

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

**Appendix 12.1.70 – Woodland Report Parcel 4204,
Glenlatterach Reservoir**



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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This appendix presents information relevant to the Beaulay 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 4204, Glenlatterach. 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 12.1.70a Parcel 4204 Location Map**. The woodlands are found 12.88 km southwest of Elgin on the west side of the A941 between Elgin and Rothies (NJ 194451 533402) within the Moray Council region. The woodland consists of native broadleaved woodland below Glenlatterach Reservoir and are found within the designated Buinach and Glenlatterach Site of special scientific interest (SSSI)¹.
- 2.1.2 The woodland parcel is bounded by two main public roads: the B9010 to the north and the A941 to the east. These roads provide the primary access routes in the wider area. In addition to these, several single-track, unclassified roads branch off from the main routes and extend into the surrounding rural landscape, providing more direct access to the woodland itself.

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) 2002² and The Electricity Act 1989³. The OC is defined based on two different factors as follows:

¹ Nature Scot (1988). Available online at: [SiteLink - Buinach and Glenlatterach SSSI](#)

² UK Gov (2002). The Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002. Available at: [The Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002](#)

³ UK Gov (1989). Electricity Act 1989. Available at: [Electricity Act 1989](#)

- 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.
- 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 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 70 m in width is required throughout the native woodland within Woodland Parcel 4204 taking into account the requirements of the conductor blowout assessment. The OC is illustrated in **Figure 12.1.70b: Parcel 4204 Proposed Felling Requirement**.

3.2 Access Track Route Design

3.2.1 There are no proposed access tracks within the woodland parcel.

4 Woodland Characteristics

4.1 Woodland Composition and Site Conditions

- 4.1.1 It is important to note that this section of the OHL consists of the alternative Kellas Alignment route which takes the OHL north of the Glenlatterach reservoir with the main proposal staying south of the reservoir. The woodland comprises of mainly native broadleaves at low density with birch (DBI / SBI) being the dominant component within the OC. Sporadic Scots pine (SP) are found amongst the broadleaves.
- 4.1.2 The landform is dominated by the steep slopes towards the Leanoich burn at the Ess of Glenlatterach due north of the dam. The section of Proposed OHL Alignment is sheltered by high ground on either side of the ownership. The area is therefore sheltered with a maximum Detailed Aspect Method of Scoring (DAMS) score of 10⁴.
- 4.1.3 The Ecological Site Classification (ESC)⁵ identifies the site as having a cool, sheltered, and wet climate. The soils have a wet moisture status and very poor nutrient status.

⁴ Forest Research (2025). Available at: <http://www.forestdss.org.uk/geoforestdss/>

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 Forest Research Decision Support Tools. Ecological Site Classification. Available at: <http://www.forestdss.org.uk/geoforestdss/>

- 4.1.4 The National Soil Map of Scotland⁶ indicates the main soil types are podzols and gleys.
- 4.1.5 As a result of the slopes running towards the Leonach burn soils are well drained but nutrient availability is low as can be seen from the heather cover.
- 4.1.6 A section of the woodland has been identified in the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS)⁷ as classified under the "Native" category with the dominant habitat type within this woodland parcel recorded as Upland Birchwood.
- 4.1.7 There is no existing management permission on the area within this ownership.
- 4.1.8 Approximately half of the identified tree retention in the OC intersects the designated Buinach and Glenlatterach SSSI for Upland Oak Woodland, Upland Birch Woodland, and Lowland Dry Heath.
- 4.1.9 There are no access tracks proposed in this ownership.
- 4.1.10 There is existing infrastructure to the dam and reservoir which ends on the eastern bank of the Leonach burn, within the OC. The majority of woodland in the OC is found just below and west of the existing turning area.
- 4.1.11 The existing road infrastructure in this area is of good quality and is considered suitable for timber haulage. Surrounding haulage routes from Shougle back to the A941, including those via Hillhead & Trochail and Barholm / Paddockhaugh, are identified by the Timber Transport Forum⁸ as Agreed⁹, Excluded¹⁰, and Severely Restricted¹¹, respectively. These designations should be carefully considered when planning extraction routes.
- 4.1.12 There is currently no existing infrastructure on the western side of the Leonach Burn, which may present access constraints for operations on that side of the corridor.
- 4.1.13 If felling is required, hand felling of the necessary trees with material left on site is likely least intrusive both environmentally and aesthetically and minimises cost. If timber extraction is required, material west of the burn would need to cross the burn or be hauled up and west towards the proposed infrastructure on Kellas Estate ground.

4.2 Photo Record – Operational Corridor Assessment

- 4.2.1 The following photographs provide a visual record of key locations along the OC. Each image illustrates existing vegetation types, land use, and notable landscape features relevant to the planning and management of the corridor. 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.

⁶ Scottish Government (2024). National soil map of Scotland. Available at: <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/soil-maps/national-soil-map-of-scotland/>

⁷ Scottish Forestry (2014). Available at: <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/forests-environment/biodiversity/native-woodlands/native-woodland-survey-of-scotland-nwss>

⁸ HYPERLINK "https://timbertransportforum.org.uk/agreed-routes-map/introduction-to-agreed-routes-map/"https://timbertransportforum.org.uk/agreed-routes-map/introduction-to-agreed-routes-map/

⁹ Agreed Routes can be used for timber haulage without restriction (other than as regulated by the Road Traffic Act 1988). "A" roads (e.g. the A9) are assumed to be Agreed Routes unless covered by one of the other TTG classifications (e.g. Consultation Route)

¹⁰ Excluded Routes should not be used for timber transport in their present condition. These routes are either formally restricted, or are close to being formally restricted, in order to protect the road network from damaging loads. Consultation with the Local Authority is required to explore alternatives.

¹¹ Severely Restricted Routes should not normally be used for timber transport in their present condition. These routes are close to being Excluded Routes and consultation with the Local Authority is required to achieve an agreed road and traffic management regime to get the timber out.

Photo 1: View from existing turning area at the head of Glenlatterach Reservoir to the west overlooking the Leonach glen. (NJ 195191 533192, looking northwest)



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 the Forestry Chapter 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 outwith 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 Standards (UKFS)¹² for the implementation of the works required.
- 5.1.2 Considering the open grown nature of the woodland and the sheltered location there is a very low risk of windblow.

6 Woodland Management Impact

- 6.1.1 The woodland within this ownership is not managed commercially and as such there is limited impact on the woodland management because of the Proposed OHL Alignment.

¹² Scottish Forestry (2024). UK Forestry Standard (UKFS). Available at: <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/publications/sustainable-forestry/uk-forestry-standard-ukfs>

- 6.1.2 As the OC passes through the Buinach and Glenlatterach SSSI there might be implications for its management and quality. These will need discussion with the landowner and regulatory body.
- 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 (Forest Industry Safety Accord, FISA 804 "Electricity at Work: Forestry"¹³).
- 6.1.4 The total loss of Native Broadleaved woodland resulting from the proposed alignment is 0.00 ha.

7 Mitigation Opportunities

7.1 Woodland Mitigation Measures

- 7.1.1 Selective Crown Reduction / Selective Felling – focused on mature trees with high ecological value, ensuring that reduction is carried out in a manner that retains structural diversity.
- 7.1.2 The area of crown reduction is estimated at 0.83 ha.

7.2 Restructuring

- 7.2.1 The section of woodland is mixed native woodland of varying age, any felling in the OC would therefore have limited impact on structure.

7.3 Restocking

- 7.3.1 As there is no management felling proposed for this area there is no restock obligation on the landowner.

¹³ Forest Industry Safety Accord (2020), FISA 804 Electricity at Work: Forestry. Available at: <https://ukfisa.com/Safety/Safety-Guides/fisa-804>

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 CB9C-28A and CB9C-29B on the alternative route. They detail the areas designated for clear felling, within the OC and forest design considerations.

Table 8.1: Woodland removal for Infrastructure, within OC

Item	Woodland Type	Area (ha)
Crown Reduction / Selective Felling	Native Broadleaved Woodland (70 m)	0.83
Total area		0.83

Table 8.2: Compensatory Planting

	Woodland Type	Area (ha)
Compensatory Planting Area	Native Broadleaved Woodland	0.00
Total area		0.00

Table 8.3: Woodland Removal Impact of Infrastructure

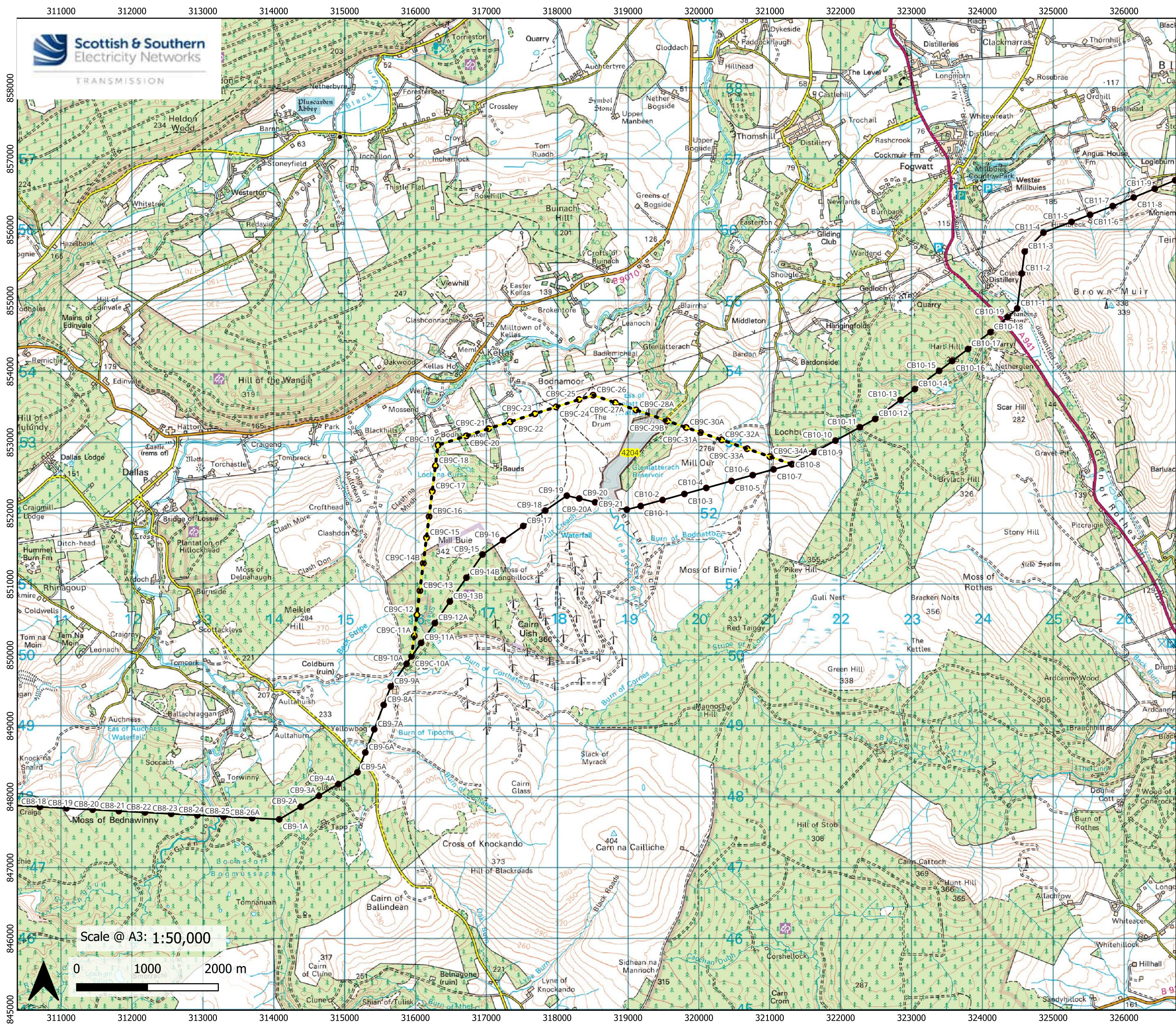
Item	Area (ha)
Total Loss of Woodland Area	0.00
Total Compensatory Planting Area	0.00
Total Net Loss of Woodland Area	0.00

Table 8.4: Woodland removal for Management Felling, outwith OC

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

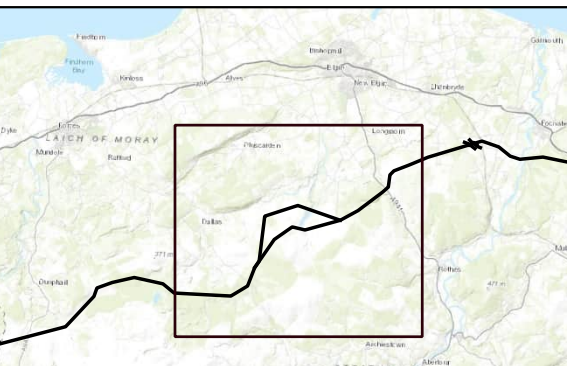
9 Compensatory Planting

- 9.1.1 No compensatory planting is required in this instance, as no large-scale or clear-felling operations will be undertaken within the woodland area. Instead, the proposed activity involves crown reduction and selective felling, which are targeted and low-impact silvicultural interventions.
- 9.1.2 This approach has been specifically chosen to minimise disturbance to the native woodland structure and the ecological features for which the overlapping Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is designated. By retaining the overall woodland canopy and focusing only on removing specific individuals to improve structural diversity or address safety or operational needs, the intervention will avoid a net loss of woodland cover or functionality.



Legend

- Proposed Tower - 400 kV
- Proposed OHL Alignment - 400 kV
- Proposed Tower - Kellas Alternative Alignment
- - - Proposed OHL Alignment - Kellas Alternative
- Landownership Boundary/Parcel

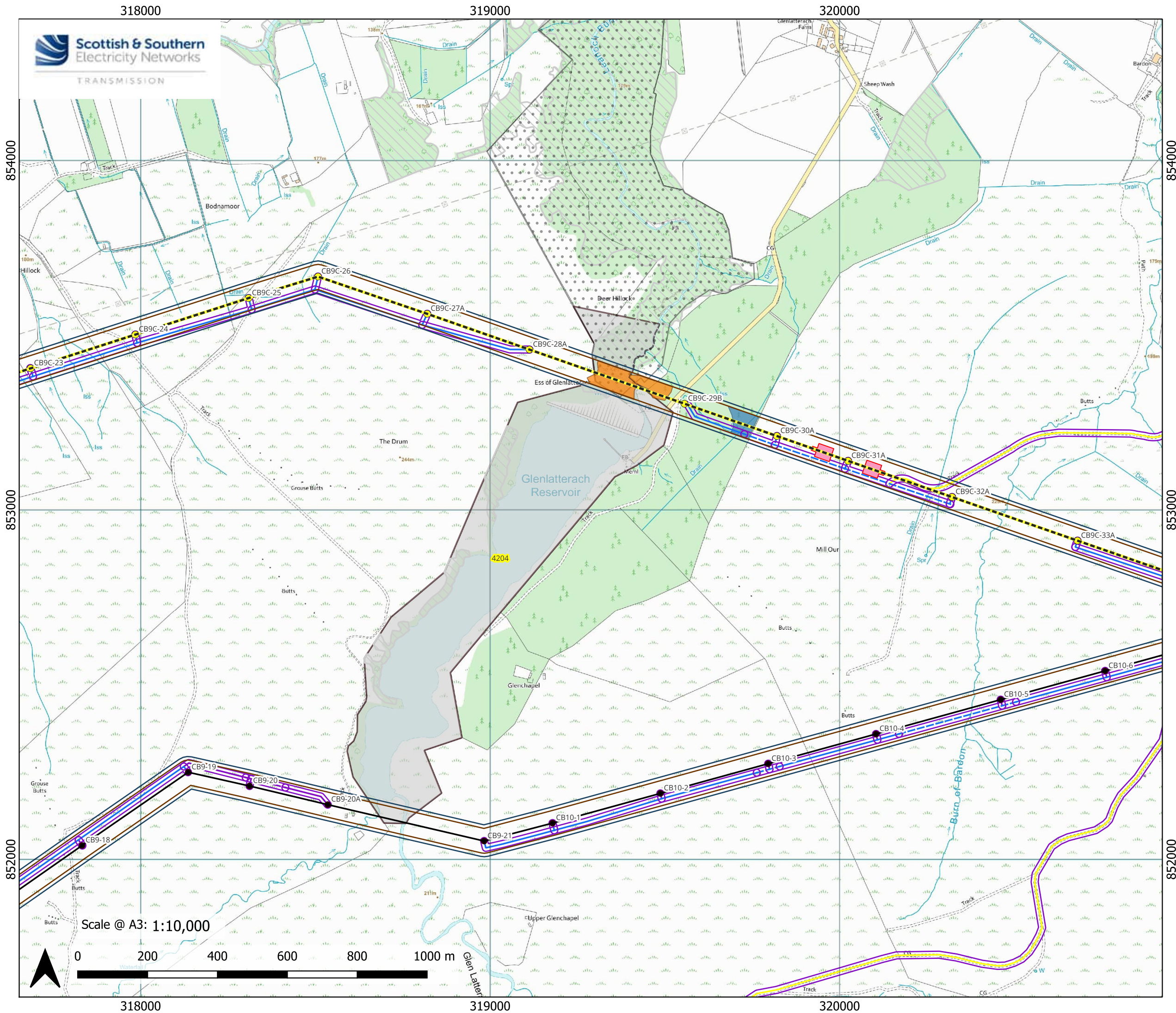


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Project:
Beaulieu to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400 kV
OHL Project

Title:
Figure 12.1.70a Parcel 4204 Location Map

Drawn by: LA



Legend

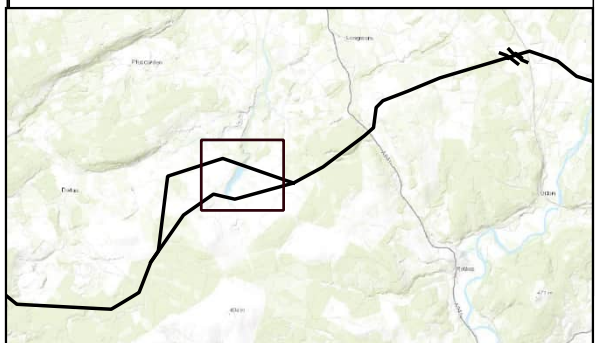
- Proposed Tower - 400 kV
- Proposed OHL Alignment - 400 kV
- Proposed Tower - Kellas Alternative Alignment
- Proposed OHL Alignment - Kellas Alternative
- Proposed Conductor Pulling Area (EPZ)
- 70m Operational Corridor - Broadleaved Woodland
- 90m Operational Corridor - Commercial Woodland
- Access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

Proposed Access Tracks

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

Proposed Felling Requirements

- Mixed Conifer Operational Corridor Felling
- Native Woodland Crown Reduction
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Native Woodland Survey Scotland (NWSS)
- Landownership Boundary/Parcel



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

Title: **Figure 12.1.70b** Parcel 4204 Proposed
Felling Requirements

Drawn by: LA