

# Planning Application for the Installation and Operation of a Battery Energy Storage System at Corshellach, Moray Landscape & Visual Appraisal

PREPARED BY PEGASUS GROUP ON BEHALF OF RES LTD. | JUNE 2024 | P23-0525





## CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. METHODOLOGY
3. SITE CONTEXT
4. DESIGNATION AND POLICY CONTEXT
5. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
6. LANDSCAPE BASELINE AND EFFECTS
7. VISUAL BASELINE AND EFFECTS
8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
9. REFERENCES

### APPENDIX 1: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

### APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared on behalf of RES Ltd. by Pegasus Group. It relates to a parcel of land approximately 1.7km to the east of Edinkillie village and lies directly west of Berryburn substation, as shown on **Figure 1**. This LVA considers the site and its surrounding context in both landscape and visual terms, to assess the potential effects of the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS / the proposed development) upon:

- Landscape features;
- Landscape character; and
- Visual amenity.

1.2 This LVA has been guided by the assessment criteria set out in Appendix 1. It should be noted that all of the landscape and visual effects stated within assessments such as this are considered adverse unless stated otherwise. It should also be noted that all effects are considered direct, and long-term unless otherwise stated.

1.3 The appraisal has been prepared through a desk study analysis of the site and its policy context as well as site visits to gain an appreciation of the landscape and visual context of the site.

1.4 A detailed landscape proposals plan conveys the landscape strategy and is shown by **Figure 5**. This LVA is based on this detailed landscape proposals plan, which is also produced as a separate plan.

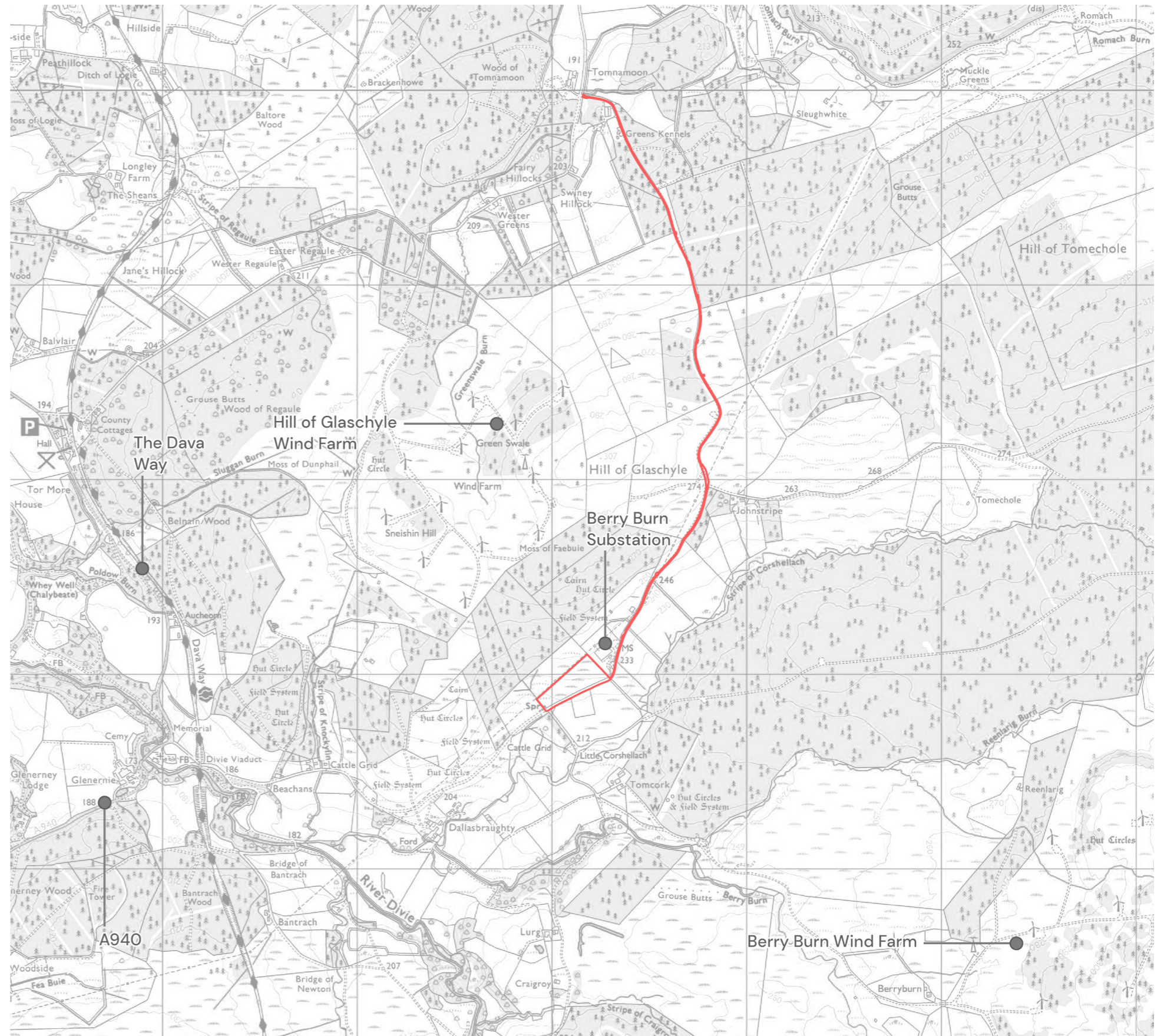


Figure 1: Site Location and Surroundings

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### Published Guidance

2.1 The LVA has been undertaken in accordance with the principles of best practice, as outlined in published guidance documents listed in the reference section of this report, notably the third edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (GLVIA3), (Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013).

2.2 The methodology and assessment criteria for the assessment have been developed in accordance with the principles established in this best practice document. It should be acknowledged that GLVIA3 establishes guidelines, not a specific methodology. The preface to GLVIA3 states:

*“This edition concentrates on principles and processes. It does not provide a detailed or formulaic ‘recipe’ that can be followed in every situation – it remains the responsibility of the professional to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the task in hand.”*

2.3 The approach set out below and in detail in Appendix 1 has therefore been developed specifically for this assessment to ensure that the methodology is fit for purpose.

### Distinction between Landscape and Visual Effects

2.4 In accordance with the published guidance, landscape and visual effects were assessed separately, although the procedure for assessing each of these is closely linked. A clear distinction has been drawn between landscape and visual effects as described below:

- Landscape effects relate to the effects of the indicative proposals on the physical and perceptual characteristics of the landscape and its resulting character and quality; and
- Visual effects relate to the effects on specific views experienced by visual receptors and on visual amenity more generally.

### Types of Landscape and Visual Impacts Considered and Duration

2.5 The LVA assesses the temporary effects of the proposed development during the construction stage, as well as the long-term effects associated with the operational stage.

2.6 Consideration has been given to seasonal variations in the visibility of the development and these are described where necessary.

2.7 Both beneficial and adverse effects are identified in the assessment and reported as appropriate. Where effects are described as ‘neutral’ this is where beneficial effects are deemed to balance the adverse effects. The

adverse and beneficial effects are communicated in each case so that the judgement is clear.

2.8 As part of the proposed development, new planting would be introduced. Newly planted vegetation takes a number of years to mature and average growth rates have been taken into consideration in this assessment. The effectiveness of vegetation would improve over time (both in terms of integrating the development into the surrounding landscape and in providing visual screening) and this needs to be considered appropriately.

2.9 Therefore, landscape and visual impacts of the project are assessed both in the winter of year 1 (the year in which the development is completed) and also in the summer of year 15 (15 years after completion of the development). In this second scenario it is assumed that vegetation planted as part of the development will have established and exhibit a degree of maturity.

### Assumptions and Limitations of the Assessment

#### Assessed Proposal

2.10 The project proposals have been developed iteratively in conjunction with the production of the LVA with the intention of incorporating mitigation into the project from the outset. The effects identified and described as part of this LVA are based on the landscape proposals as shown in Figure 5.

#### Study Area

2.11 This LVA has focussed on an initial 3km study area. Based on an understanding of visibility gained during site visits and the results of the screened zone of theoretical visibility plan (Figure 8), it was considered that given the context of the landscape and the scale of the proposed development, this was a proportionate study area. However, most landscape and visual receptors are located within less than 1km of the site.

#### Baseline Information

2.12 The baseline landscape resource and visual receptors were identified in part through a desk based study of Ordnance Survey mapping, published landscape character studies, relevant planning policies, interrogation of aerial photography, as well as photographs taken and observations made during a site visit conducted during April 2023.

2.13 Access during site visits was restricted to publicly accessible locations or land within the ownership of the site landowners. No access was possible to private properties and therefore, assumptions have been made regarding the view from private properties. These assumptions have been based on an understanding of the properties and features

present within the wider landscape gained during the site visit from publicly accessible locations. Assumptions are guided by professional experience and judgement.

2.14 Site visits were conducted during sunny conditions with good visibility. It is recognised that site visits were undertaken when vegetation was in leaf, however a worst-case scenario is considered in this LVA, including winter conditions following leaf fall, with potential for increased visibility.

#### Distances

2.15 Where distances are given in the LVA, these are approximate distances

## 3. SITE CONTEXT

3.1 The site is located within the administrative boundaries of Moray Council (MC) and occupies the southern part of a semi improved and rough grassland medium scale field. The existing Berryburn substation lies directly east. A single lane minor road lies to the immediate south, whilst conifer forest plantations lie in proximity to the north, east, south and west.

3.2 The site is generally delineated by a pylon line immediately north, field drains and post and wire fences to the east and west, and the minor road to the south.

3.3 Existing electricity infrastructure includes Berryburn substation, directly east, associated overhead power line and steel lattice towers directly north which extends east across the landscape, east and west of the site and Hill of Glaschyle Wind Farm which is located approximately 0.6km to the north.

3.4 Key recreational routes near to site include the Dava Way / MC Core Path DA05 that route approximately 2.5 km west of the site (at closest point to the site). The network of single lane roads near the site are indicated as ‘Existing Path’s’ on MC Core Paths Plan Area Map 35.

3.5 There are no nationally designated landscapes in proximity to the site. The Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates Special Landscape Area (SLA) is the nearest designated landscape: approximately 1.7km west of the site.

3.6 A photographic record of views toward the site and its local context is provided in **Appendix 2** with the photographic locations illustrated in **Figure 9**.

## 4. DESIGNATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 This section provides an overview of the policies and designations of particular relevance to landscape and visual issues. Figures 2 to 4 illustrate relevant designations within the locality of the site.

### Landscape Designations

4.2 The site is not covered by any national landscape designations but is located approximately 1.7km east of the Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates SLA, as identified by the Moray Local Landscape Designation Review 2018 (shown on **Figure 2**). The Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV) indicates no theoretical visibility from the, SLA; therefore, the Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates SLA is not considered further in the LVA.

4.3 There are no Tree Preservation Orders covering the site. There are no listed buildings, scheduled monuments or conservation areas on or near the site, with those closest illustrated by **Figure 3**. Cultural assets are a Cultural Heritage concern and are not considered further in this LVA. Recreational routes are shown on **Figure 4**. The Dava Way / MC Core Path DA05 routes approximately 2.5 km west of the site (at closest point to the site). The network of single lane roads near the site are indicated as 'Existing Path's on MC Core Paths Plan Area Map 35.

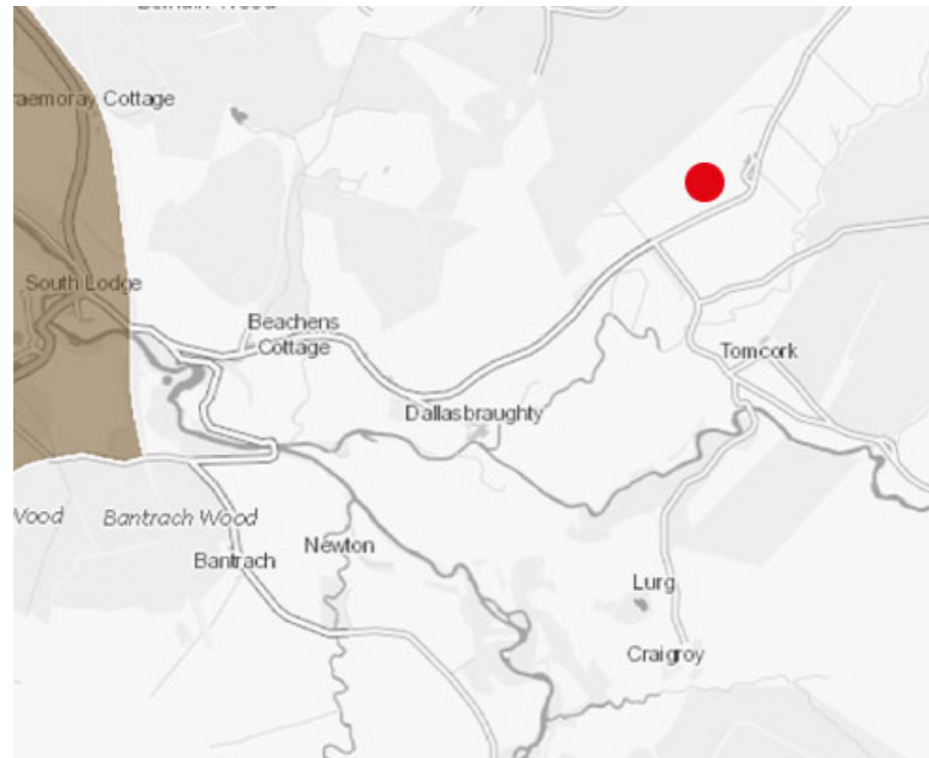


Figure 2: Extract from the Moray Council Local Development Plan 2020, interactive mapping (approximate site location shown as red dot). Brown wash indicating the Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates SLA.

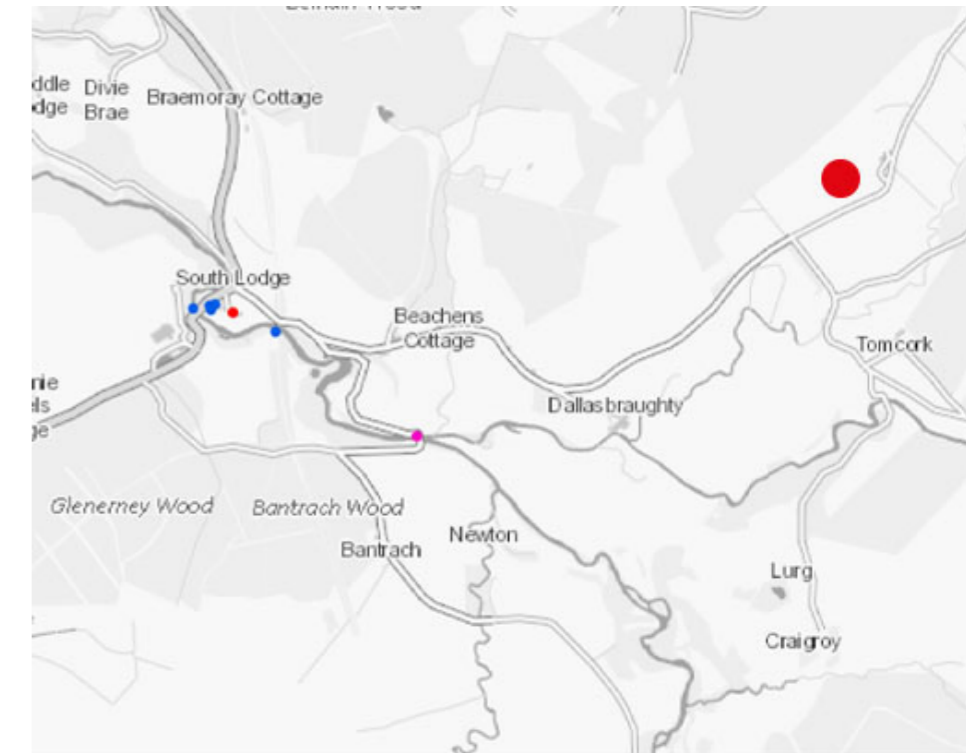


Figure 3: Extract from the Moray Council Local Development Plan 2020, interactive mapping (approximate site location shown as large red dot). Grade A listed building small Red Dot, Grade B listed building Blue Dot, Grade C listed building pink dot.

### Relevant Landscape Planning Policy

#### National Planning Guidance

4.4 The National Planning Framework for Scotland 4 (NPF4) (2023) was adopted 13th February 2023 and replaces NPF3 (2014) and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (2014). NPF4 sets out spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy for Scotland.

4.5 NPF4 sets out six overarching spatial principles:

- *“Just transition. We will empower people to shape their places and ensure the transition to net zero is fair and inclusive.*
- *Conserving and recycling assets. We will make productive use of existing buildings, places, infrastructure and services, locking in carbon, minimising waste, and building a circular economy.*
- *Local living. We will support local liveability and improve community health and wellbeing by ensuring people can easily access services, greenspace, learning, work and leisure locally.*
- *Compact urban growth. We will limit urban expansion so we can optimise the use of land to provide services and resources,*

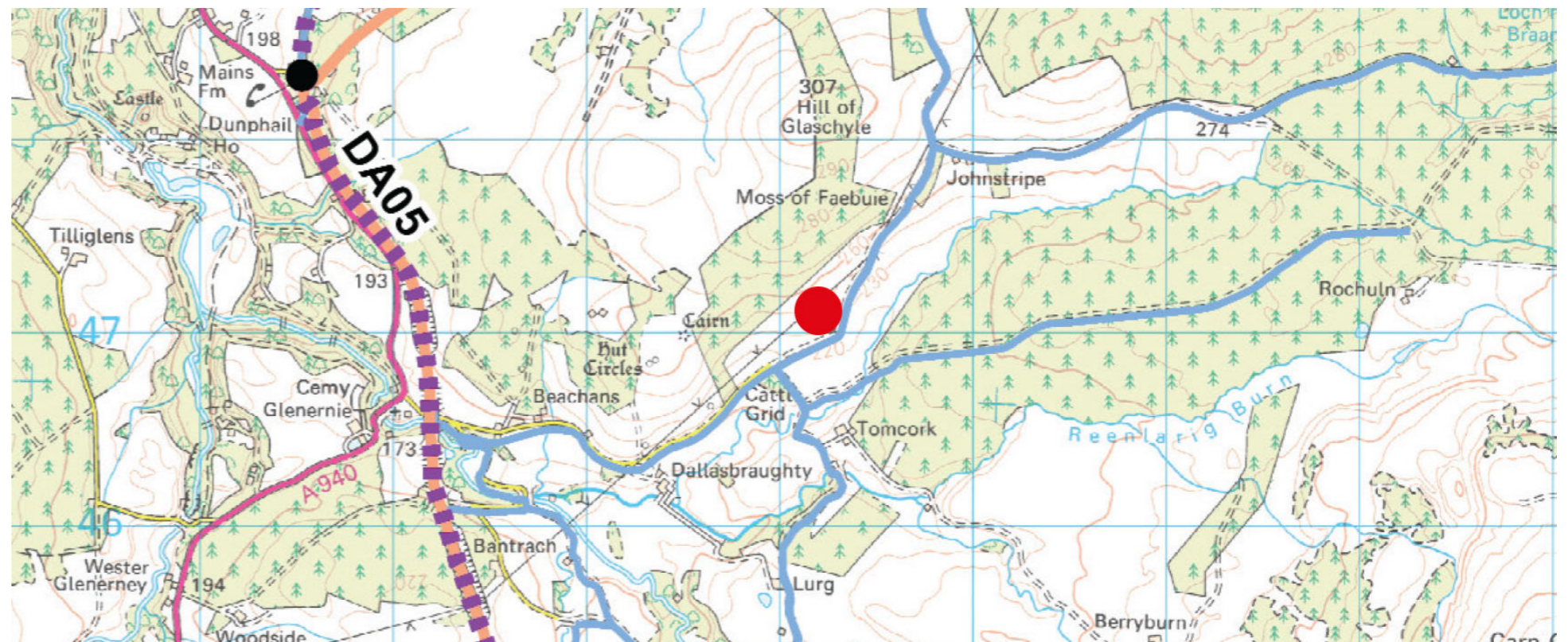


Figure 4: Extract from Moray Council Core Path Map 35 (approximate site location shown as large red dot), Dava Way / MC Core Path DA05 indicated by dashed line. Single land roads and existing paths are indicated by blue lines.

*including carbon storage, flood risk management, blue and green infrastructure and biodiversity.*

- *Rebalanced development. We will target development to create opportunities for communities and investment in areas of past decline, and manage development sustainably in areas of high demand.*
- *Rural revitalisation. We will encourage sustainable development in rural areas, recognising the need to grow and support urban and rural communities together.*

4.6 By applying these principles NPF4 will support the planning and delivery of:

- *“sustainable places, where we reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity;.*
- *liveable places, where we can all live better, healthier lives; and*
- *productive places, where we have a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.”*

4.7 A full and detailed consideration of the NPF4 policy applicable to the proposed development are provided in the Planning Statement accompanying the planning application. A full and detailed consideration of the regulatory and planning policy frameworks applicable to the proposed development are provided in the Planning Statement accompanying the planning application.

#### **Local Planning Policy**

4.8 The Moray Local Development Plan 2020 was formally adopted on 27th July 2020 Local Development Plan (LDP) policies of relevance to the site and the proposed development are considered below.

#### **LDP policy: DP1 Development Principles**

*“This policy applies to all development, including extensions and conversions and will be applied reasonably taking into account the nature and scale of a proposal and individual circumstances.”*

4.9 The proposed development would be located on a site which has not been identified for its local distinctiveness. The site is already influenced by existing elements of electricity infrastructure including Berryburn substation, directly east, associated pylon line directly north which extends east across the landscape, east and west of the site and Hill of Glaschyle Wind Farm which is located approximately 0.6km to the north.

#### **LDP policy: DP9 Renewable Energy**

4.10 This policy states that renewable energy proposals will be considered favourably where they avoid or address unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts. This policy also states that:

*“The landscape is capable of accommodating the development without unacceptable significant adverse impact on landscape character or visual amenity.*

*The proposal is appropriate to the scale and character of its setting, respects the main features of the site and the wider environment and addresses the potential for mitigation.”*

4.11 The proposed development would be located in proximity to an area already influenced by electricity infrastructure. Potential effects on landscape and visual receptors are considered at section 5, 6 and 7 within this LVA.

#### **LDP policy: EP3 Special Landscape Areas and Landscape Character**

4.12 The proposed development is situated outside any nationally or locally designated landscapes and as identified at paragraph 4.2 effects on SLAs are not considered further in this LVA.

4.13 In terms of landscape character this LDP Policy states that:

*“New developments must be designed to reflect the landscape characteristics identified in the Landscape Character Assessment of the area in which they are proposed..”*

4.14 The proposed development would be located in proximity to an area already influenced by electricity infrastructure. Potential effects on landscape character are considered at sections 5 and 6 within this LVA.

## 5. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 The proposed development comprises an energy storage facility with associated equipment and infrastructure. The proposed development would consist of the following:

- 32no. battery storage enclosures and associated Power Conversion Systems (PCSs) and transformers, substation, auxiliary transformer, pre-insertion resistor, harmonic filter and storage enclosures, set within a surfaced compound;
- Two surfaced access tracks from the single lane road to the south through the existing field connecting to the surfaced compound;
- A pole mounted CCTV system, located at strategic points around the compound;
- An acoustic timber fence up to 3m high; and
- Attenuation feature to the west of the compound.

### Mitigation Proposals

5.2 In order to mitigate potential landscape and visual effects, the landscape planting as illustrated at Figure 5, takes account of existing habitats and identified areas of sensitivity. During construction the existing mature woodland belt immediately south-west of the site; would be retained and protected in accordance with BS 5837:2012

5.3 The landscape mitigation proposals include the following:

- The battery storage enclosures are relatively low in terms of height, and as installed units would be coloured in relation to the local landscape.
- One of the proposed access points would use the existing field gated access and improve the existing access across the site;
- Retention and management of native gorse scrub and heathland planting around the compound;
- Translocated upland heathland to the west of the compound;
- Proposed grassland seed mixes to the proposed infiltration/attenuation pond; and
- Ongoing landscape management of planting during the lifetime of the proposed development.



Figure 5: Detailed Landscape Proposals



## 6. LANDSCAPE BASELINE AND EFFECTS

- 6.1 The assessment of Landscape Effects deals with the changes to the landscape as a resource. Different combinations of the physical, natural and cultural components (including aesthetic, perceptual and experiential aspects) of the landscape and their spatial distribution create the distinctive character of landscapes in different places.
- 6.2 Effects are considered in relation to both landscape features and landscape character during construction, at Year 1 and at Year 15 and beyond. A summary of landscape effects are included in Table 1.

### Landscape Features

#### Landform and Topography

- 6.3 The landform of the wider field of which the site would occupy the south-eastern portion rises gradually from the south-west at approximately 225m AOD to 235m in the north-east. The main part of the site is situated at around 230m AOD.
- 6.4 The wider field is defined by conifer forest plantation to the north, field drains, post and wire fencing and Berryburn Substation directly east, post and wire fencing and minor road directly south and field drain and post and wire fencing to the west. The site is generally open in proximity views to the south and west.
- 6.5 The immediate surrounding landscape comprises rising landform associated with the River Divie valley and a patchwork of conifer forest plantation and rough glazing.
- 6.6 The characteristics of the site are judged to be of medium to low susceptibility to the type and scale of development proposed given the nearby presence of existing electricity infrastructure. Considering the present site condition, the surrounding landscape and nearby recreational routes, landscape value is judged to be medium. Taking account of the judgements of susceptibility and value, the overall sensitivity of the site is judged to be medium.
- 6.7 There would be some changes to the landform of the site to accommodate foundations of the proposed compounds and their fencing, the access track and other structures, as well as the creation of the attenuation feature. During construction, the magnitude of change is considered to be medium, which would result in a **Moderate** adverse level of effect, which would be temporary in nature.
- 6.8 Upon completion, all earthwork works would be completed, with new features either planted or seeded, resulting in a medium to low magnitude of change resulting in a **Moderate** to **Minor** adverse level of effect in the longer term.



Figure 6: Aerial Photograph of site and immediate surroundings

### Watercourse and Drainage

- 6.9 There are no notable watercourses within the application site. The nearest is the Berry Burn and the River Divie which are located approximately 0.6km and 1.3km to the south and southwest respectively.
- 6.10 A drainage channel runs near the southern boundary of the site, parallel to the minor road. This drainage channel is considered to be of low value and moderately susceptible to changes (medium) which may affect its function. The combined sensitivity level is judged to be low.
- 6.11 A new drainage strategy is proposed as part of the proposed development, incorporating new surface water filtration drains, a new drainage channel, and a new swale, which will all flow into a new infiltration/attenuation pond. Consequently, the changes to drainage conditions within the application site during the construction phase are judged to result in a medium to low magnitude of change. When taking account of the low sensitivity, this would result in a **Moderate/minor** temporary adverse landscape effect.
- 6.12 The new drainage strategy is predicted to improve conditions over the operational phase. The resulting magnitude of change is predicted to be very low, which results in a **Minor** beneficial long-term effect.

### Land Use, Buildings and Infrastructure

- 6.13 There are no existing buildings within the site. However, the site is influenced by the steel lattice tower and overhead line directly northwest, Berryburn Substation directly east and the Hill of Glaschyle Wind Farm which is located approximately 0.6km to the north. These infrastructure elements are visible across the majority of the site.
- 6.14 Accounting for the existing land uses and the influence of existing electricity and infrastructure susceptibility and landscape value are judged to be medium to low. Overall sensitivity is judged to be medium to low.
- 6.15 The introduction of the proposed development would result in a change of land use within the south-eastern part of the larger field. This would result in the loss of an area of rough grazing and naturally regenerative vegetation and the introduction of a BESS and associated infrastructure. The magnitude of change is judged to be medium during construction and at Year 1 of operation, resulting in a **Moderate** adverse degree of effect.
- 6.16 As landscape mitigation planting matures the proposed development would be further integrated within the local landscape by Year 15. However, accounting for the change in land use the degree of effect would remain **Moderate** and adverse.

### Vegetation

- 6.17 Vegetation across the site comprises rough grazing grassland. The site is generally open, defined by post and wire fences, recently felled conifer forest plantation to the north and Berryburn Substation directly east. Vegetation across the site is considered to be of low susceptibility and value. On balance the overall sensitivity of vegetation within the site is considered to be low.
- 6.18 During construction, the introduction of the proposed development would result in the loss of some vegetation within the footprint and immediately adjacent to the proposals. The existing trees and woodland on and immediately adjacent to the site boundaries would be retained and protected during construction. The magnitude of change to vegetation is judged to be medium. Accounting for the low sensitivity the degree of effect is judged to be **Moderate** adverse and temporary.
- 6.19 Proposed native heathland planting would be provided around the compound, whilst gorse scrub would be introduced near the southeastern boundary of the site to better integrate the proposals with the surrounding area, as illustrated in Figure 5. In addition, areas near the eastern boundary and the proposed basin would be appropriately seeded. A very low beneficial magnitude of change is predicted at Year 1 as planting would not have matured, resulting in a **Minor** beneficial landscape effect in the short term. In the longer term, the proposed vegetation would help integrate the proposed development with its surroundings and bring about a number of localised benefits, resulting in a long-term **Minor** beneficial landscape effect.

### Landscape Character

- 6.20 This section provides an overview of the landscape character of the site and its locality. It provides judgment on the sensitivity of the landscape character to the proposed development and the resulting effects which would arise from the development proposals.

#### National Level Landscape Character

- 6.21 Scotland has a digital map-based national Landscape Character Assessment published in 2019 by NatureScot, showing Landscape Character Types (LCTs) i.e. areas of consistent and recognisable landscape character. This mapping supersedes those landscape character studies from the 1990s.
- 6.22 The site lies entirely within LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry, illustrated on **Figure 7** and considered below.
- 6.23 LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry covers a large area contained by LCT 285 Rolling Farmland and Forests - Moray & Nairn to the north and east, LCT 291. Open Rolling Uplands to the south, and LCT 286 Narrow Wooded Valley - Moray & Nairn to the west.
- 6.24 Direct effects on landscape character would be limited to LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry. Indirect effects on other LCTs would be limited to where the proposed development would be visible from some northern areas of LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland. This would include within approximately 1.5km to 3km from the site - an area between Cairn Eney 277m AOD and the Falls of Feakirk and west of Little Berry Burn.
- 6.25 However, given that views from these areas within LCT 291 Rolling Farmland and Forests are already influenced by the existing pylon line north of the site Berryburn Substation directly east and the Hill of Glaschyle Wind Farm north of the site potential for notable landscape effects are considered unlikely. Therefore, this LVA only considers effects on LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry.
- 6.26 Selected key characteristics of LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry relevant to the site and immediate landscape include:
- *Generally simple, large scale landscape with expansive scale of interior plateau area.*
  - *Predominantly simple landcover of extensive, geometric conifer forests and heather moorland.*
  - *Large scale commercial forestry blankets much of the mid and upper slopes, many of which are undergoing deforestation and restocking. The differing tree heights and open areas of landcover disturbance are prominent on the simple broad slopes, reinforced by the wider*

resurfaced forest roads upgraded for timber extraction.

- More intimate farmed landscapes at the margins and close to burns and roads, with farms, small holdings and marginal pastures.
- Large expanses of un-settled areas, with settlement very sparsely scattered near the very few roads.
- Windfarm development both within the Landscape Character Type and in adjacent landscapes.

### Effects upon LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry

- 6.27 The site is located within the southeastern part of the LCT in proximity to LCT 291 Open Rolling Upland, which cover land at distance approximately 0.8km to the south. The landscape of the site and immediate surroundings are typical of the LCT comprising rough grazing, conifer forest plantation and elements of electricity infrastructure.
- 6.28 The LCT is influenced by operational wind farms, pylon lines and associated substations. Accounting for the influence of existing elements of electricity infrastructure the susceptibility of the LCT is judged to be medium. There are no landscape designations within the LCT, recreational routes include a short section of The Dava Way / MC Core Path DA05 approximately 2.5km west of the site. The network of single lane roads near the site are indicated as 'Existing Path's on MC Core Paths Plan Area Map 35. On balance landscape value is judged to be medium.
- 6.29 Accounting for landscape susceptibility and value in the overall sensitivity balance, the sensitivity of LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry is considered to be medium.
- 6.30 Effects on landscape character would be largely contained within the site and its local context. The proposed development would introduce a BESS and associated infrastructure and result in the loss of an area of rough grazing.
- 6.31 Accounting for the size and scale of the proposed development and screening provided by conifer forest plantations in vicinity, notable landscape effects would be largely limited to the site level, extending to around 0.4km to the southwest at Year 1 of operation. The proposed development would marginally extend the presence and influence of electricity infrastructure west of Berryburn substation within the northern fringe of the LCT.
- 6.32 The proposed development would give rise to a no greater than low magnitude of change upon the wider LCT, resulting in a **Minor** level of landscape effect, which would reduce in the longer-term due to the proposed mitigation planting as it becomes more established by Year 15 of operation.

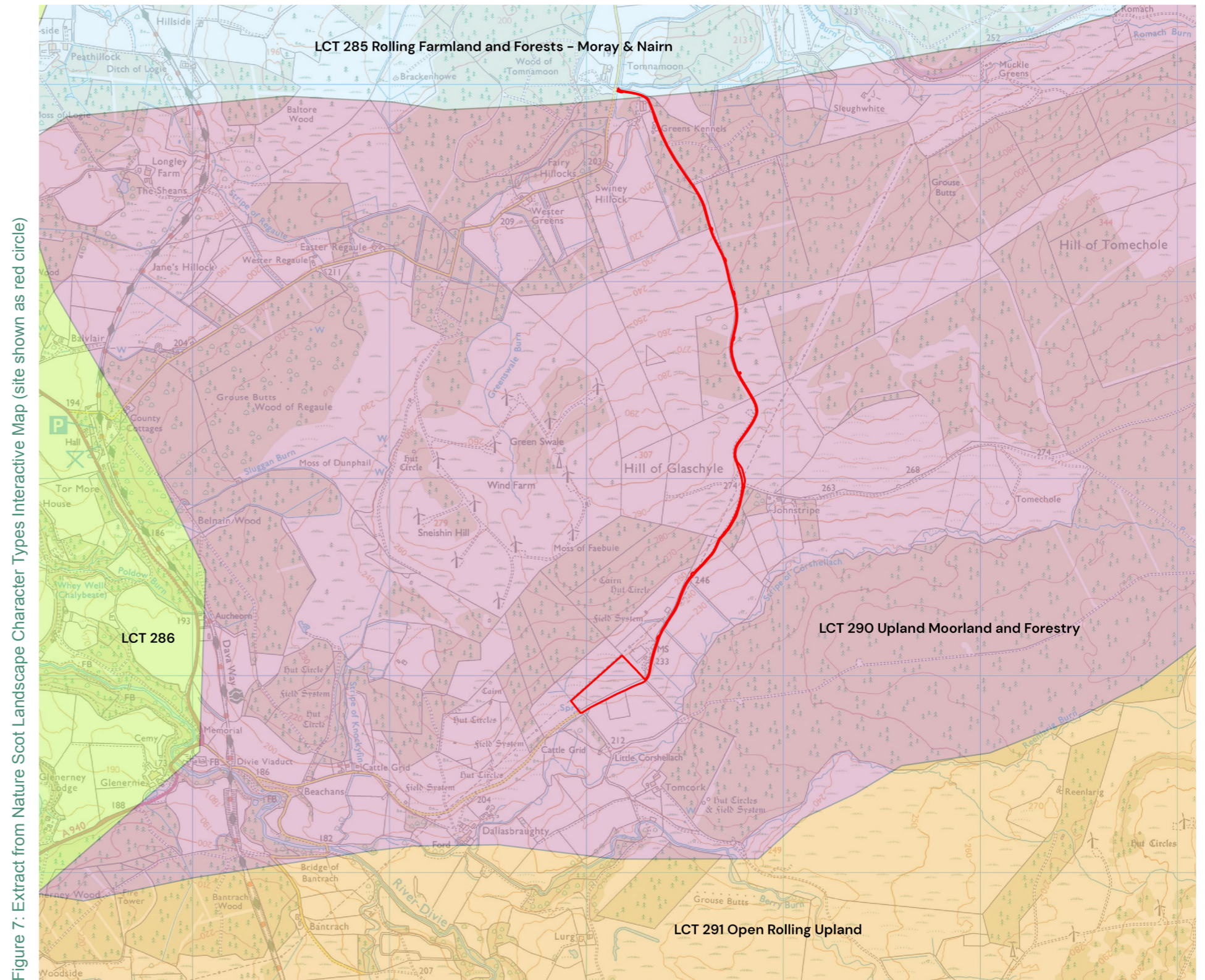


Figure 7: Extract from Nature Scot Landscape Character Types Interactive Map (site shown as red circle)

## Effects on Local Landscape Character

### Sensitivity of the site

- 6.33 The current land use of the site is for rough grazing. The site is influenced by the steel lattice tower and overhead line directly northwest, Berryburn Substation directly east and the Hill of Glaschyle Wind Farm which is located approximately 0.6km to the north. These infrastructure elements are visible across the majority of the site.
- 6.34 The site is not located within any nationally or locally designated landscapes. There are no recreational routes within the site itself. The Dava Way / MC Core Path DA05 routes approximately 2.5km west of the site (at its closest point). The network of single lane roads near the site are indicated as 'Existing Path's on MC Core Paths Plan Area Map 35.
- 6.35 Considering both landscape susceptibility and value the overall sensitivity of the site to the type and scale of development proposed is considered to be medium.

### Effects on the site

- 6.36 The proposed development would introduce a new feature into the landscape, which although of limited height and scale and in proximity to similar infrastructure, would incorporate most of the site area and therefore adversely alter the physical and perceptual attributes of the site.
- 6.37 The magnitude of change to the site itself during construction and at Year 1 of operation is assessed as medium to high. This would result in a **Moderate** adverse landscape effect on the site.
- 6.38 The landscape mitigation proposals would provide some enhancements to the scheme and potentially enhance local landscape character. In the longer-term, the magnitude of change to the site itself would reduce to medium, resulting in a **Moderate** level of effect at Year 15 of operation.

Receptor	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of change	Level of Effect
<b>Landscape Features</b>				
Landform and topography	Medium	Construction	Medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 1	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 15	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
Water features and drainage	Low	Construction	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 1	Very Low	Minor beneficial
		Year 15	Very Low	Minor beneficial
Land use, buildings and infrastructure	Medium to Low	Construction	Medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 1	Medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 15	Medium	Moderate adverse
Vegetation	Low	Construction	Medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 1	Very Low	Minor beneficial adverse
		Year 15	Very Low	Minor beneficial adverse
<b>Landscape Character</b>				
LCT 290 – Upland Moorland and Forestry	Medium	Construction	Low	Minor adverse
		Year 1	Low	Minor adverse
		Year 15	Low	Minor adverse
The site itself	Medium	Construction	Medium to High	Moderate adverse
		Year 1	Medium to High	Moderate adverse
		Year 15	Medium	Moderate adverse

Table 1: Summary of Landscape Effects

## 7. VISUAL BASELINE AND EFFECTS

### Introduction

7.1 The appraisal of visual effects considers the potential for changes in views and visual amenity. The aim is to establish the area in which the development may be visible, the different groups of people who may experience views of the development, the places where they will be affected, and the nature of the views and visual amenity (meaning the overall quality and pleasantness to a view).

7.2 Effects are considered during construction, at Year 1 and at Year 15 and beyond. New planting takes a number of years to mature and average growth rates have been taken into consideration. The effectiveness of the vegetation in terms of integrating the development into the surrounding landscape would improve over time and needs to be considered appropriately. A summary of visual effects are included in Table 2.

7.3 Photography is set out within the photographic record set out in Appendix 2. Viewpoint locations are shown on Figure 9.

### Zone of Theoretical Visibility

7.4 The Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV, **Figure 8**) identifies the potential locations from which the development may be visible. The SZTV has been produced using Digital Terrain Modelling (DTM) data. Existing built development (8m tall) and larger blocks of woodland have also been modelled (15m tall) to take account of the screening effect that these would provide. However, the screening effect provided by smaller blocks of woodland, individual trees and hedgerows has not been taken into account, and consequently the actual extent of the area from which the proposed development is visible is likely to be much smaller. Figure 8 also conveys the bare earth scenario, assuming that only the DTM data is used and there are no elements providing screening.

7.5 The SZTV has been run at an average height of 4.8m for the elements which form the proposed development.

### Sensitivity

7.6 Residential receptors, users of Core Paths and visitors are considered to be of high visual sensitivity. Users of the local minor road network where the view is not the focus of activity are considered to be of medium sensitivity. People using larger A-roads are considered to be of low sensitivity.

7.7 The approach to sensitivity of visual receptors is set out in **Appendix 1**.

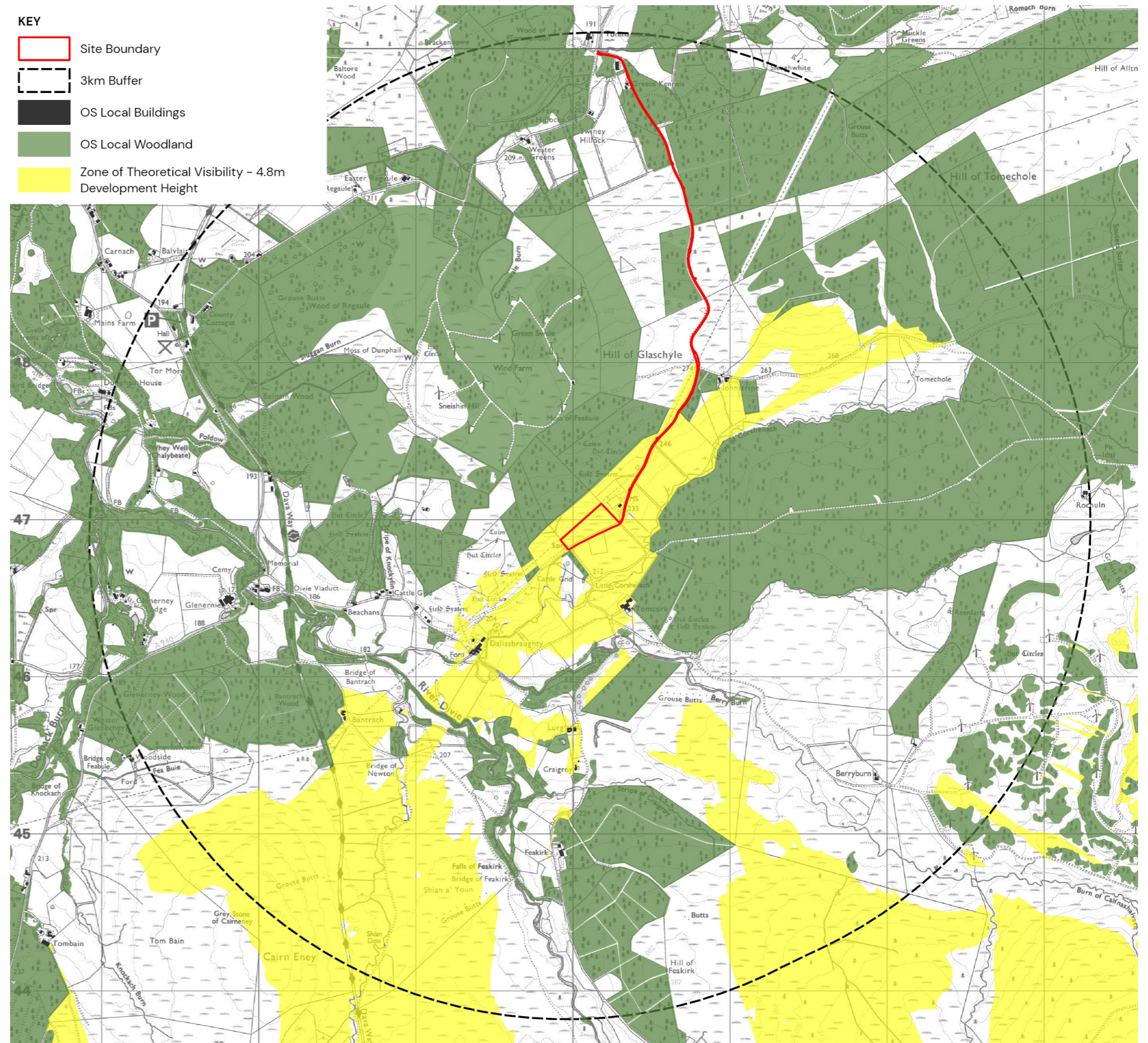


Figure 8: Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility

## Residential Receptors

7.8 The proposed development is remote from settlements identified within the Moray Council LDP 2020. Therefore the appraisal of residential receptors focuses on individual residential properties and farmsteads within SZTV coverage. This LVA does not include a separate residential amenity assessment. It is considered that effects resulting from the proposed development would fall below the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold referred to in Landscape Institute TGN 02/2019 as visual effects: “of such nature and / or magnitude that it potentially affects ‘living conditions’ or Residential Amenity”. For the purpose of this assessment, it is assumed as a worst-case, that all nearby properties are permanent residences.

### Tomcork

7.9 Representative views are shown as Viewpoint 3, **Appendix 2**.

7.10 This property is located approximately 0.5km south of the site. The site is evident from the access and curtilage of this farmstead, with views from the main property screened by immediate agricultural buildings. Construction activities within the site would be evident in views from the access and northern curtilage of Tomcork.

7.11 Construction activities would affect a small portion of the background of available views and would be largely back clothed by the conifer forestry plantation to the north. The magnitude of change is judged to be medium and taking account of the high sensitivity would result in a short-term temporary **Moderate** adverse visual effect. Views from the property itself would be screened by the intervening agricultural buildings.

7.12 From year 1 onwards, the proposed development and occasional associated vehicle movements would be seen in views from the access and northern curtilage of Tomcork. The introduction of the BESS would marginally extend the presence of electricity infrastructure immediately west of Berryburn Substation and would be back clothed by landform and coniferous forestry plantation. The proposed acoustic fence would screen lower elements of the site. The magnitude of change is judged to be medium to low and taking account of the high sensitivity would result in a **Moderate to Minor** adverse visual effect. Views from the property itself would be screened by the intervening agricultural buildings.

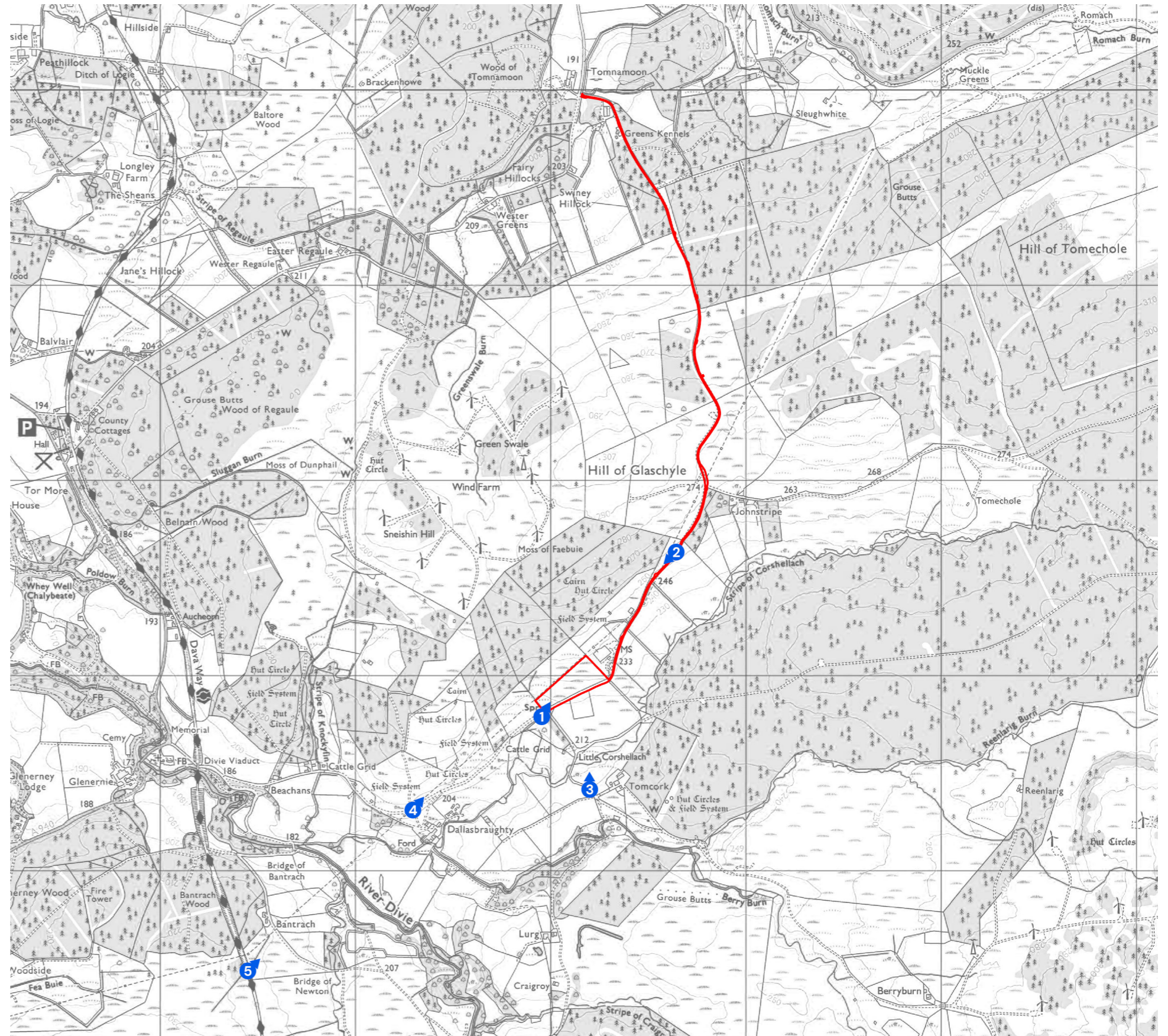


Figure 9: Viewpoint Location Plan

### Johnstripe

- 7.13 Representative views are shown as Viewpoint 2, **Appendix 2**.
- 7.14 This property is located approximately 1.1km northeast of the site. Existing views from the property are largely screened by the area of broadleaf and conifer woodland directly southwest of the property. The site is evident from the access approaching Johnstripe where views are already influenced by Berryburn Substation and the wind farms at Hill of Glaschyle and Berry Burn, and associated pylon lines.
- 7.15 During construction there would be some additional vehicle movements experienced on the access up to Johnstripe which passes directly south of the site. Once operational the proposed development would be largely screened in views from the property itself by the intervening broadleaf and conifer woodland. It is possible that the proposed development would become marginally more apparent during the winter months following leaf fall where the BESS would be barely evident behind Berryburn Substation.
- 7.16 A very low magnitude of change is predicted at construction and Years 1 and 15, resulting in a **Minor** adverse visual effect to **No Effect**.

### Dallasbraughty

Representative views are shown as Viewpoint 4, **Appendix 2**.

- 7.17 This property is located approximately 0.8km southwest of the site. Existing views from the property looking northeast towards the site are largely foreshortened by landform and screened by immediate agricultural buildings and intervening blocks of conifer plantation. Views feature the pylon line west of the site.
- 7.18 Construction activities within the site would be largely screened by intervening features, although some additional vehicle movements would be experienced from the access north of Dallasbraughty. Once operational the proposed development would be largely screened in views from the property itself by the intervening landform, vegetation and agricultural buildings,
- 7.19 A very low magnitude of change is predicted at construction and Years 1 and 15, resulting in a **Minor** adverse visual effect to **No Effect**.

### Lurg and Craigroy

- 7.20 These properties are located approximately 1.1km south of the site. Existing views from the properties looking north towards the site are largely screened by intervening blocks of conifer plantation and feature the pylon line that routes near the northern boundary of the site.

- 7.21 Construction activities within the site would be largely screened by intervening features, although some additional vehicle movements would be experienced from a short section of the access to Lurg and Craigroy. Once operational the proposed development would be largely screened in views from the properties by the intervening landform, vegetation and agricultural buildings,
- 7.22 A very low magnitude of change is predicted at construction and Years 1 and 15, resulting in a **Minor** adverse visual effect to **No Effect**.

### Bantrach

- 7.23 Similar views to those experienced from Bantrach would be experienced to those represented by Viewpoint 5, **Appendix 2**.
- 7.24 This property is located approximately 1.8km southwest the site. In views looking northeast from the property the site is evident partly screened by the intervening pylons in front of Berryburn Substation and framed by the pylon wayleave. Operational wind farms at Hill of Glaschyle and Berry Burn are seen in the background of view on the skyline.
- 7.25 Construction activities within the site would be evident, affecting a small portion of relatively long-distance views partly screened by the intervening pylon line and framed by the associated wayleave. The magnitude of change is judged to be medium to low and taking account of the high sensitivity would result in a short-term temporary **Minor** adverse visual effect.
- 7.26 From year 1 onwards the proposed development and occasional associated vehicle movements would be seen affecting a relatively small portion of relatively long distance views from the property. The introduction of the BESS would marginally extend the presence of electricity infrastructure immediately west of Berryburn Substation and would be back clothed by landform. The acoustic fence would screen lower elements of the site. The magnitude of change is judged to be low and taking account of the high sensitivity would result in a **Minor** adverse visual effect. Views from the property itself would be screened by the intervening agricultural buildings.
- 7.27 No notable visual effects are anticipated on other residential receptors within the study area.

## Recreational Receptors

### The Dava Way

- 7.28 Representative views are shown as Viewpoint 5 in **Appendix 2**.
- 7.29 The Dava Way is a 38km route that forms one of Scotland's Great Trails. The route follows the former Highland Railway between Granton and Forres. Within the study area this route is found 1.8km west at the closest point crossing the Divie Viaduct.
- 7.30 Accounting for extensive conifer forest plantation the SZTV indicates that theoretical visibility is limited to an open section of this route southwest of Brantrach.Wood. From this section of the Dava Way the site is seen in the background of views looking northeast forming a small part of the available view in front of Berryburn substation and south of the associated pylon line. Views from this open section of the route are heavily influenced by the operational wind farms at Hill of Glaschyle and Berry Burn which are seen in the background of view on the skyline.
- 7.31 During construction activities associated with the introduction of the proposed development would be seen to be relatively distant back clothed by landform. The magnitude of change is judged to be low and taking account of the high sensitivity would result in a short-term temporary **Minor** adverse to effect.
- 7.32 At Years 1 and 15, the proposed development would be seen as a distant feature back clothed by landform within the context of the existing infrastructure of Berryburn substation the associated pylon line and the operational wind farms at Hill of Glaschyle and Berry Burn. The magnitude of change is judged to be low and taking account of the high sensitivity would result in a **Minor** adverse effect.

## Road Users

### Local Road Network

- 7.33 Representative views are shown as Viewpoint 1 to 4 in **Appendix 2**.
- 7.34 The local road network east of the A940 is largely formed by single lane roads with passing places which connect farmsteads and individual residencies. .
- 7.35 The SZTV shows theoretical visibility from short sections of the local road network including the road immediately south of the site which provides access to Johnstrie (northeast), Tomcork, Lurg and Craigroy (south) and Dallasbraughty (west). Some theoretical visibility is also indicated from a short section of the local road to the north and south of Bantrach.
- 7.36 Where the SZTV indicates theoretical visibility, views are already influenced by Berryburn substation, wind farm and the associated pylon line.
- 7.37 Construction traffic would use the local road network to access the site, which would enter the field in which the site is located at the existing access and at a new access point. Views of construction activities within the site would be limited to very short sections of the local road east of Dallsbraughty and southwest of Johnstrie. Some additional traffic is also likely to be experienced on the section of the minor road between the site and the A940 road during construction. The magnitude of change is judged to be medium and taking account of the medium sensitivity would result in a short-term temporary **Moderate** adverse level of effect.
- 7.38 At Year 1, the access track would be complete, views of the proposed development would be briefly direct to oblique and would be limited to the southern and western side of the proposals which would be largely back clothed by coniferous forestry plantation. From Year 1 onwards the magnitude of change is judged to be low and taking account of the medium sensitivity would result in a **Moderate** to **Minor** adverse level of effect.

### Other roads within the study area

- 7.39 No notable visual effects are anticipated on other more distant roads routes within the study area. This includes the A940, which routes approximately 1.9km from the site (at its closest point) where no SZTV coverage is indicated.

## Designated Landscapes

### Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates Valley SLA

- 7.40 As noted at 4.2 there is no STZV coverage from the Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates Valley SLA. Therefore there would be no effect on this locally designated landscape resulting from the introduction of the proposed development.

Receptor	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of change	Level of Effect
<b>Residential Receptors</b>				
Tomcork	High	Construction	Medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 1	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 15	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
Johnstrie	High	Construction	Very Low	Minor adverse to No Effect
		Year 1	Very Low	Minor adverse to No Effect
		Year 15	Very Low	Minor adverse to No Effect
Dallasbraughty	High	Construction	Very Low	Minor adverse to No Effect
		Year 1	Very Low	Minor adverse to No Effect
		Year 15	Very Low	Minor adverse to No Effect
Lurg and Craigroy	High	Construction	Very Low	Minor adverse to No Effect
		Year 1	Very Low	Minor adverse to No Effect
		Year 15	Very Low	Minor adverse to No Effect
Bantrach	High	Construction	Medium to Low	Minor adverse
		Year 1	Low	Minor adverse
		Year 15	Low	Minor adverse
<b>Recreational Routes</b>				
The Dava Way	High	Construction	Medium to Low	Minor adverse
		Year 1	Low	Minor adverse
		Year 15	Low	Minor adverse
<b>Local Road Network</b>				
Local Road Network	Medium	Construction	Medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 1	Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 15	Low	Moderate to Minor adverse

Table 2: Summary of Visual Effects and Effects on Designated Landscapes



## 8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### Landscape Features

- 8.1 There would be some changes to the landform of the site to accommodate the proposed development, leading to a **Moderate** temporary adverse levels of effect. However, once the proposals are completed and with new landscape features either planted or seeded, adverse effects would reduce in the longer term.
- 8.2 The proposed development would represent an inevitable change to the current land use from an area of rough grazing to an operational BESS and associated infrastructure albeit in context of nearby infrastructure. A **Moderate** adverse level of effect is predicted in the longer-term, although the surrounding influences and benefits of landscape proposals would provide some local enhancements.
- 8.3 In the long-term, the additional planting in the form of new heathland and gorse shrub and the introduction of grassland and damp grassland mixes would enhance the landscape structure of the site and give rise to landscape and biodiversity benefits. The creation of a new attenuation feature would also give rise to limited beneficial landscape effects.

### Landscape Character

- 8.4 The proposed development would introduce a new feature into the landscape, which although of limited height and scale and adjacent to similar such infrastructure would adversely alter the physical and perceptual attributes of the site. The proposed development would give rise to **Moderate** long-term adverse effects upon the landscape character of the site itself, however, the landscape mitigation proposals would provide some enhancements around peripheral areas.
- 8.5 The site lies within the southern fringe of LCT 290 Upland Moorland and Forestry. The proposed development would result in the loss of an area of rough grazing to an operational BESS and associated infrastructure. This would directly affect a very small southern part of the LCT.
- 8.6 Given the relatively low heights of the proposed development, presence of existing electricity infrastructure and proposed mitigation measures effects on LCT 290 – Upland Moorland and Forestry would be **Minor** adverse long-term. Over time as the proposed planting matures effects would reduce as the proposed development becomes further integrated within the local landscape.
- 8.7 No notable effects on other neighbouring LCTs are anticipated.

### Visual Receptors

- 8.8 The proposed layout has sought to integrate and minimise potential visual effects through siting the proposed development in close proximity to existing electricity infrastructure and introducing appropriate mitigation measures.
- 8.9 Visual effects on local residents arising from the proposed development would be limited to views experienced from the access and northern curtilage of Tomcork. These receptors would experience a **Moderate** adverse and temporary visual effect during construction. Following construction, a **Moderate** to **Minor** adverse visual effect is anticipated for operational Year 1 reducing further as mitigation planting matures by Year 15. From a very short section of the single track road in proximity to the proposed development a **Moderate** adverse and temporary visual effect during construction is identified reducing to **Moderate** to **Minor** adverse for Years 1 and 15.
- 8.10 No notable visual effects are anticipated from other residential, recreational and road user receptors.

### Designated Landscapes

- 8.11 There is no SZTV coverage from the Findhorn Valley and the Wooded Estates Valley SLA therefore there would be no indirect effects on this locally designated landscape.

### Conclusion

- 8.12 The proposed development would locate a Battery Energy Storage System within the existing field structure of an area of rough grazing west of Berryburn substation. .
- 8.13 Mitigation measures would include new native heathland and gorse scrub, which would help integrate the proposed development within the local landscape, as well as introduce some additional biodiversity opportunities.
- 8.14 Overall the total extent of the landscape and visual effects would be localised and limited in nature.

## 9. REFERENCES

- 9.1 The following documents have been consulted during the preparation of this LVA:
- National Planning Framework for Scotland 4 (2023);
  - The Moray Local Development Plan (2020);
  - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) - Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013);
  - Landscape Institute (June 2013) GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13, LI;
  - Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19, September 2019;
  - Residential Visual Amenity Assessment Technical Guidance Note 2/19: and
  - Nature Scot National Landscape Character Assessment (2019).

# APPENDIX 1: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

## INTRODUCTION

This appendix presents the assessment criteria adopted for the appraisal of landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development.

The primary source of best practice for LVA in the UK is The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013). The assessment criteria adopted to inform the appraisal of effects has been developed in accordance with the principles established in this best practice document. It should however be acknowledged that GLVIA3 establishes guidelines not a specific methodology. The preface to GLVIA3 states:

“This edition concentrates on principles and processes. It does not provide a detailed or formulaic ‘recipe’ that can be followed in every situation – it remains the responsibility of the professional to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the task in hand.”

The criteria set out below have therefore been specifically tailored for this appraisal to ensure that the methodology is appropriate and fit for purpose.

The purpose of an LVA when undertaken outside the context of an EIA is to identify and describe the relative level of any landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the proposals. As confirmed in GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13 (Landscape institute, 10th June 2013) an LVA for development which has been screened as not requiring EIA should avoid concluding whether the effects are significant or not and this is the approach adopted in this LVA.

An LVA must consider both:

- effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right (the landscape effects); and
- effects on specific views and visual amenity more generally (the visual effects).

Therefore, separate criteria are set out below for the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

## NATURE (SENSITIVITY) OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The nature or sensitivity of an individual landscape feature or element reflects its susceptibility to change and any values associated with it. It is therefore a function of factors such as its quality, rarity, contribution to landscape character, degree to which the particular element can be replaced and cultural associations or designations that apply. A particular feature may be more 'sensitive' in one location than in another often as a result of local values associated with the feature or in relation to its function as a key or distinctive characteristic of that local landscape. Therefore it is not possible to simply place different types of landscape features into sensitivity bands. Where individual landscape features are affected, professional judgement is used as far as possible to give an objective evaluation of its sensitivity. Justification is given for this evaluation where necessary.

The nature or sensitivity of individual landscape features has been described as very high, high, medium, low or very low.

## NATURE (SENSITIVITY) OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The nature or sensitivity of landscape character reflects its susceptibility to change and any values associated with it. It is essentially an expression of a landscape's ability to accommodate a particular type of change. It varies depending on the physical and perceptual attributes of the landscape including but not necessarily limited to: scale; degree of openness; landform; existing land cover; landscape pattern and complexity; the extent of human influence in the landscape; the degree of remoteness/wildness; perception of change in the landscape; the importance of landmarks or skylines in the landscape; inter-visibility with and influence on surrounding areas; condition; rarity and scenic quality of the landscape, and any values placed on the landscape including any designations that may apply.

In this appraisal, the nature or sensitivity of landscape character is considered with reference to published landscape character areas/types and where relevant local landscape units as defined in this LVA for the purposes of this study. Information regarding the key characteristics of these local character areas/units has been extrapolated from relevant published studies where possible. Together with on-site appraisal, an assessment of landscape sensitivity to development has been undertaken employing professional judgement for relevant local landscape character areas/types/units.

The nature or sensitivity of landscape character has been described as very high, high, medium, low or very low.

## NATURE (SENSITIVITY) OF VISUAL RECEPTORS

The nature or sensitivity of a visual receptor group reflects their susceptibility to change and any values associated with the specific view in question. It varies depending on a number of factors such as the occupation of the viewer, their viewing expectations, duration of view and the angle or direction in which they would see the site. Whilst most views are valued by someone, certain viewpoints are particularly highly valued for either their cultural or historical associations and this can increase the sensitivity of the view. The following criteria are provided for guidance only and are not exclusive:

- Very Low Sensitivity – People engaged in industrial and commercial activities or military activities.
- Low Sensitivity - People at their place of work (e.g. offices); short - medium stay patients at hospital, shoppers; users of trunk/major roads and passengers on commercial railway lines (except where these form part of a recognised and promoted scenic route).
- Medium Sensitivity - Users of public rights of way and minor roads which do not appear to be used primarily for recreational activities or the specific enjoyment of the landscape; recreational activities not specifically focused on the landscape (e.g. football); motel users.
- High Sensitivity – Residents at home; users of long distance or recreational trails and other sign posted walks; users of public rights of way and minor roads which appear to be used for recreational activities or the specific enjoyment of the landscape; users of caravan parks, campsites and 'destination' hotels; tourist attractions with opportunities for views of the landscape (but not specifically focused on a particular vista); slow paced recreational activities which derive part of their pleasure from an appreciation of setting (e.g. bowling, golf); allotments.
- Very High Sensitivity - People at recognised vantage points (often with interpretation boards), people at tourist attractions with a focus on a specific view, visitors to historic features/estates where the setting is important to an appreciation and understanding of cultural value.

It is important to appreciate that it is the visual receptor (i.e. the person) that has a sensitivity and not a property, public right of way or road. Therefore, a large number of people may use a motorway for example but this does not increase the sensitivity of the receptors using it. Conversely, a residential property may only have one person living in it but this does not reduce the sensitivity of that one receptor. The number of receptors affected at any given location may be a planning consideration, but it does not alter the sensitivity of the receptor group.

Where judgements are made about the sensitivity of assessment viewpoints, the sensitivity rating provided is an evaluation of the sensitivity of the receptor group represented by the viewpoint and not a reflection of the number of people who may experience the view.

## NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS – GENERAL NOTE

The following discussion sets out the approach adopted in this LVA in relation to a specific issue arising in GLVIA3 which requires a brief explanation.

Prior to the publication of GLVIA3, LVA practice had evolved over time in tandem with most other environmental disciplines to consider significance principally as a function of two factors, namely: sensitivity of the receptor and magnitude of the effect (the term 'magnitude' being a word most commonly used in LVA and most other environmental disciplines to describe the size or scale of an effect).

Box 3.1 on page 37 of GLVIA3 references a 2011 publication by IEMA entitled 'The State of EIA Practice in the UK' which reiterates the importance of considering not just the scale or size of effect but other factors which combine to define the 'nature of the effect' including factors such as the probability of an effect occurring and the duration, reversibility and spatial extent of the effect.

The flow diagram on page 39 of GLVIA3 now suggests that the magnitude of effect is a function of three factors (the size/scale of the effect, the duration of the effect and the reversibility of the effect).

For clarification, the approach taken in this LVA has been to consider magnitude of effect solely as the scale or size of the effect in the traditional sense of the term 'magnitude'. Having identified the magnitude of effect as defined above the LVA also describes the duration and reversibility of the identified effect before drawing a conclusion on the overall level of effect taking all of these factors into account.

In the context of the above discussion the following criteria have been adopted to describe the magnitude of effects.

#### NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Professional judgement has been used as appropriate to determine the magnitude of direct physical effects on individual existing landscape features using the following criteria as guidance only:

- Very Low Magnitude of Change - No loss or alteration to existing landscape features;
- Low Magnitude of Change - Minor loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape feature;
- Medium Magnitude of Change - Some loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape feature;
- High Magnitude of Change - Major loss or major alteration to an existing landscape feature;
- Very High Magnitude of Change - Total loss or alteration to an existing landscape feature.

#### NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The magnitude of effect on landscape character is influenced by a number of factors including: the extent to which existing landscape features are lost or altered, the introduction of new features and the resulting alteration to the physical and perceptual characteristics of the landscape. Professional judgement has been used as appropriate to determine the magnitude using the following criteria as guidance only. In doing so, it is recognised that usually the landscape components in the immediate surroundings have a much stronger influence on the sense of landscape character than distant features whilst acknowledging the fact that more distant features can have an influence on landscape character as well.

- Very Low Magnitude of Change - No notable loss or alteration to existing landscape features; no notable introduction of new features into the landscape; and negligible change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- Low Magnitude of Change - Minor loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of minor new features into the landscape; or minor alteration to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- Medium Magnitude of Change - Some notable loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of some notable new features into the landscape; or some notable change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- High Magnitude of Change - A major loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of major new features into the

landscape; or a major change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.

- Very High Magnitude of Change - Total loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of dominant new features into the landscape; a very major change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.

#### NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS ON VIEWS AND VISUAL AMENITY

Visual effects are caused by the introduction of new elements into the views of a landscape or the removal of elements from the existing view.

Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude of impacts using the following criteria as guidance only:

- Very Low Magnitude of Change - No change or negligible change in views;
- Low Magnitude of Change - Some change in the view that is not prominent but visible to some visual receptors;
- Medium Magnitude of Change - Some change in the view that is clearly notable in the view and forms an easily identifiable component in the view;
- High Magnitude of Change - A major change in the view that is highly prominent and has a strong influence on the overall view.
- Very High Magnitude of Change – A change in the view that has a dominating or overbearing influence on the overall view.

Using this set of criteria, determining levels of magnitude is primarily dependant on how prominent the development would be in the landscape, and what may be judged to flow from that prominence or otherwise.

For clarification, the use of the term 'prominent' relates to how noticeable the features of the development would be. This is affected by how close the viewpoint is to the development but not entirely dependent on this factor. Other modifying factors include: the focus of the view, visual screening and the nature and scale of other landscape features within the view. Rather than specifying crude bands of distance at which the proposed development would be dominant, prominent or incidental to the view etc, the prominence of the proposed development in each view is described in detail for each viewpoint taking all the relevant variables into consideration.

#### TYPE OF EFFECT

The assessment identifies effects which may be 'beneficial', 'adverse' or 'neutral'. Where effects are described as 'neutral' this is where the beneficial effects are deemed to balance the adverse effects.

#### DURATION OF EFFECT

For the purposes of this appraisal, the temporal nature of each effect is described as follows:

- Long Term – over 5 years
- Medium Term – between 1 and 5 years
- Short Term – under 1 year

#### REVERSIBILITY OF EFFECT

The LVA also describes the reversibility of each identified effect using the following terms:

- Permanent – effect is non reversible
- Non-permanent – effect is reversible

#### LEVEL OF EFFECT

The purpose of an LVA when produced outside the context of an EIA is to identify the relative level of effects on landscape and visual amenity arising from the proposed development. The judgements provided within the LVA may then inform the planning balance to be carried out by the determining authority.

In this LVA, the relative level of the identified landscape and visual effects has been determined by combining judgements regarding the sensitivity of the landscape or view, magnitude of change, duration of effect and the reversibility of the effect. The level of effect is described as Major, Major/Moderate, Moderate, Moderate/Minor or Minor. No Effect may also be recorded as appropriate where the effect is so negligible it is not even noteworthy. In determining the level of residual effects, all mitigation measures are taken into account.

## **APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD**



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