face; and

iv) The bund to be planted with native woodland in accordance with an amended Landscape and Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan.

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

Reason: To provide additional screening of the Development, especially from the A9(T), in the interest of visual amenity.

Signature:	Dafydd Jones
Designation:	Area Planning Manager - North
Author:	Peter Wheelan
Background Papers:	Documents referred to in report and in case file.
Relevant Plans:	Plan 1 - Figure 1.1 Location Plan
	Plan 2 - Figure 1.2 Site Layout Plan
	Plan 3 – Figure 1.3 Typical Track Construction
	Plan 4 - Figure 1.4 Typical Cable Trench
	Plan 5 – Figure 1.5 Typical Culvert Plan
	Plan 6 – Figure 1.6 BESS Compound Plan
	Plan 7 – Figure 1.7 Battery Container Plan
	Plan 8 – Figure 1.8 Medium Voltage Skid Container Plan
	Plan 9 – Figure 1.9 Indicative Substation Layout Plan
	Plan 10 – Figure 1.10 Lighting and CCTV pole Plan
	Plan 11 – Figure 1.11 Typical Fencing Plan
	Plan 12 – Figure 12 Junction Visibility Splay Plan
	Plan 13 – Figure 13 Indicative Export Cable Routes
	Plan 14 - Figure 5.8 Landscape and Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan – Scenario A
	Plan 15 – Indicative Landscaping – Scenario B (Indicative)
	Plan 16 – Indicative Photomontages VP1 A9(T) (low res) – Scenario B

- Image 1) No bund and no planting proposals
- Image 2) No bund
- Image 3) 3m high bunding
- Image 4) 3m high bunding and planting proposals.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Development Plan and Other Material Policy Considerations

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

Appendix 3: Cumulative Schemes (within 3km)

Appendix 1 – Development Plan and Other Material Policy Considerations

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

National Planning Framework 4 (2023) (NPF4)

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

1 - Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises

2 - Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

3 - Biodiversity

4 - Natural Places

5 - Soils

7 - Historic Assets and Places

11 – Energy

18 – Infrastructure First

20 - Blue and Green Infrastructure

22 - Flood Risk and Water Management

23 - Health and Safety

25 - Community Wealth Building

29 - Rural Development

33 - Minerals

Highland Wide Local Development Plan 2012 (HwLDP)

A1.2 28 - Sustainable Design

29 - Design Quality and Place-making

30 - Physical Constraints

31 - Developer Contributions

36 - Development in the Wider Countryside

55 - Peat and Soils

56 - Travel

57 - Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage

58 - Protected Species

59 - Other important Species

60 - Other Importance Habitats

61 - Landscape

63 - Water Environment

64 - Flood Risk

65 - Waste Water Treatment

66 - Surface Water Drainage

67 - Renewable Energy Developments

72 - Pollution

73 - Air Quality

77 - Public Access

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

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

Highland Council Supplementary Planning Policy Guidance

A1.4

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

OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A1.5

- Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 – interim and annual targets replaced by Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill in November 2024
- Climate Change Committee Report to UK Parliament (July 2024)
- UK Government Clean Power Action Plan (Dec 2024)
- The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023)
- Scottish Energy Strategy (2017)
- 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy (2011)

- Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map, Scottish Government (2018)
- Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (2019)
- PAN 1/2011 - Planning and Noise (2011)
- PAN 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (Jan 2008)
- Developing with Nature Guidance (NatureScot 2023)
- Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects (2010)
- Health and Safety Guidance for Grid Scale Electrical Energy Storage Systems' (UK Government, Mar 2024)
- Grid Scale Battery Energy Storage System Planning – Guidance for Fire and Rescue Service (Dec 2025)
- Scottish Government Planning Guidance: Biodiversity (Dec 2025)
- Planning Guidance: Battery Energy Storage Systems (March 2026)
- Planning Circular 4/1998: The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions.

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

National Policy

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

A.2.2 NPF4 outlines 18 national developments that support the plan's spatial strategy. National developments will be a focus for delivery, as well as exemplars of the Place Principle, placemaking and a Community Wealth Building (CWB) approach to economic development. Six of the national developments support the delivery of sustainable places. Among these is national development number 3 – Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure, which "supports electricity generation and associated grid infrastructure throughout Scotland, providing employment and opportunities for community benefit, helping to reduce emissions and improve security of supply."

A.2.3 National development 3 accords national development status to a) On and off shore electricity generation, including electricity storage, from renewables exceeding 50 megawatts capacity. This proposal aligns with part a) and therefore, is classed as a national development, and as such received in principle support.

A.2.4 The spatial strategy reflects existing legislation by setting out that decision making requires to reflect the long-term public interest. However, in doing so, it is clear that the decision maker must make the right choices about where development should be located, ensuring clarity is provided over the types of infrastructure that need to be provided and the assets that should be protected to ensure they continue to benefit future generations. To that end, the Spatial Priorities support the planning and delivery of sustainable places, which will reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity; create liveable places, where residents can live better, healthier lives; and create productive places, with a greener, fairer, and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

A.2.5 Part 2 of NFP4 sets out the National Planning Policy which cover three themes: Sustainable Places, Liveable Places, and Productive Places; within which there are a total of 33 policies and many of these consist of distinct sub-policies. These 33 national planning policies form part of the development plan and will be assessed along with the Council's LDP policies for development management decisions. The most relevant policies are outlined below.

A.2.6 Part 3 provides a series of annexes that provide the rationale for the strategies and policies of NPF4, which outline how the document should be used, and set out how the Scottish Government will implement the strategies and policies contained in the document. With Annex A: 'How to use this document' noting that the policies within

Part 2 should be read as a whole and '…it is for the decision maker to determine what weight to attach to policies on a case-by-case basis….' It goes on to state that '…where a policy states that development will be supported, it is in principle, and it is for the decision maker to take into account all other relevant policies….'.

A.2.7 Many of NPF4's policies are relevant to consideration of this proposal, but attention is particularly drawn here to the following key policies. Policy 1 - Tackling the climate and nature crises aims to encourage, promote and facilitate development that addresses the global climate emergency and nature crisis. It requires 'significant weight' to be given to those crises in decision making. NPF4 Policy 2 requires that development proposals be sited and designed to minimise lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions as far as possible and to adapt to current and future risks from climate change. NPF4 Policy 3 states that development proposals for national development will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity so that they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention. Biodiversity measures can be secured through several conditions including the landscaping strategy, the Habitat Management Plan and the requirement for 10% biodiversity net gain. The assessment has considered the proposal in relation to these policies and is considered to be compliant, subject to conditions.

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

A.2.9 NPF4 Policy 5 intends to protect carbon-rich soils, restore peatlands and minimise disturbance to soils from development. It states that development proposals will only be supported if they are designed and constructed in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy, which has been adequately demonstrated in the submission. The application has demonstrated that it will not adversely affect agriculturally valuable ground and carbon rich soils are avoided in this instance.

A.2.10 NPF4 Policy 11 relates to energy and is the key NPF4 policy for assessing energy developments. It provides support for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emission development proposals, including battery storage. This support is dependent on development proposals maximising net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities. It sets out several areas, including impacts on communities, landscape and visual, and public access, where project design and mitigation is required to demonstrate how impacts upon them have been addressed. Subject to the suggested conditions, it is considered that the proposal is in general compliance with this policy.

A.2.11 NPF4 Policy 22, relating to flood risk and water management, also apply. The policy intends to strengthen resilience to flood risk by promoting avoidance as a

first principle and reducing the vulnerability of existing and future developments to flooding. The Burn of Achanarras runs immediately adjacent to the site. In this instance, the main infrastructure components of the proposal have been shown to be outwith the flood risk area. There is some potential for flooding on the access track back to the A9 during the 200 year plus climate change flood event. This is discussed in the main part of the report and the risk to personal and emergency vehicles is considered to be low and there are no consultee objections.

A.2.12 The requirements of NPF4 Policy 23, relating to health and safety, are also relevant as they seek to protect people and places from environmental harm, mitigate risks arising from safety hazards, and encourage, promote and facilitate development that improves health and wellbeing. The Health and Safety section of this report sets out how the applicant has mitigated the risk to human and environmental health from battery fire. The applicant will also need to comply with other legislation which is outwith the planning system.

A.2.13 Policy 25 - Community wealth building aims to encourage, promote and facilitate a new strategic approach to economic development that also provides a practical model for building a wellbeing economy at local, regional and national levels. While NPF4 considers national developments as a focus for delivery, they should also be exemplars of the community wealth building approach to economic development. A socio-economic condition can be secured. Further measures outwith the planning application can be developed through the Councils Social Charter.

Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP)

A.2.14 The key policy for assessing renewable energy developments within the HwLDP is Policy 67. It states that renewable energy developments should be well-related to the source of the primary renewable resources that are needed for their operation. For BESS technology, the source is the grid instead of a natural resource i.e. running watercourse or wind, given that the energy is already generated. The proximity of a BESS facility to the electricity substation is also a key consideration, with the Spittal Converter Station in this case being located in very close proximity to the Site and the connection between the two being via underground cables, thus avoiding the need for overhead lines.

A.2.15 The Council will consider the contribution of the proposed development towards meeting renewable energy generation targets and any positive or negative effects it is likely to have on the local and national economy. It states that the Council will support proposals where it is satisfied that they are located, sited and designed such that they will not be significantly detrimental overall, either individually or cumulatively with other developments, with regard to 11 identified areas, including natural, built and cultural heritage features, species and habitats and visual and landscape impacts. Policy 28 relates to sustainable design and supports developments which promote and enhance the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the people of Highland. It introduces the concept of achieving the right development in the right place and not to allow development at any cost.

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

A.2.16 The Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (CaSPlan) is the Area Local Development Plan covering the application site. It does not contain any allocations related to the application site or the type of development proposed.

Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023)

A.2.17 The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023) notes the importance of efficiently matching energy supply and demand for power. It recognises the role that grid scale battery storage can play in achieving this and attaches particular importance to Long Duration Energy Storage (LDES). The draft energy strategy notes that, as of September 2021, only 124MW of the total 864MW of energy storage in Scotland was provided by BESS with a further 2.1GW having secured by planning permission. Energy Statistics for Scotland- Q4 2025 show that in the planning pipeline that for electricity storage projects there is an estimated capacity of 41.8GW. The technology with the most pipeline capacity is battery storage with 32.8 GW.

A.2.18 The policies of NPF4 and the Draft Energy Strategy set out the Scottish Government's clear support for renewable energy development, including energy storage.

Appendix 3 – Cumulative Schemes (within 3km)

Site / Planning Ref	Planning Status	Approx. Distance to Proposal
Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (Granted / at Application Stage)		
25/00498/S36: Spittal BESS	With Scottish Ministers for determination. THC raised no objection.	700m
24/02827/FUL: BESS at Caithness Flagstone Ltd, Spittal	Planning Permission Granted March 2025	1.8km
BESS at Scoping/ Screening Stage		
24/02020/SCRE: Achanarras BESS, Land 585M SW Of SSE Halkirk	Screening opinion issued – Scottish Ministers EIA not required – 13 May 2024	Adjacent to southern boundary
25/02189/SCRE: BESS, Land adjacent to Banniskirk Quarry	Screening opinion issued – Scottish Ministers EIA not required - 7 August 2025	1.2km
24/00902/SCOP: Ouglassy Wind Farm (includes BESS)	Scoping opinion issued by Scottish Ministers -11 June 24	2.3km
Other Electricity Transmission Infrastructure (Operational/ Granted / Application Stage)		
Spittal Substation	Operational	500m
132 kV and 275 kV Overhead Lines	Operational	45m
23/05353/PIP: West of Orkney Wind Farm - onshore transmission infrastructure	Planning permission in principle granted June 2024	0.25km
24/04898/FUL: Banniskirk Substation	NPAC resolved to grant planning permission subject to the conclusion of s75 legal agreement.	0.82km
25/03311/S37: Spittal to Beauly 400 kV OHL	Application received: 03 Sept 2025 application pending	0.89km
25/02964/PIP: Ayre Offshore Wind Farm - onshore transmission infrastructure	Approved March 2026	1.8km

Spittal
Battery Energy Storage System

Figure 1.1
BESS Location Plan

LEGEND

Development Boundary

0 2,000 4,000 m

Ref:	10109449 S4N Spittal Design
Date:	30-04-2025
Paper Size:	A3
Scale:	1:74999.999923
Drawn by:	CN

Sun 4Net

93 George Street
Edinburgh EH2 3ES
Pell Frischmann

Achies
Battery Energy Storage System

Figure 1.2
BESS General Arrangement

N

LEGEND

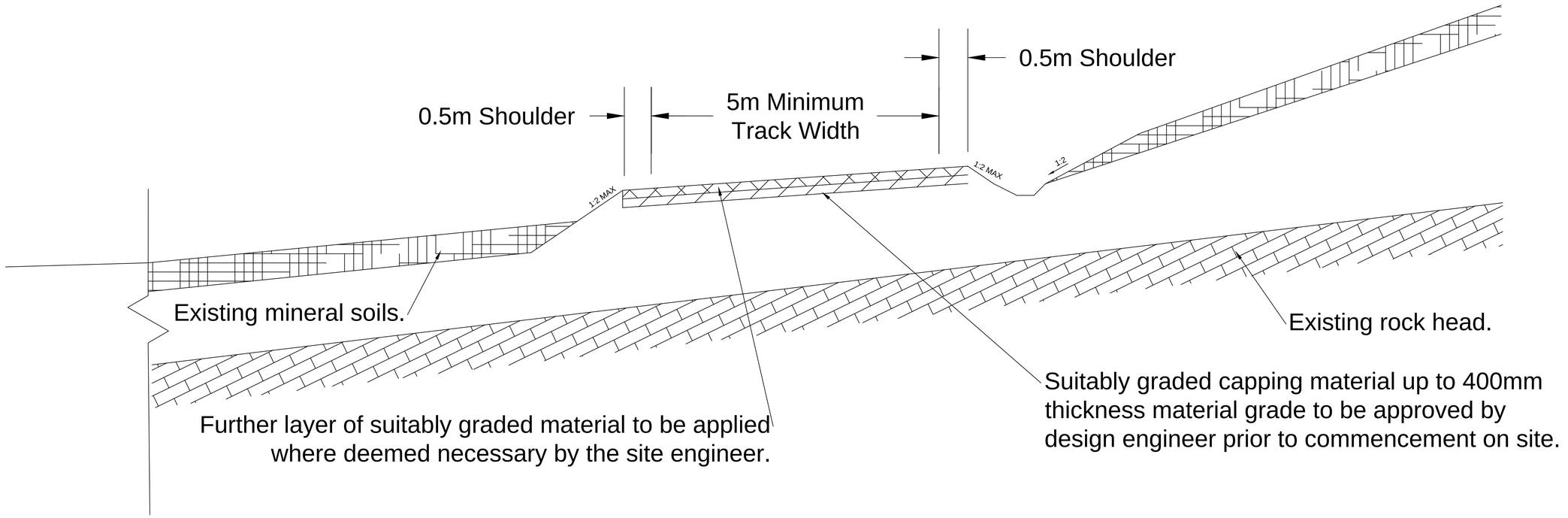
- Development Boundary
- SuDS Area Features
- SuDS_Lines_Features
- Track Resurfacing
- New Track Extents
- Lighting and CCTV
- Track Extents
- MV Skid Containers
- BESS Containers
- BESS Compound
- Substation
- Earthworks

100 200 m

Ref:	10109449 S4N Achies Design
Date:	30-04-2025
Paper Size:	A3
Scale:	1:3000
Drawn by:	CN

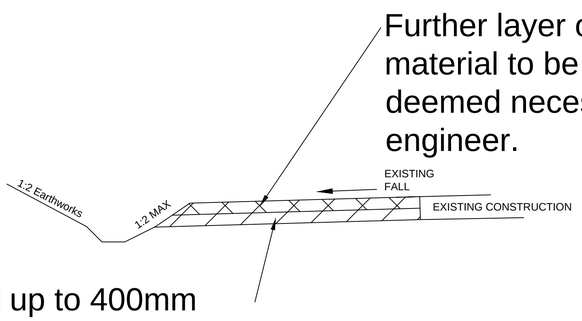
Sun 4Net

93 George Street
Edinburgh EH2 3ES
Pell Frischmann



TYPICAL TRACK FORMATION ON OVERBURDEN SOIL

SCALE 1:50



TYPICAL EXISTING TRACK WIDENING

NOTE:

1. ALL DRAWINGS ARE TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SPECIFICATION FOR HIGHWAY WORKS AND THE TURBINE MANUFACTURERS STANDARDS AND ALL RELEVANT DRAWINGS WITHIN THE PROJECT DESIGN PACKAGE.
2. ALL WORKS TO BE EXECUTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DMRB, THE MANUAL OF CONTRACT DOCUMENTS FOR HIGHWAY WORKS, DESIGN MANUAL FOR ROADS AND BRIDGES, AND TRAFFIC SIGNS MANUAL.
3. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN METRES UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE. ALL LEVELS ARE IN METRES AND RELATE TO ORDNANCE DATUM.
4. DO NOT SCALE FROM ANY DRAWING. WORK TO FIGURED DIMENSIONS ONLY. ANY DISCREPANCIES IN DIMENSIONS ARE TO BE REFERRED TO THE DESIGNER BEFORE WORK IS PUT TO HAND.
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Email: pfedinburgh@pellfrischmann.com
www.pellfrischmann.com

Client: S4N Spittal Ltd.

Project: ACHIES BESS

Drawing Title: PROPOSED TYPICAL TRACK CONSTRUCTION

	Name	Date	Scale: NTS @ A1
Designed	CN	07.05.2025	File: Achies BESS Construction Details
Checked	SCM	07.05.2025	Drawing Status: DRAFT

Drawing No.: FIGURE 1.3
Revision: 1

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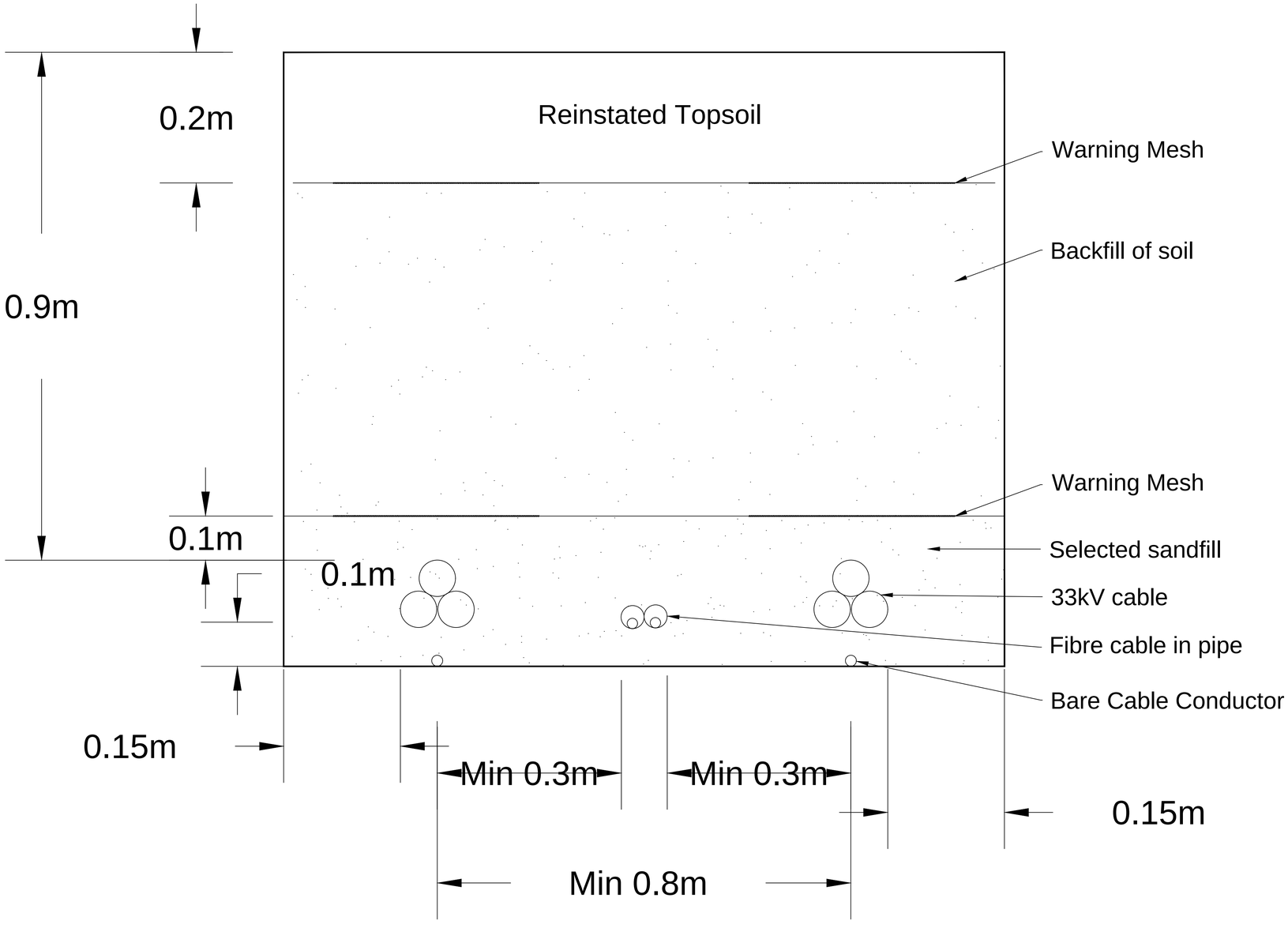

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Client: S4N Spittal Ltd.

Project: ACHIES BESS

Drawing Title: TYPICAL CABLE TRENCH

	Name	Date	
Designed	CN	07.05.2025	Scale 1:20 @ A1
Checked	SCM	07.05.2025	File Achies BESS Construction Details
			Drawing Status DRAFT

Drawing No. FIGURE 1.4 | Revision 1

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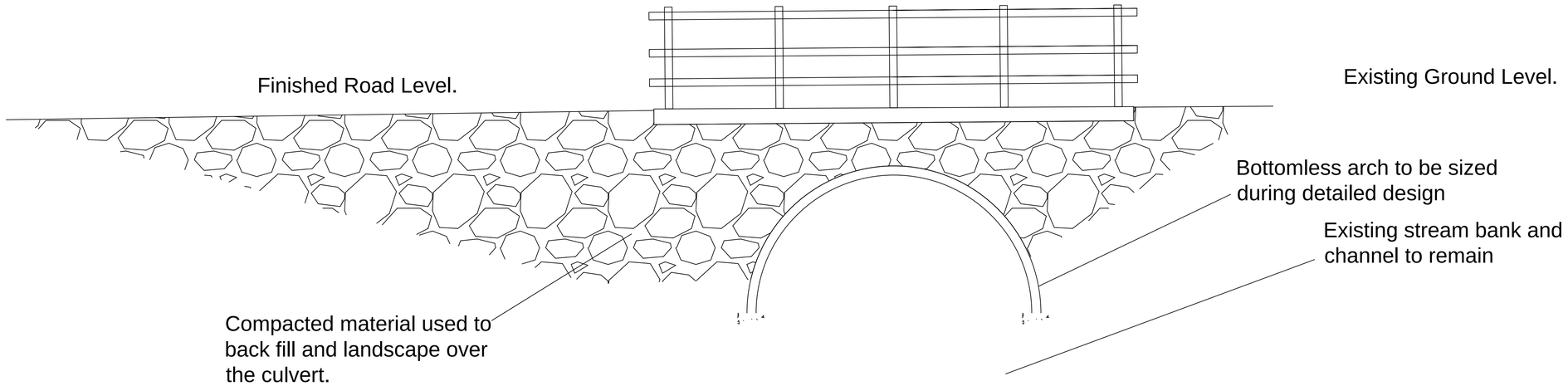

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Project

ACHIES BESS

Drawing Title

TYPICAL CULVERT

	Name	Date	Scale 1:25 @ A1
Designed	CN	07.05.2025	File Achies BESS Construction Details
Checked	SCM	07.05.2025	Drawing Status DRAFT

Drawing No. FIGURE 1.5

Revision 1

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KEY:

Plan

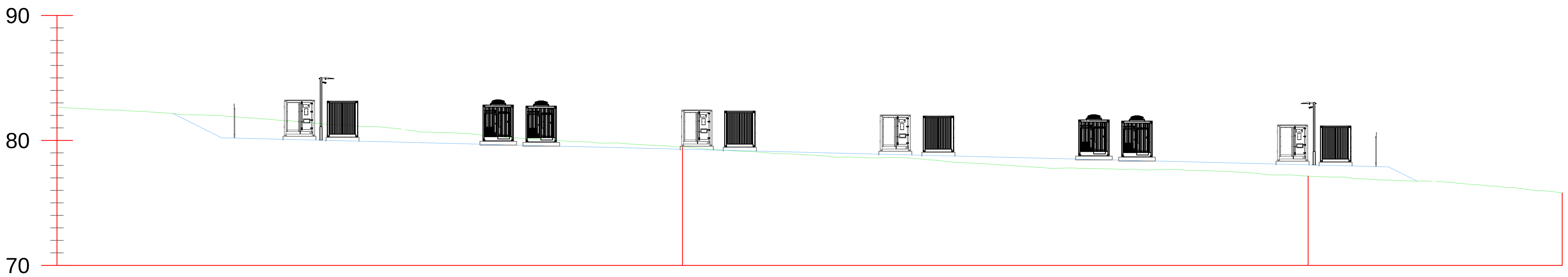
- Development Boundary
- Indicative Cable route

Profile

- Existing Ground
- Proposed Levels

Section - (AA)
DATUM: 70.00

Section - (BB)
DATUM: 70.00



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S4N Spittal Ltd.

Project

ACHIES BESS

Drawing Title

BESS COMPOUND DETAIL

	Name	Date	
			Scale 1:1000 @ A1
Designed	CN	07.05.2025	File Achies BESS Construction Details
Checked	SCM	07.05.2025	Drawing Status DRAFT

Drawing No.	Revision
FIGURE 1.6	1

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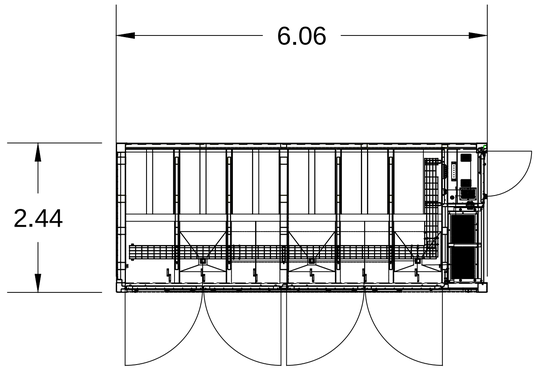
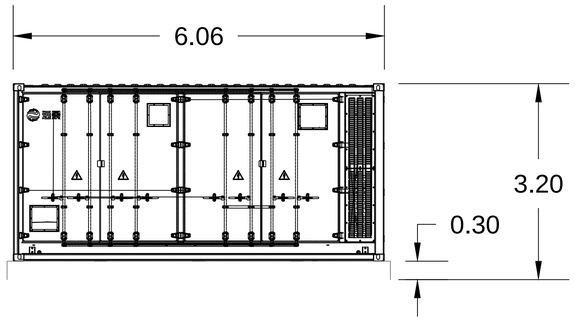
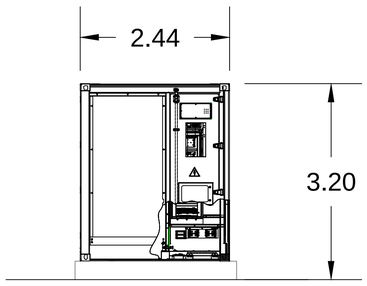


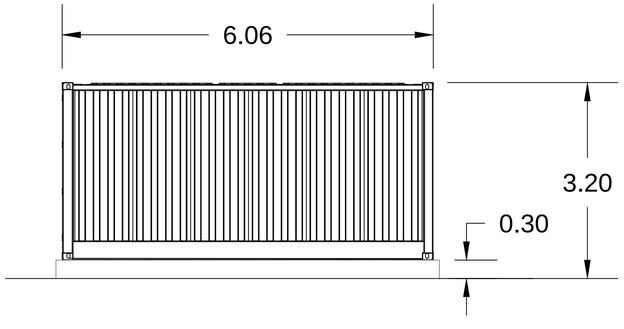
Battery Container Plan



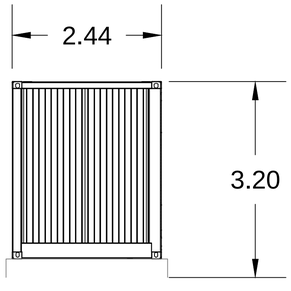
Battery Container Side Elevation



Battery Container Front Elevation



Battery Container Side Elevation



Battery Container Back Elevation

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Client
S4N Spittal Ltd.

Project
ACHIES BESS

Drawing Title
BATTERY CONTAINER DETAIL

	Name	Date	Scale 1:50 @ A1
Designed	CN	07.05.2025	File Achies BESS Construction Details
Checked	SCM	07.05.2025	Drawing Status DRAFT

Drawing No. FIGURE 1.7
Revision 1

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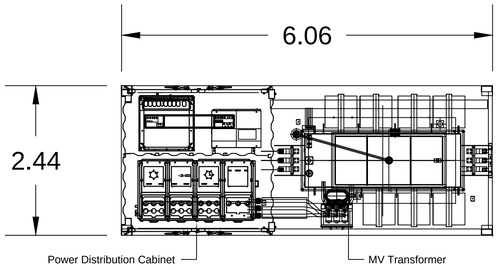
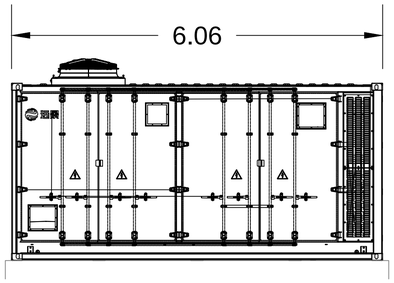
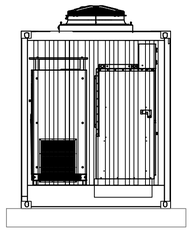


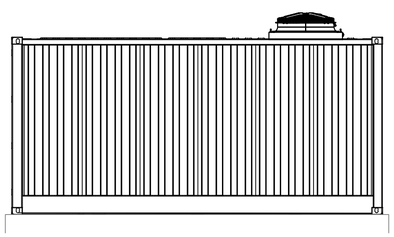
MV Skid Plan



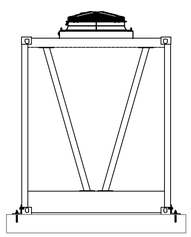
Medium Voltage Skid Side Elevation



Medium Voltage Skid Front Elevation



Medium Voltage Skid Side Elevation



Medium Voltage Skid Back Elevation

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S4N Spittal Ltd.

Project

ACHIES BESS

Drawing Title

MEDIUM VOLTAGE SKID CONTAINER DETAIL

	Name	Date	Scale 1:50 @ A1
Designed	CN	07.05.2025	File Achies BESS Construction Details
Checked	SCM	07.05.2025	Drawing Status DRAFT

Drawing No. FIGURE 1.8

Revision 2

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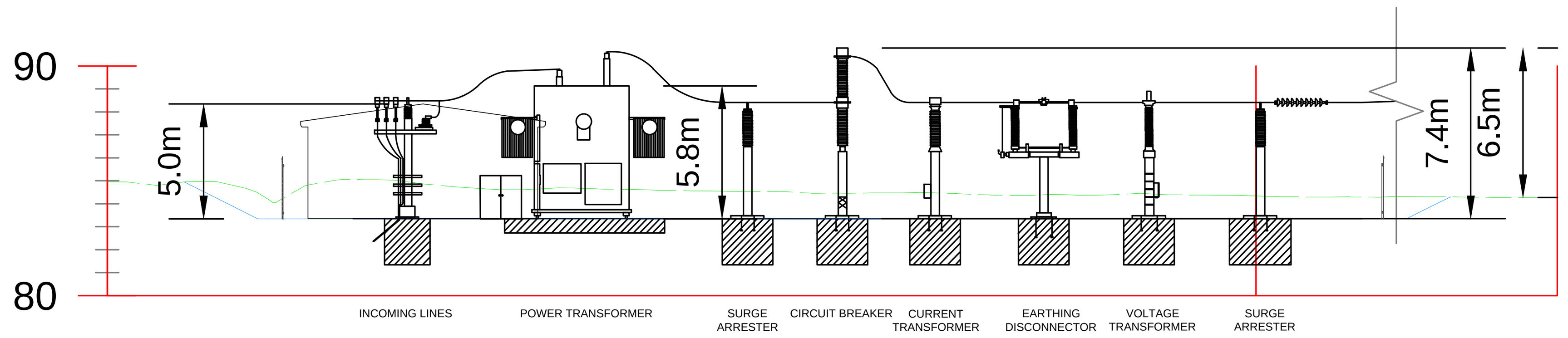
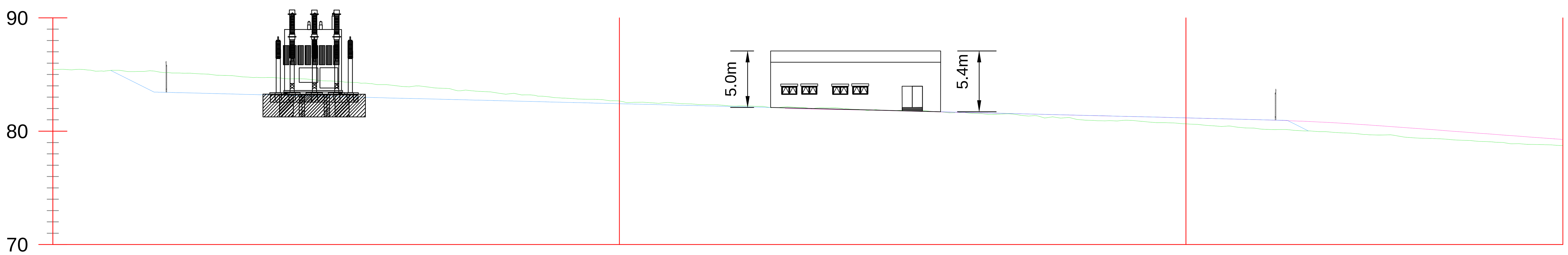
Alignment - (11)
DATUM: 80.00





Alignment - (10)
DATUM: 70.00

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KEY:

Plan
- Development Boundary
- Indicative Cable route

Profile
- Existing Ground
- Proposed Levels
- Proposed Track Levels

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Project
ACHIES BESS

Drawing Title
INDICATIVE SUBSTATION LAYOUT

	Name	Date	
			Scale 1:500 @ A1
Designed	CN	07.05.2025	File Achies BESS Construction Details
Checked	SCM	07.05.2025	Drawing Status DRAFT

Drawing No.	Revision
FIGURE 1.9	2

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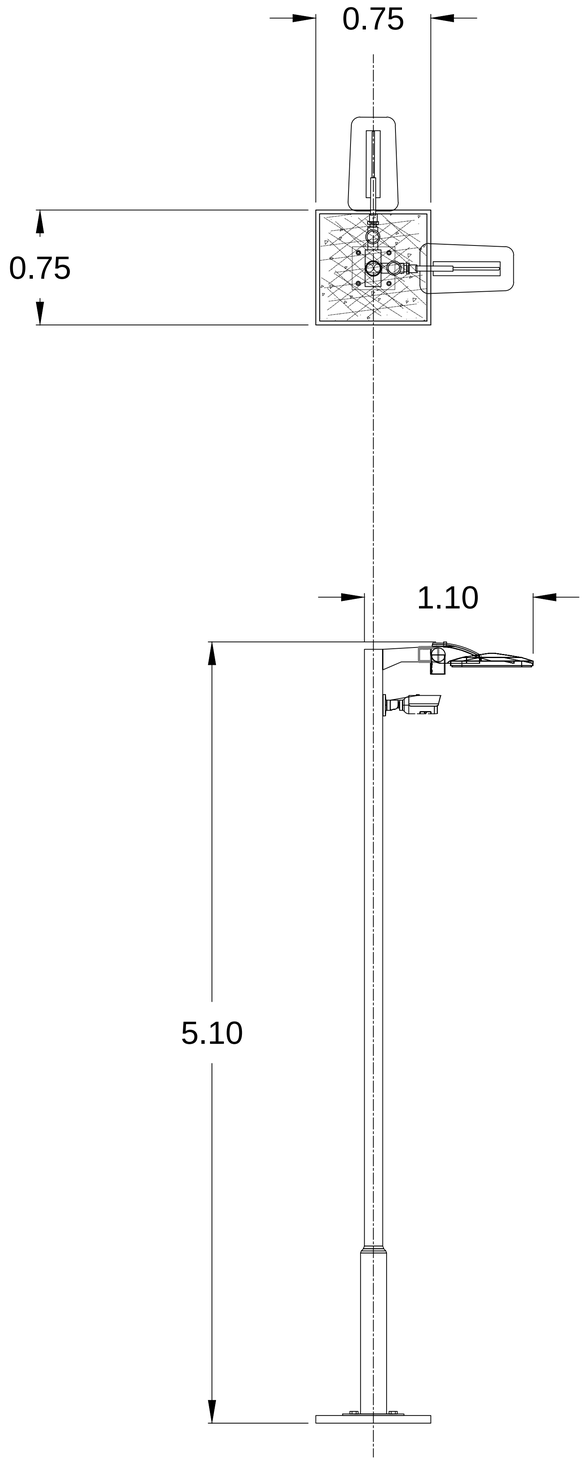

Lighting and CCTV Column
Plan and Elevation

NOTE:

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Project

ACHIES BESS

Drawing Title

LIGHTING AND CCTV POLE

	Name	Date	Scale 1:20 @ A1
Designed	CN	07.05.2025	File Achies BESS Construction Details
Checked	SCM	07.05.2025	Drawing Status DRAFT

Drawing No. FIGURE 1.10

Revision 1

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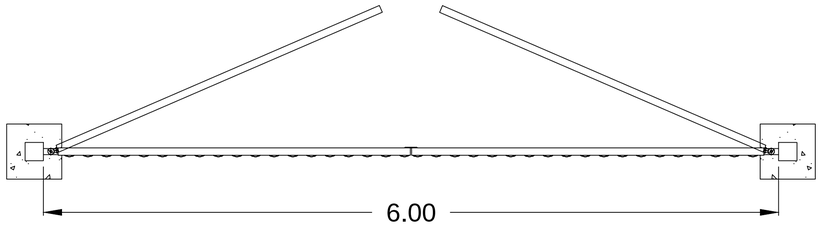
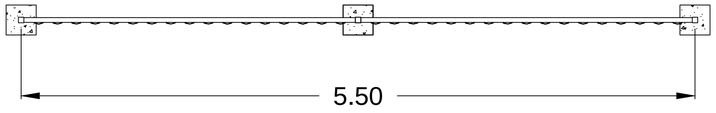
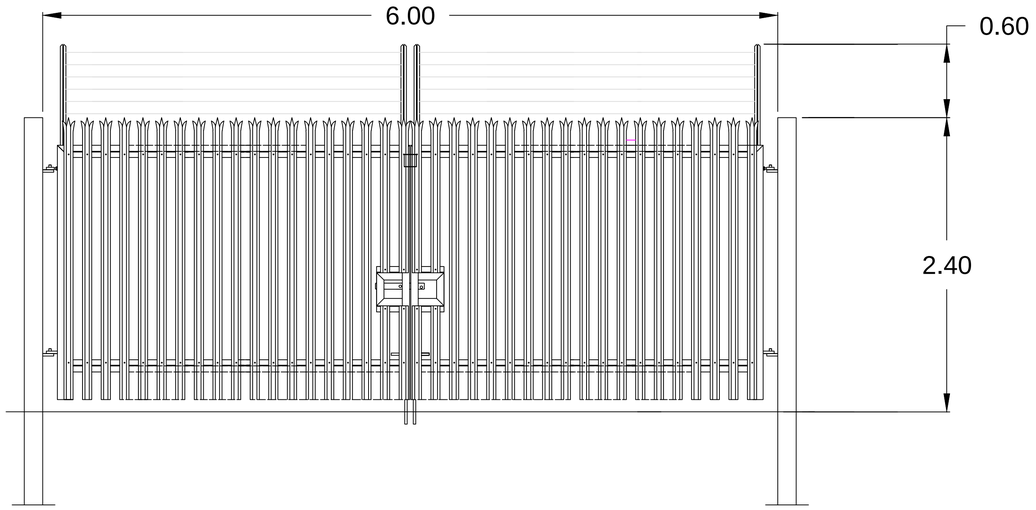


6 METRE ACCESS GATE PLAN



TYPICAL PALISADE FENCE PLAN



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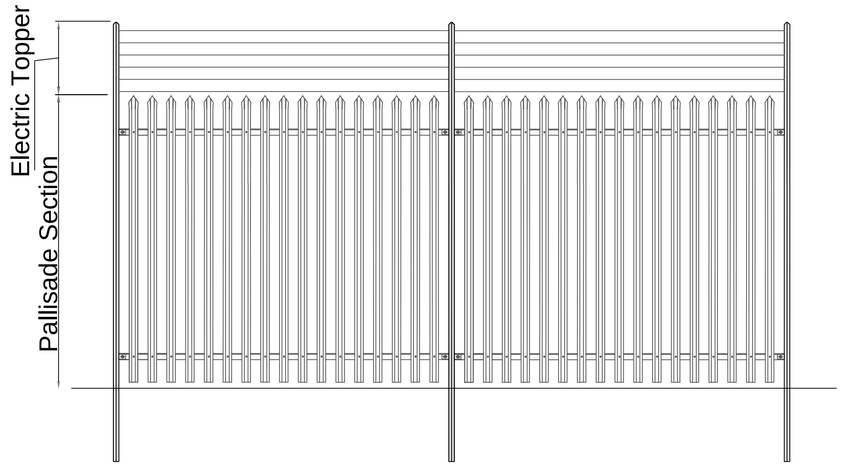
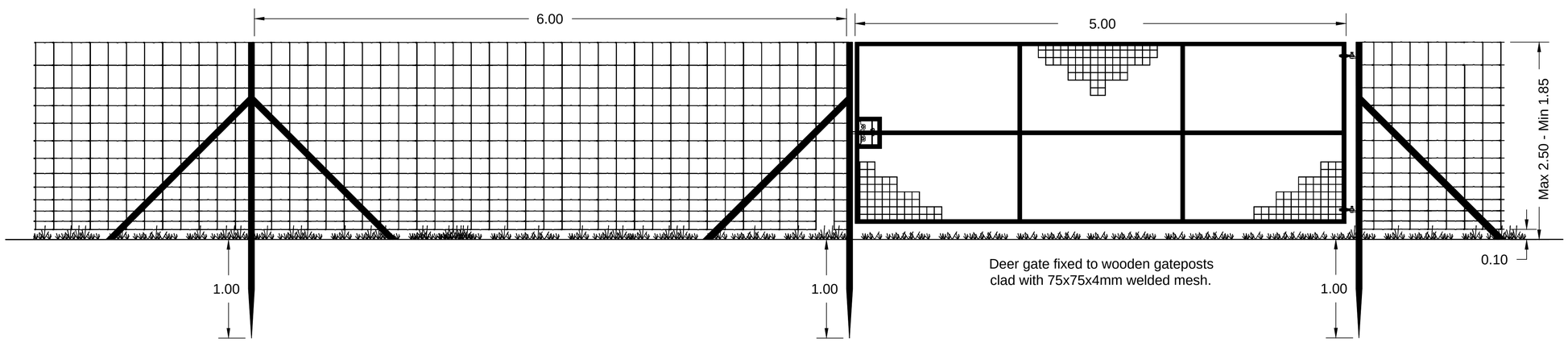


TYPICAL PALISADE FENCE ELEVATION



TYPICAL DEER FENCE ELEVATION

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Client

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Project

ACHIES BESS

Drawing Title

TYPICAL FENCING DETAIL

	Name	Date	Scale	Custom @ A1
Designed	CN	07.05.2025	File	Achies BESS Construction Details
Checked	SCM	07.05.2025	Drawing Status	DRAFT

Drawing No. FIGURE 1.11

Revision 1

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3. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN METRES UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE. ALL LEVELS ARE IN METRES AND RELATE TO ORDNANCE DATUM.
4. DO NOT SCALE FROM ANY DRAWING. WORK TO FIGURED DIMENSIONS ONLY. ANY DISCREPANCIES IN DIMENSIONS ARE TO BE REFERRED TO THE DESIGNER BEFORE WORK IS PUT TO HAND.
5. ALL DIMENSIONS AND LEVELS ARE TO BE CHECKED ON SITE BY THE CONTRACTOR PRIOR TO PREPARING ANY WORKING DRAWINGS OR COMMENCING ON SITE.
6. ALL WORKS BY THE CONTRACTOR MUST BE CARRIED OUT IS SUCH A WAY THAT ALL REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT ARE SATISFIED.
7. ALL WORKS ARE TO BE CARRIED OUT IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENT OF THE STATUTORY AUTHORITIES AND CONSTRUCTION DESIGN MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS.

KEY:

160m x 4.5m Visibility Splay

215m x 4.5m Visibility Splay

Sun 4 Net

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Client

S4N Spittal Ltd.

Project

ACHIES BESS

Drawing Title

JUNCTION VISIBILITY SPLAY

	Name	Date
Designed	CN	07.05.2025
Checked	SCM	07.05.2025

Scale 1:1000 @ A1

File Achies BESS Construction Details

Drawing Status DRAFT

Drawing No. FIGURE 1.12

Revision 1

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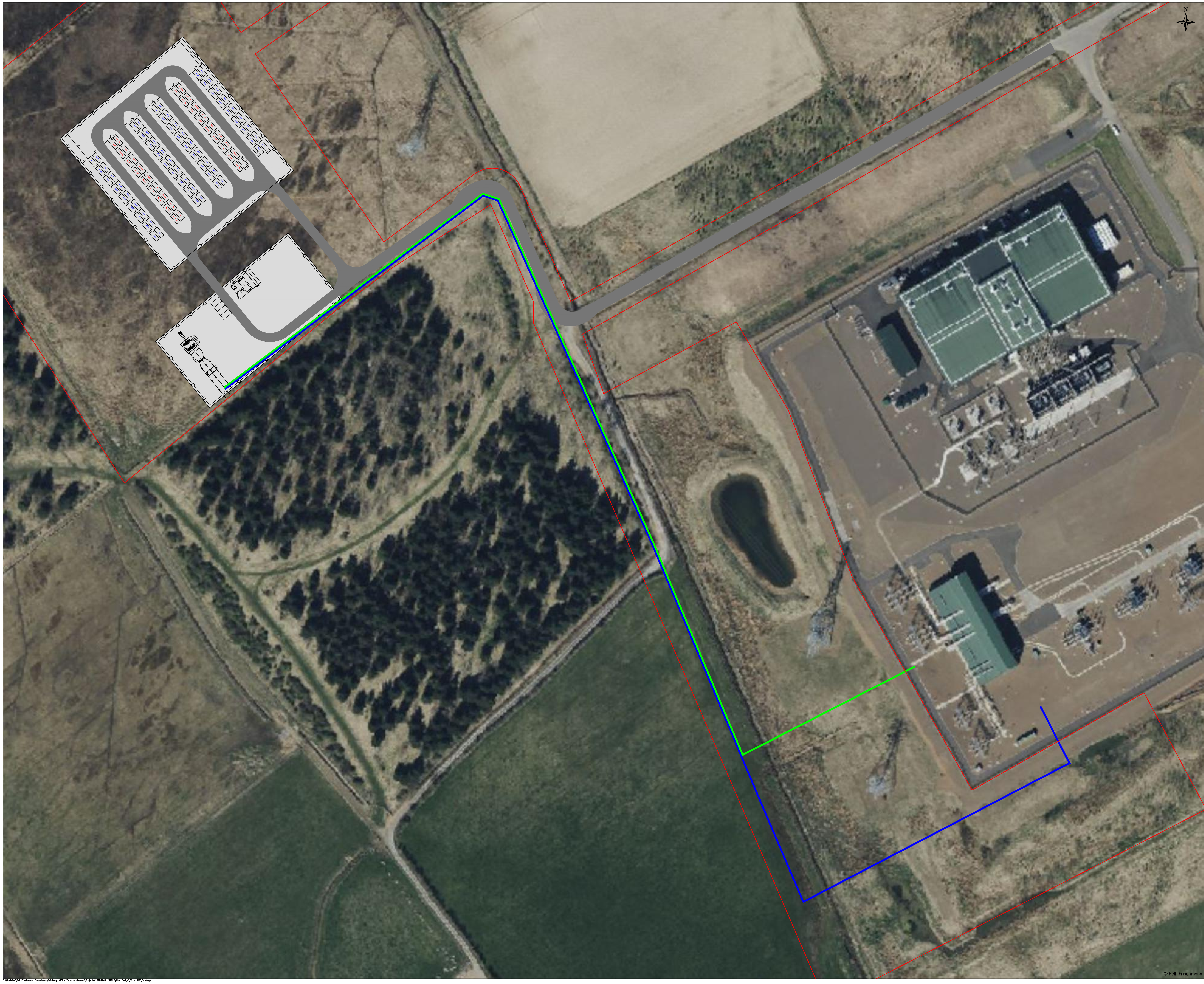

NOTE:

1. ALL DRAWINGS ARE TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SPECIFICATION FOR HIGHWAY WORKS AND THE TURBINE MANUFACTURERS STANDARDS AND ALL RELEVANT DRAWINGS WITHIN THE PROJECT DESIGN PACKAGE.
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KEY:

- Development Boundary
- Export Route - Option 1
- Export Route - Option 2

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Project
ACHIES BESS

Drawing Title
INDICATIVE EXPORT CABLE ROUTES

	Name	Date	
			Scale 1:1000 @ A1
Designed	CN	07.05.2025	File Achies BESS Construction Details
Checked	SCM	07.05.2025	Drawing Status DRAFT

Drawing No. FIGURE 1.13

Revision 1

Woodland Planting @ 3 plants /m² planted in groups of 7-9 plants

% Mix	Species	Specification	Height/ Spread (cm)	Grown
20	Betula pubescens	1+1, Transplant - seed raised	80-100	B
10	Crataegus monogyna	1+1, Transplant - seed raised	40-60	B
5	Ilex aquifolium	Leader with laterals	40-60	2L
20	Pinus sylvestris	Leader with laterals	40-60	2L
5	Prunus spinosa	1+1, Transplant - seed raised, branched, 2 breaks	40-60	B
20	Quercus robur	1+1, Transplant - seed raised	60-80	B
10	Salix cinerea	0/1 , Cutting branched, 2 breaks	60-80	B
10	Sorbus aucuparia	1+1, Transplant - seed raised	60-80	B

Meadow Seeding: Highland Grassland Mix, by Scotia Seeds, 3g/m2

% Mix	Species
	Wildflowers (20%)
2.5	Achillea millefolium
1	Alchemilla alpina
2	Calluna vulgaris
1.8	Erica cinerea
0.1	Galium saxatile
1.6	Galium verum
0.2	Luzula multiflora
2	Plantago lanceolata
0.1	Potentilla erecta
2.7	Prunella vulgaris
2.7	Ranunculus acris
1	Rumex acetosella
0.2	Stellaria graminea
0.5	Succisa pratensis
1.1	Trifolium repens
0.1	Veronica chamaedrys
0.3	Veronica officinalis
0.2	Viola riviniana
	Grasses and sedges (80%)
8	Agrostis capillaris
6	Agrostis vinealis
2	Anthoxanthum odoratum
6.3	Deschampsia flexuosa
28.5	Festuca ovina
28	Festuca rubra ssp commutata
1	Molinia caerulea
0.2	Nardus stricta

Achies Battery Energy Storage System

Figure 5.8: Landscape and Biodiversity Mitigation and Enchancement Plan

LEGEND

- Existing woodland
- Proposed native woodland (refer to EIAR Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Amenity)
- Areas of peatland restoration (refer to EIAR Chapter 7: Biodiversity)
- Areas disturbed restored with meadow seeding or site won turfs
- Restoration and enhancement areas - D2: Wet dwarf shrub heath habitat
- Proposed deer fencing
- Security fencing with gates
- Site Boundary

Note:

Drawing is for planning purposes only not for construction.
Refer to finished site levels plan.
All site dimensions shall be verified by the Contractor on site prior to commencing any works.
All contractors should ascertain the location of all underground services/utilities before undertaking any work and conflicts resolved.
It is assumed all work will be carried out by an experienced competent contractor working to an approved method statement.
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Date:	20/05/2025
Paper Size:	A3
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Plan 15 – Indicative Landscaping – Scenario B