

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

**Appendix 12.1.73: Woodland Report Parcel 5410,
Coleburn Farm**



APPENDIX 12.1.73: Woodland Report Parcel 5410, Coleburn Farm.

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.....	5
6	Woodland Management Impact	5
7	Mitigation Opportunities.....	6
7.1	Woodland Mitigation Measures.....	6
7.2	Restructuring	6
7.3	Restocking	6
8	Net Effect / Summary.....	6
9	Compensatory Planting	7

Appendix Figures

Figure 12.1.73a: Parcel 5410 Location Map

Figure 12.1.73b: Parcel 5410 Proposed Felling Requirements

Figure 12.1.73c: Parcel 5410 Proposed Planting Areas

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 5410, Coleburn Farm. 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 12.1.73a: Parcel 5410 Location Map**. The Coleburn Farm woodlands consist largely of birchwood tying the lower agricultural ground into the open hill above. The woodlands are situated east of the A941 6 km south of Elgin in the Moray council area (NJ 245633 553721). The operational corridor comes in from Rothes estate on the west and continues east towards Blackhills estate.

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 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 broadleaved woodland within Woodland Parcel 5410 and taking into account the requirements of the conductor blowout assessment. The OC is illustrated in **Figure 12.1.73b: Parcel 5410 Proposed Felling Requirement**.

3.2 Access Track Route Design

- 3.2.1 The tracks associated with this section of the OHL are within the OC.

4 Woodland Characteristics

4.1 Woodland Composition and Site Conditions

- 4.1.1 The woodland was surveyed in November 2024. The vast majority of the OC traverses open hill and gorse with a small section of native upland birch woodland at its western end.
- 4.1.2 This upland birchwood consists of young woodland of extremely varied density with a majority Silver birch (SBI) and some minor species such as Rowan (ROW) and Willow (WL). The majority of trees are approximately 10 meters in height with a diameter of 10cm with some older specimens of greater height and girth found in amongst them. Moving up the hill the SBI runs out and gorse becomes dominant.
- 4.1.3 The landscape is characterised by the upland moorland and forestry of Moray. Landform consists of undulating hills.
- 4.1.4 The proposed section of OHL consists of a section of OC between towers CB11-1 and CB11-5. An existing OHL crosses the proposed OHL between CB11-1 and CB11-2.
- 4.1.5 This section of proposed OHL is sheltered by the higher ground to the east and is sheltered from the west with a Detailed Aspect Method of Scoring (DAMS) of³ 11.
- 4.1.6 The Ecological Site Classification⁴ describes the site as having a cool, sheltered and moist climate. The soils have a slightly dry moisture status and a very poor nutrient status.
- 4.1.7 The Soil Map of Scotland⁵ identifies the soils as being predominantly humus-iron podzols. Soil conditions are mixed with higher ridges with better drainage interspaced with wet flushes.

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

⁴ Ecological Site Classification, Available at: <http://www.forestdss.org.uk/geoforestdss/>

⁵ National Soil Map of Scotland. Available at: <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/soil-maps/national-soil-map-of-scotland/>

- 4.1.8 No environmental designations apply to this parcel, although the Coleburn pasture SSSI, designated for lowland acid grassland, is found within this ownership to the northeast of the woodland.
- 4.1.9 No existing forest plans or felling permissions were found on the Scottish Forestry Web Viewer.
- 4.1.10 There is no existing forest infrastructure into this block and no straightforward opportunities for access were found. Tree removal is most easily achieved through hand felling or mulching after which material can be left on site or extracted using small machinery. Timber could easily be extracted to the A941, this is classed as an Agreed Route by the Timber Transport Forum⁶⁷.

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 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: Young birchwood within the OC (NJ 245211 552235, looking east)



⁶ The Timber Transport Forum. Introduction to Agreed Routes Map. Available at: <https://timbertransportforum.org.uk/agreed-routes-map/introduction-to-agreed-routes-map/>

⁷ 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).

Photo 2: Edge of birchwood with adjacent gorse (NJ 245831 553122, looking northeast)



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 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 or the implementation of the works.
- 5.1.2 There is a small risk of windblow within this property as the SBI has grown up interspaced with gorse and has developed good stability. Tree height is still limited, and green edges are found throughout.

6 Woodland Management Impact

- 6.1.1 As this forest does not appear managed for timber purposes the impact on forest management will be small. The landowner will have reduced production of potentially firewood and lower quality timber products due to a loss of productive ground. There will be little to no implication on the remaining woodland out with the corridor.
- 6.1.2 The infrastructure built for this section of the OHL could provide a minor benefit to the landowner for future forest management as it could provide long term access into a currently poorly accessible area. However, given the likely objectives of the woodland this is unlikely to be of significant benefit. As part of construction works, dedicated crossing points and long-term access opportunities should be discussed with the landowner(s).

- 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”⁸).
- 6.1.4 The total loss of Native Broadleaved woodland resulting from the proposed alignment is 2.32 hectares (ha).

7 Mitigation Opportunities

7.1 Woodland Mitigation Measures

- 7.1.1 To mitigate the landscape impact on this section of the proposed OHL the ‘Landscape Replanting Proposals’ as set out in the Landscape chapter will be followed as demonstrated in **Figure 12.1.34c: Parcel 5410 Proposed Planting Areas**.

7.2 Restructuring

- 7.2.1 The forest is not particularly diverse with the majority of trees being of similar age and size. The OC will cut this currently contiguous native woodland in two which is likely negative for the environmental value of this woodland. Both to the east and west significant areas of similar woodland will be retained which means forest structure will be impacted minimally.
- 7.2.2 The felling of the OC for the development will create new green edges, which will allow the landowner to work to in the future if that is desired. In the long term this might benefit forest structure.

7.3 Restocking

- 7.3.1 No management felling is required for this section of proposed OHL therefore there will be no restock obligation on the landowner.
- 7.3.2 As set out in the Landscape chapter under the ‘Landscape Replanting Proposals’ restocking can potentially take place within the OC to mitigate the visual impact of the OC. Restocking within the OC will be carried out by the applicant. Detail shown in **Figure 12.1.73c: Parcel 5410 Proposed Planting Areas**.

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 CB11-1 and CB11-5. It details 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)
Operational corridor felling	Native broadleaves (70 m)	2.32
Total area		2.32

Table 8.2: Compensatory Planting

Item	Woodland Type	Area (ha)
Compensatory Planting Area	Native broadleaves	2.32
Total area		2.32

⁸ Forest Industry Safety Accord (2020), FISA 804 Electricity at Work: Forestry. Available at: <https://ukfisa.com/Safety/Safety-Guides/fisa-804>

Table 8.3: Woodland Removal Impact of Infrastructure

Item	Area (ha)
Total Loss of Woodland Area	2.32
Total Compensatory Planting Area	2.32
Total Net Loss of Woodland Area	0.00

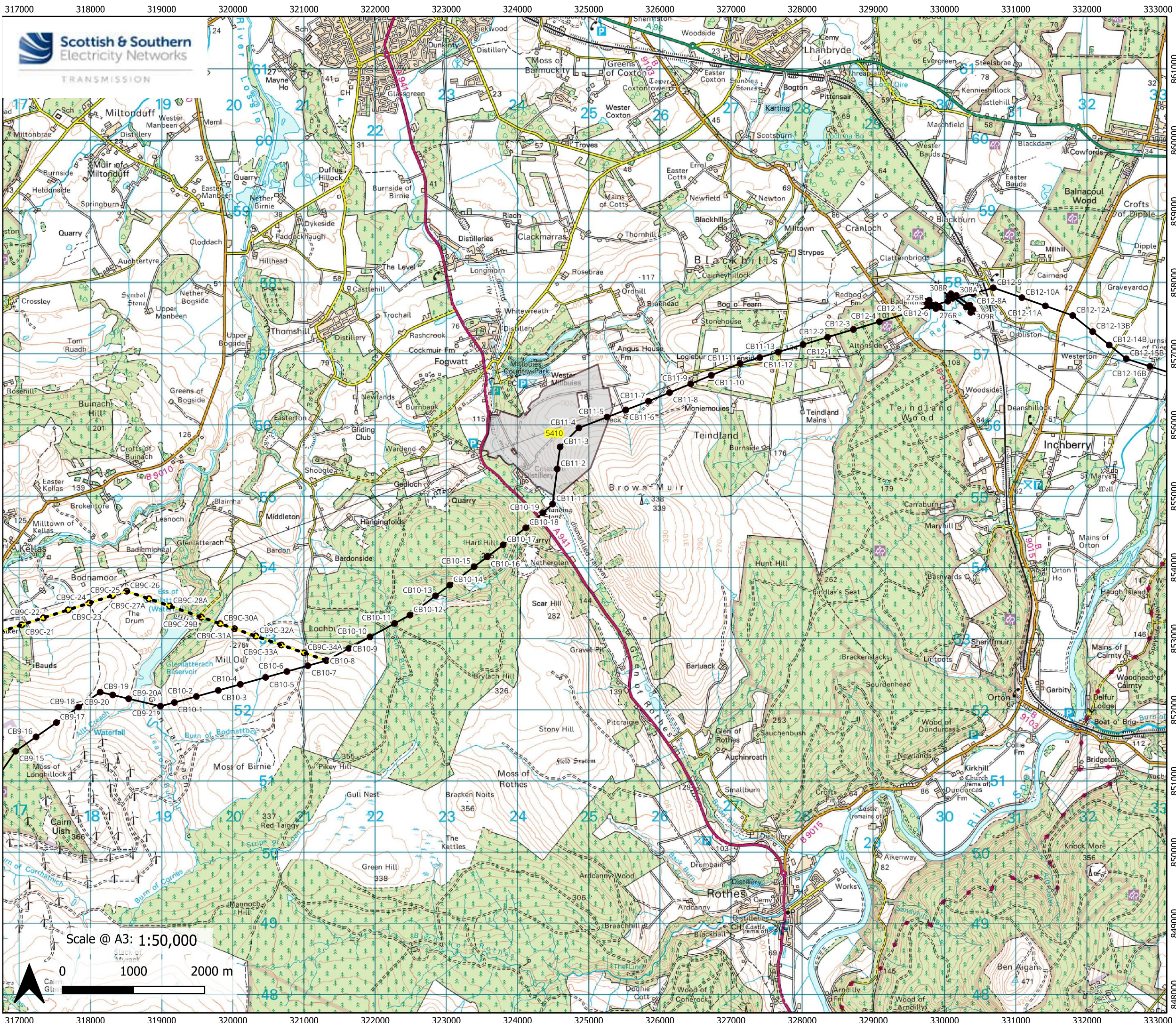
Table 8.4: Woodland removal for Management Felling, outwith OC

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 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)⁹. 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 Management Strategy**.
- 9.1.2 Any additional felling outside the OC, such as areas cleared for windblow 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 2.32 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 offsite compensatory planting within the same local authority area. It is proposed that full details of the areas subject to this offsite compensatory planting is notified to Scottish Forestry prior to energising the OHL.

⁹ 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

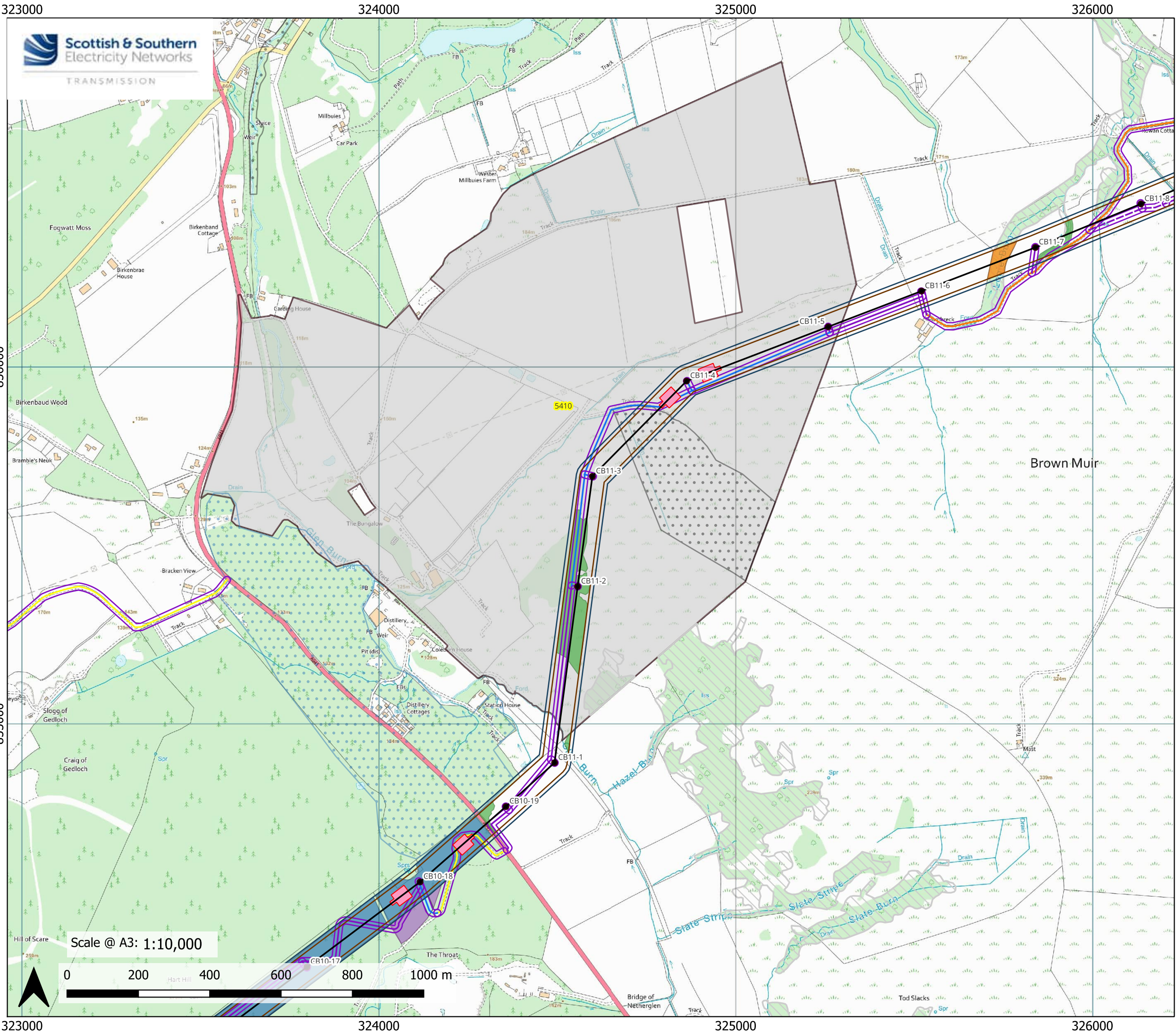
- Proposed Tower - 400 kV
- Proposed OHL Alignment - 400 kV
- Proposed Tower - Kellas Alternative Alignment
- - - Proposed OHL Alignment - Kellas Alternative
- Landownership Boundary/Parcel

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

Title:
Figure 12.1.73a Parcel 5410 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 – Poor Condition
- Proposed Access – Permanent
- Proposed Access – Temporary
- Proposed Access – Temporary Floated

Proposed Felling Requirements

- Native Woodland Operational Corridor Felling
- Mixed Conifer Operational Corridor Felling
- Mixed Conifer Management Felling
- Mixed Conifer Access Track Felling
- Native Woodland Crown Reduction
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Native Woodland Survey Scotland (NWSS)

Ancient Woodland Inventory

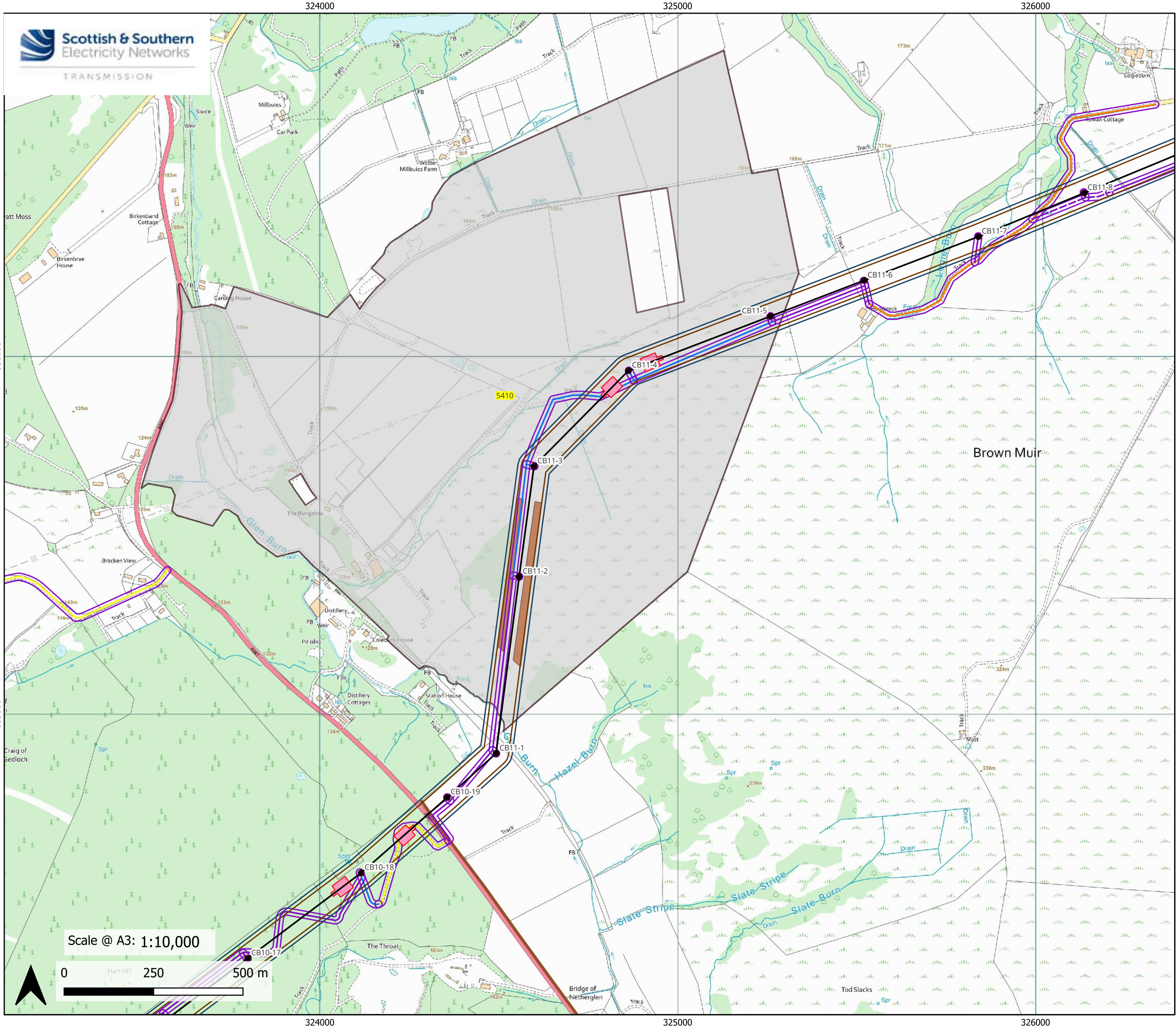
- Long-Established (of plantation origin)
- Landownership Boundary/Parcel

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Title: **Figure 12.1.73b** Parcel 5410 Proposed Felling Requirements

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 - Poor Condition
- Proposed Access - Permanent
- Proposed Access - Temporary
- Proposed Access - Temporary Floated
- Landownership Boundary/Parcel
- Forest Edge Planting Locations
- Roadside Mitigation Planting Locations

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

Title:
Figure 12.1.73c Parcel 5410 Proposed Planting Areas

Drawn by: LA