

**Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to
Peterhead 400 kV Project
Environmental Impact Assessment Report
Volume 5 | Appendices**

**Appendix 12.1.46: Woodland Report Parcel 1052,
North Dulsie**



APPENDIX 12.46: Woodland Report Parcel 1052, North Dulsie

1	Introduction.....	2
2	Woodland Property.....	2
3	Development Requirements.....	2
3.1	400 kV Overhead Line Infrastructure Requirements	2
3.2	Access Track Route Design.....	3
4	Woodland Characteristics	3
4.1	Woodland Composition and Site Conditions	3
4.2	Photo Record – Operational Corridor Assessment.....	4
5	Windblow Risk.....	6
6	Woodland Management Impact	6
7	Mitigation Opportunities.....	6
7.1	Restructuring	6
7.2	Restocking	6
8	Net Effect / Summary.....	6
9	Compensatory Planting	7

Appendix Figures

Figure 12.1.46a: Parcel 1052 Location Map

Figure 12.1.46b: Parcel 1052 Proposed Felling Requirements

1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Appendix presents information relevant to the Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV Overhead Line (OHL) Project (the Proposed Development). It should be read in conjunction with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report, specifically **Chapter 12: Forestry**, for full details of the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.2 As part of the EIA, it has been identified that construction of the Proposed OHL Alignment and the associated access tracks would cross several woodland areas within private or publicly owned landholdings.
- 1.1.3 This woodland report has been prepared to assess the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on Woodland, Parcel 1052, North Dulsie. It includes the requirements for woodland removal and management recommendations to mitigate the impact of the woodland removal. The report provides an overview of the characteristics of the affected woodland, including woodland composition, site conditions, soil conditions, exposure levels, and existing felling approvals. The report also provides details of existing infrastructure, and potential constraints related to forestry operations. It aims to inform decision-making by identifying key environmental and logistical considerations associated with the Proposed Development. Additionally, it evaluates the feasibility of timber extraction and access whilst highlighting necessary mitigation measures to minimise disruption to the woodland ecosystem and surrounding landscape.
- 1.1.4 Field surveys of the woodland areas have been undertaken and have been used to determine the various woodland characteristics, to identify the woodland removal required and recommended. This document also sets out the area quantity hectares (ha) to be compensatory planted to ensure no net loss of woodland is achieved.

2 Woodland Property

- 2.1.1 The landholding property boundaries are identified in **Figure 12.1.46a: Parcel 1052 Location Map**. The North Dulsie woodlands consist of a mixture of commercial conifer drops and native broadleaved woodland, in a wider matrix of forest land. The woodlands are located approximately 11.8 km to the southeast of Nairn and 2.45 km northwest of Ferness in the Highland council area (NH 940155 456314).

3 Development Requirements

3.1 400 kV Overhead Line Infrastructure Requirements

- 3.1.1 The Study Area for this assessment initially focussed on a 100 m width either side of the centreline of the Proposed OHL Alignment and ancillary infrastructure, where relevant, prior to the identification of an Operational Corridor (OC). The Applicant defines the OC as the area in which it has rights to remove woodland for the purposes of the safe construction, resilience, and continued maintenance of OHLs, or protection of electrical plant as required by the Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations (ESQCR) 2002¹ and the Electricity Act 1989². The OC is defined based on two different factors as follows:
- The first factor in which the OC is determined is with reference to the distance at which a tree could fall and cause damage to the OHL, resulting in a supply outage. As a result, the OC width would be based on the safety distance required to allow for a mature tree falling towards the OHL at the mid-point on an OHL span between two towers, taking account of topography and tree height at maturity. Standard falling distance for a mature conifer tree is considered to be a minimum of 45 m. Where the OC passes through areas of broadleaved woodland, it is noted that the width of woodland removal is likely to be reduced, due to the general lower height and characteristics of the tree species present.

¹ UK Gov (2002). The Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002. Available at: [The Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002](#)

² UK Gov (1989). Electricity Act 1989. Available at: [Electricity Act 1989](#)

- The second factor that is considered is the maximum distance that the OHL conductors can blow out from the tower under a 1 in 50-year return period wind condition, plus the required electrical clearance distance. This is to ensure that the OHL conductors do not come into contact with, or come close enough to, any object that could result in an electrical clearance infringement. This conductor blowout distance varies between each tower dependent on span length and must therefore be considered on a span-by-span basis.

- 3.1.2 The typical OC required within areas of commercial conifer forestry for a 400 kV OHL is 90 m (i.e. 45 m either side of the centre line). Where the OC passes through areas of broadleaved woodland, it is proposed that the extent of woodland removal is likely to be reduced due to the lower height of the tree species present. The OC for the Proposed OHL Alignment through areas of broadleaved woodland has been reduced to 70 m (i.e. 35 m either side of the centre line of the OHL). This has been based on the likely height of the woodland at maturity. Where any woodland removal within the OC is proposed to be reduced from the 45 m either side of the line, a site-specific assessment must be carried out to confirm that the conductor blowout does not exceed the OC width. If the conductor blowout exceeds the proposed OC, then the width of the OC must be increased to meet the requirements of the blowout assessment as a minimum. This will ensure compliance with ESQCR requirements and that the required safety clearances are maintained.
- 3.1.3 A resilient OC of 90 m in width is required throughout the commercial conifer woodland within Woodland Parcel 1052 and taking into account the requirements of the conductor blowout assessment. The OC is illustrated in **Figure 12.1.46b: Parcel 1052 Proposed Felling Requirement**.

3.2 Access Track Route Design

- 3.2.1 A temporary access track is proposed in the OC between CB5-22 and CB5-23.

4 Woodland Characteristics

4.1 Woodland Composition and Site Conditions

- 4.1.1 The woodland was surveyed in January 2025. In this section the OC traverses an area of commercial woodland, with occasional broadleaved trees.
- 4.1.2 The proposed section of overhead powerline consists of a section of OC between towers CB5-22 and CB5-23.
- 4.1.3 This woodland consists of Scots pine (SP) planted as a commercial crop. With occasional Downy birch (DBI) at the edge of the stand and regenerating in a forest ride.
- 4.1.4 This section of proposed powerline is moderately exposed ranging from a Detailed Aspect Method of Scoring (DAMS) score of 14^{3,4}.
- 4.1.5 The Ecological Site Classification⁵ describes the site as having a cool, moderately exposed, and wet climate. The soils are moderately dry moisture status and very poor nutrient status.
- 4.1.6 The Soil Map of Scotland⁶ identifies the soils as being predominantly peaty gleyed podzols.
- 4.1.7 The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland identifies the woodland as pole stage Native pinewood, with 90% canopy cover.⁷
- 4.1.8 No environmental designations apply to this parcel.

³ Forest Research (2025). Available at: <http://www.forestdss.org.uk/geoforestdss/>

⁴ The Detailed Aspect Method of Scoring (DAMS) is a system used to assess wind exposure in forestry and land management. It provides a numerical score that quantifies the level of exposure a site experiences based on factors such as elevation, topography, and aspect (the direction a slope faces). The DAMS score helps foresters predict wind risk, which is crucial for understanding tree stability, growth potential, and the likelihood of windthrow (trees being uprooted or broken by wind). The scoring system ranges from 0 to 24, with higher scores indicating more exposure to wind.

⁵ Ecological Site Classification, Available at: <http://www.forestdss.org.uk/geoforestdss/>

⁶ National Soil Map of Scotland. Available at: <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/soil-maps/national-soil-map-of-scotland/>

⁷ Native Woodland Survey of Scotland. Available at: <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/forests-environment/biodiversity/native-woodlands/native-woodland-survey-of-scotland-nwss>

- 4.1.9 There is existing access infrastructure into this compartment. Tree removal is most easily achieved through mechanical felling or mulching after which material can be left on-site or extracted using standard machinery. The nearest road suitable for timber haulage is the unclassified C1154 Cawdor to Aitnoch Road. This is classed as a Consultation Route⁸ by The Timber Transport Forum⁹.

4.2 Photo Record – Operational Corridor Assessment

- 4.2.1 The following photographs provide a visual record of key locations along the proposed OC. Each image illustrates existing vegetation types, land use, and notable landscape features relevant to the planning and management of the OC. Particular attention has been given to areas of mature woodland, natural regeneration, and locations where proposed works may intersect with ecologically or visually sensitive habitats. The photos are intended to support site assessments and inform mitigation strategies.

Photo 1: Pole stage Scots pinewood between towers CB5-22 and CB5-23, within the OC (NH 940155 456314, looking northeast)



⁸ Consultation Routes are recognised as being key to timber extraction but are not up to Agreed Route standard. Consultation with the Local Authority is required and it may be necessary to agree limits of timing, allowable tonnage etc. before the route can be used. B roads and minor roads that are not categorised should be assumed to be Consultation Routes unless covered by one of the other classifications (e.g. Severely Restricted Route).

⁹ The Timber Transport Forum. Introduction to Agreed Routes Map. Available at: <https://timbertransportforum.org.uk/agreed-routes-map/introduction-to-agreed-routes-map/>

Photo 2: Pole stage Scots pinewood and birch regeneration in forest ride between towers CB5-22 and CB5-23, within the OC (NH 936872 455776, looking south)



5 Windblow Risk

- 5.1.1 It is acknowledged that the creation of the OC would result in wider potential indirect effects on the surrounding woodland areas. These areas would be subject to potential increased risk of damage (windblow). Each woodland report identifies further areas of felling to a windfirm edge, defined as 'Management Felling' (categorised as an indirect secondary impact), which is covered in more detail in **Chapter 12 Forestry** in **Section 12.4**. Management felling would be considered as part of any application for felling permission. This would provide restocking as agreed with Scottish Forestry which would result in balancing the loss of woodland. Any felling undertaken out with the OC would be solely under the control of the relevant landowner (and not the Applicant). It is the intention of the Applicant to encourage the landowners to follow this good practice in terms of redesign of their current Long-Term Forest Plans, which in-turn would aim to follow UK Forestry Standard (UKFS)¹⁰ for the implementation of the works required.
- 5.1.2 There is a reasonable risk of windblow within this Parcel.

6 Woodland Management Impact

- 6.1.1 Removing the northern edge of this mid rotation stand will introduce a risk of windblow, which may result in a decision to fell to the nearest wind firm boundary to the south. This will result in an earlier than expected felling and potentially smaller felling coupe than expected in this area, reducing revenue and increasing costs.
- 6.1.2 This management felling and subsequent restocking may provide greater flexibility in coupe felling planning later in the rotation.
- 6.1.3 The Proposed OHL Alignment furthermore introduces an electrical hazard, but the constraint associated with the electrical hazard will be reduced by regular maintenance of the OC which will avoid the incidences of "Red Zone" trees (reference Forest Industry Safety Accord, FISA 804 "Electricity at Work: Forestry"¹¹).
- 6.1.4 The total loss of Commercial conifer woodland resulting from the proposed alignment is 0.94 ha.

7 Mitigation Opportunities

7.1 Restructuring

- 7.1.1 The OC will cut through commercial conifer crops which is likely to have a negative impact for the commercial value of these woodlands at a local scale. In the immediate locality and at the regional scale, significant areas of similar woodland will be retained, preserving a varied woodland structure over a wider area.

7.2 Restocking

- 7.1.2 Management felling is suggested in this section of Proposed OHL Alignment, and if undertaken will result in a restock obligation on the landowner.

8 Net Effect / Summary

- 8.1.1 **Tables 8.1 to 8.4** outline the operational requirements for forestry management within the OC between towers CB5-22 and CB5-23. They detail the areas designated for clear felling, both within the OC and additional recommended Management Felling outside the OC to address windthrow risks and forest design considerations.

¹⁰ Scottish Forestry (2024). UK Forestry Standard (UKFS). Available at: <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/publications/sustainable-forestry/uk-forestry-standard-ukfs>

¹¹ Forest Industry Safety Accord (2020), FISA 804 Electricity at Work: Forestry. Available at: <https://ukfisa.com/Safety/Safety-Guides/fisa-804>

Table 8.1: Woodland removal for Infrastructure, within OC

Item	Woodland Type	Area (ha)
OC felling	Commercial conifer (90 m)	0.95
Total area		0.95

Table 8.2: Compensatory Planting

Item	Woodland Type	Area (ha)
Compensatory Planting Area	Commercial conifer	0.95
Total area		0.95

Table 8.3: Woodland Removal Impact of Infrastructure

Item	Area (ha)
Total Loss of Woodland Area	0.95
Total Compensatory Planting Area	0.95
Total Net Loss of Woodland Area	0.00

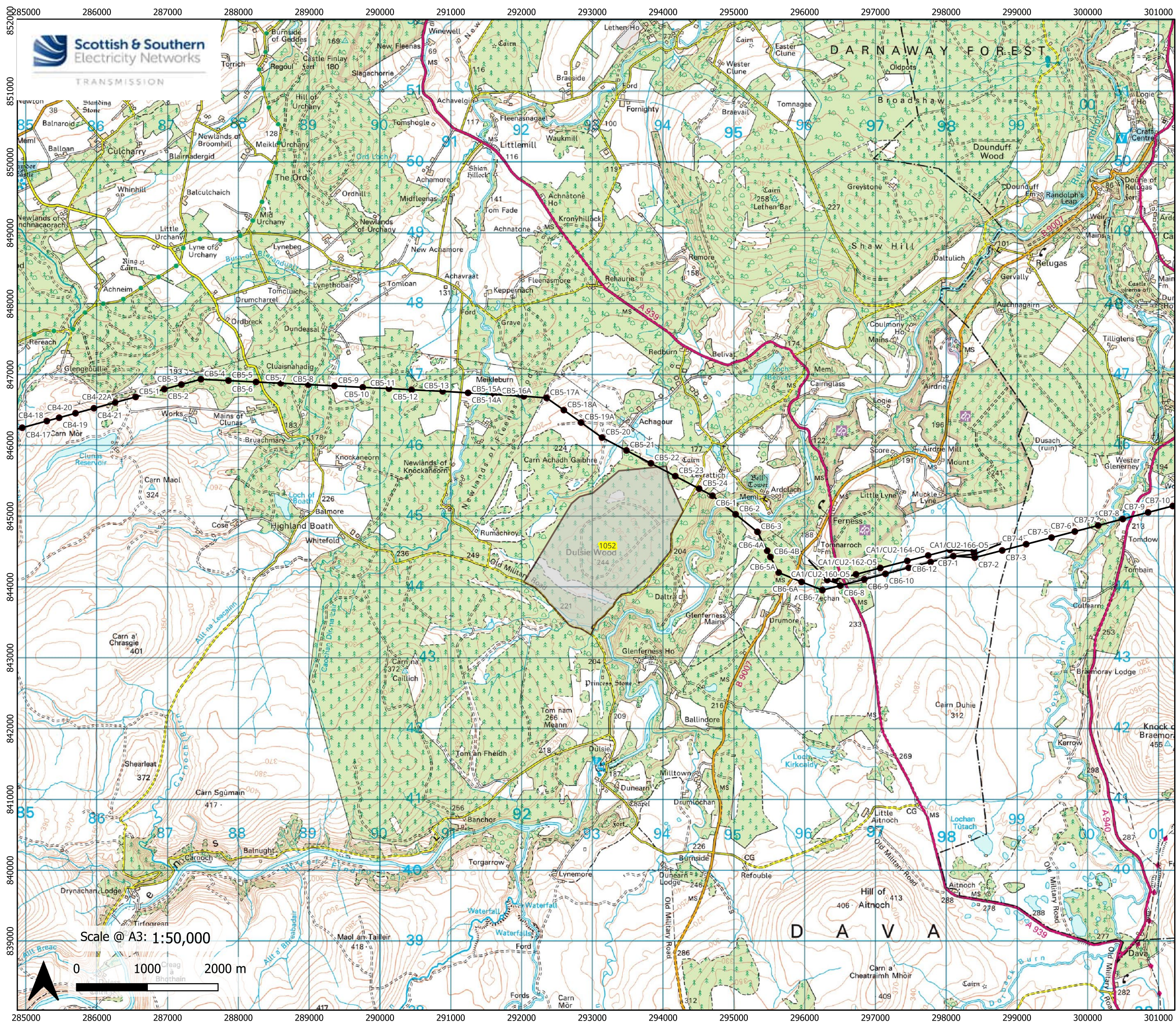
Table 8.4: Woodland removal for Management Felling, outwith OC

Item	Woodland Type	Area (ha)
Management Felling	Commercial conifer	4.95
Replanting / Restocking Opportunities	Commercial conifer	4.95
Total Net Loss of Woodland Area		0.00

9 Compensatory Planting

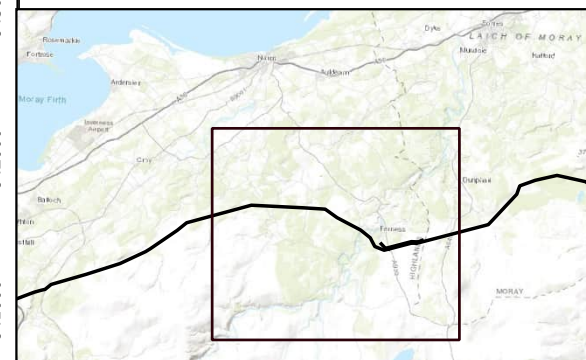
- 9.1.1 Only areas directly impacted by the OC will be included in the compensatory planting total, in accordance with the Control of Woodland Removal Policy (CoWRP)¹². This policy ensures that woodland loss due to development is mitigated by appropriate replanting or regeneration efforts, but it specifically applies to areas where tree removal is necessary for the Proposed Development. See **Appendix 12.3 Compensatory Planting Strategy**.
- 9.1.2 Any additional felling outside the OC, such as areas cleared for windthrow management or forest design improvements, falls under the responsibility of the landowner and is not included in the compensatory planting requirements. Instead, these areas may be replanted under a forest plan revision or felling license at the landowner's discretion. This approach aligns with national forestry guidelines, balancing infrastructure development with sustainable woodland management.
- 9.1.3 The total amount of net felling requiring compensation under the CoWRP is 0.95 ha.
- 9.1.4 In order to provide a greater balance limiting long-term impacts on forestry interests it is proposed that the majority of this woodland loss is compensated via off-site compensatory planting within the same local authority area. It is proposed that full details of the areas subject to this off-site compensatory planting is notified to Scottish Forestry prior to energising the OHL.

¹² Forestry Commission Scotland (2009). Control of Woodland Removal Policy. Available at: <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/publications/285-the-scottish-government-s-policy-on-control-of-woodland-removal/viewdocument/285>



Legend

- Proposed Tower - 400 kV
- Proposed OHL Alignment - 400 kV
- ▭ Landownership Boundary/Parcel

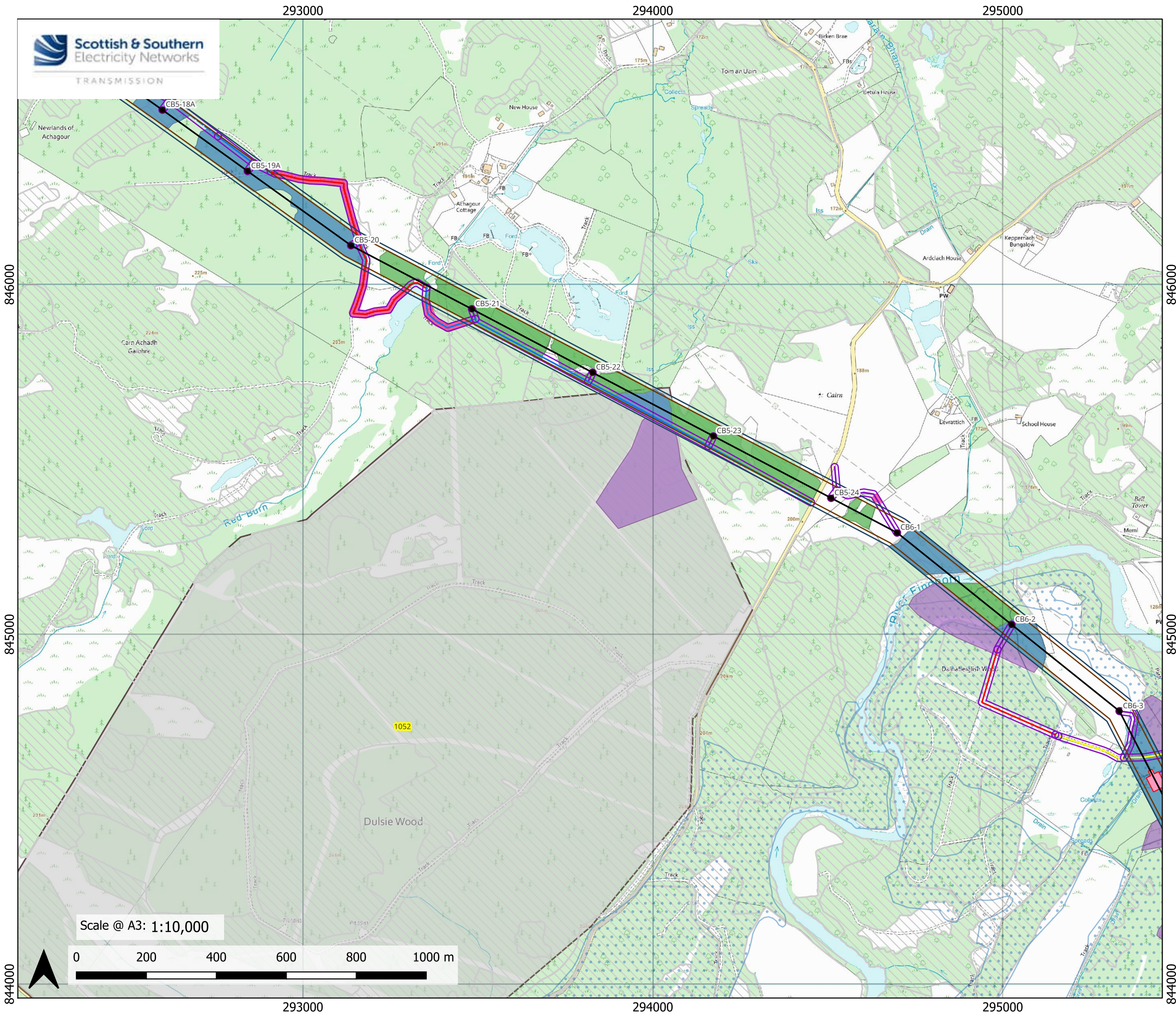


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Project:
Beaulieu to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV
OHL Project

Title:
Figure 12.1.46a Parcel 1052 Location Map

Drawn by: LA



Legend

- Proposed Tower - 400 kV
- Proposed OHL Alignment - 400 kV
- Proposed Conductor Pulling Area (EPZ)
- 70m Operational Corridor - Broadleaved Woodland
- 90m Operational Corridor - Commercial Woodland
- Access Track 20m Buffer

Proposed Access Tracks

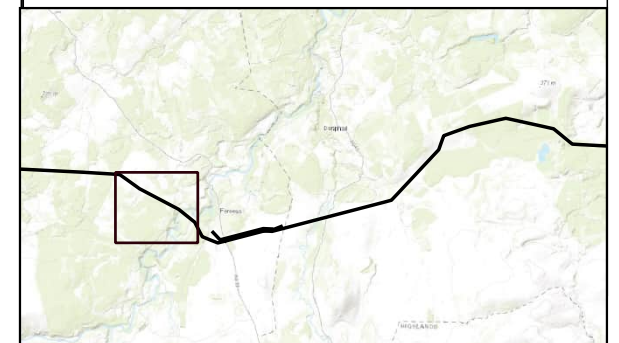
- Existing Access - Upgrade - Good/Fair Condition
- Existing Access - Upgrade - Very Poor Condition
- Proposed Access - Permanent
- Proposed Access - Permanent Floated
- Proposed Access - Temporary
- Proposed Access - Temporary Floated

Proposed Felling Requirements

- Native Woodland Operational Corridor Felling
- Mixed Conifer Operational Corridor Felling
- Mixed Conifer Management Felling
- Native Woodland Access Track Felling
- Native Woodland Survey Scotland (NWSS)

Ancient Woodland Inventory

- Long-Established (of plantation origin)
- Landownership Boundary/Parcel
(Landownership boundary extends beyond map extent - relevant area shown)



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Project:
Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV
OHL Project

Title: **Figure 12.1.46b** Parcel 1052 Proposed
Felling Requirements

Drawn by: LA