LT521 Bingally 400 /132 kV Substation

Additional Information Report

Date October 2025

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 In February 2025, Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc (operating and known as SSEN Transmission) ('the Applicant') submitted a planning application (25/00592/FUL) seeking consent from The Highland Council (THC) for the Bingally 400 / 132 kV Substation project ('the Proposed Development') under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) ('the 1997 Act'). 'The Scheme as Submitted' relates to the construction of a new 400/132kV outdoor Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) substation comprising platform, plant and machinery, control buildings, access, temporary laydown and compound areas, drainage, landscaping and other ancillary works.

1.1.2 The EIA Screening Opinion received on 13 November 2024 confirmed that the Scheme as Submitted was not considered to be EIA development in terms of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, and accordingly, an EIA was not required. A voluntary Environmental Appraisal (EA) was however submitted to support the planning application as a matter of best practice with other necessary supporting documents.

1.1.3 In the consideration of the planning application objections were raised by statutory and non-statutory bodies including THC, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and The Woodland Trust. This Additional Information Report has been produced voluntarily to address the objections made by THC, SEPA, The Woodland Trust and an additional concern raised by the RSPB (raised separately in parallel landowner discussions) – all of which are discussed further in **Section 2**. The THC Access Officer comments are the subject of on-going direct discussion and are not therefore covered in this report. The comments made by the Community Council and members of the public are likewise not assessed in the report which focusses on technical issues.

1.1.4 Additionally, the design of the proposed Bingally substation as submitted in the planning application, and appraised in the EA, has been updated (see **Section 3**, and **Appendix E Figure 1-1**) (the 'Revised Scheme'). The Revised Scheme addresses the objection received from SEPA and the concerns of the RSPB. A review of the Revised Scheme against the Scheme as Submitted in the February 2025 application has been undertaken to understand any differences between the EA outcomes as a result of the revised design. This is discussed further in **Section 3**. The Study Areas for this review remain as outlined in the respective chapters of the EA. 'The Site' remains as defined in Section 1.1.3 of the EA.

2. OBJECTIONS AND COMMENTS RECEIVED TO DATE

2.1.1 This section details the objections and comments received to date and presents the Applicant's response.

2.2 SEPA Objection – Water Environment

SEPA Objection (PCS-20005077)

2.2.1 SEPA objects to the application due to the potential significant impact on watercourses. SEPA notes "Cumulatively, there will be a significant increase in culverted watercourse [...] in addition to several proposed channel realignments [… which] will require CAR authorisations for any crossings where realignment is proposed". Additionally, "the three longest proposed culverts would fail the local standards (not including any additional realignment) triggering the Good Practice Test at the CAR application stage. In addition, the increase of over give fold in the length of culverts across the project is viewed as cumulatively significant".

2.2.2 SEPA will reconsider the objection to the application due to the potential significant impact on watercourses following modifications to the layout. The SEPA objection states "We will consider removing this objection once alternative / modified watercourse crossing proposals are submitted. These modifications will require a reduction in the length of culverts for the whole scheme rather than just the three longest ones. Bridge solutions should be investigated and as a minimum where culverts still remain these will require to be bottomless and have a natural bed and appropriate energy dissipation measures within the culvert […] and at the downstream end".

2.2.3 Additionally, SEPA recommends THC request a revised Biodiversity Net Gain Report (**Appendix I**), and revised Landscape and Habitat Management Plan (LHMP) (**Appendix G**), which take into account the significant impacts on watercourses.

Applicant Response

2.2.4 In response to SEPA's objection to the length of the culverted crossings proposed as part of the Scheme as Submitted, the Applicant has updated the design to include eight bridge crossings therefore significantly reducing the need for culverts. The details of the proposed bridge crossings can be found in **Section 3**. The proposed bridge solutions have spans intended to eliminate the need for any in-channel working and avoid impacting the existing watercourses. The design updates represent an improvement in terms of hydromorphology, further details of which are presented in **Table 3-1**.

2.2.5 There are two locations where a culverted solution remains the least impactful solution, the locations of which are as follows:

- C085: Kerrow Burn, where there are two proposed culverts, located approximately 200 m northeast of the Northern Temporary Compound; and
- C043: Unnamed Channel located approximately 550 m northeast of the Northern Temporary Compound.

2.2.6 Where a culverted solution remains as the proposed solution (see Section 3), the following justification is provided:

- Bridging the access track alignment at these locations is not considered feasible due to the length of the bridges required, as the watercourse runs parallel to the alignment;
- Amending the access track alignment to avoid the watercourses results in larger earthwork cuttings due to the sidelong ground at this location. The cuttings would

generate surplus material, require the relocation of increased peat volumes and potentially have a greater visual impact; and

- Bridging the access track would increase the gradient of the alignment (at the C085 crossing), this is not feasible due to limitations of the abnormal indivisible load (AIL) vehicle used to bring equipment to the proposed Bingally substation. The proposed access track has been selected to comply with geometric restrictions linked to the AIL vehicle.

2.2.7 To comply where possible with SEPA's requirements outlined in their objection, culvert C043 will be designed as a bottomless culvert. The design around C085 is more complex so this is not proposed but both culverts will be designed with the appropriate energy dissipation measures. Full design details of these culverts are not yet available but are suggested to be controlled by appropriate planning conditions/CAR licensing process.

2.2.8 An updated BNG report (**Appendix I**) and LHMP (**Appendix G**) form part of the Revised Scheme.

2.3 SEPA Objection – Peat and Carbon Rich Soils

SEPA Objection (PCS-20005077)

Peat Avoidance

2.3.1 SEPA notes "*the proposed Temporary Compound 3 and Borrow Pit area appears to be creating a disproportionate amount of excavated peat*". Therefore, in addition to concerns around the volume of peat used in reinstatement of the access track (see **Section 2.2.5**), SEPA objects to the application and "*will consider removing this objection once the applicant **modifies** the area of Temporary Compound 3 reducing/moving the area off the deeper area of peat to the southwest. These modifications will need to be accompanied by revised estimated peat excavation and re-use volume tables".*

Proposed Peat Reuse

2.3.2 SEPA notes the "103,876 m^3 of excavated peat which has not been yet identified for on-site reuse. Whilst it is proposed to use some of this excess peat in verge re-instatement of the main access track no re-use volumes for this have been confirmed. In addition, we highlight the excess 22,016m3 of catotelm peat will not be suitable for such re-use".

2.3.3 SEPA therefore objects to the application and requests the applicant "**modifies** the application to reduce the likely excavated volumes of peat". SEPA suggests this could be done through modifying the siting of the Temporary Compound 3, while siting of the other temporary compounds and the use of floating construction should also be considered.

2.3.4 SEPA additionally requests a condition for the applicant to submit a "detailed borrow pit restoration plan which should clearly illustrate how the re-used peat will successfully tie in with the surrounding peatland". The condition is put in place to confirm, in relation to the borrow pit on an area of degraded blanket bog, "whether the peat re-use plans at the proposed peat depths will be successful, and therefore compliant with NPF4 in terms of enhancing the site into a functional peatland system capable of achieving carbon sequestration".

Applicant Response

2.3.5 In response to SEPA's objections in relation to peat avoidance and peat reuse detailed above, the Applicant has updated the design of the Scheme as Submitted to significantly

reduce disturbance to peat by rationalising all requirements. Main updates to the design to address SEPA's objection include;

- Updates to the temporary compounds and temporary infrastructure at the substation area to avoid areas of deeper peat (including the removal of Temporary Compound 3); and,
- Reduction of the proposed substation platform and associated earthworks.

2.3.6 A description of the design updates are detailed in **Section 3** below. **Table 3-1** presents the comparison of the design submitted as part of the planning application and the revised design, with specific detail on peat avoidance and peat reuse.

2.4 THC Objection – Ecology

THC Objection (25_00592_FUL-ECOLOGY_OFFICER-3620279)

2.4.1 THC Ecology Officer places "a holding objection on the application, due to incomplete supporting information with regards to biodiversity enhancements and incomplete survey information on bat presence/absence".

2.4.2 In relation to bats, THC note that although two trees proposed to be felled have been noted as having potential for roosting bats, and further survey has been recommended, further survey has not been completed or the results have not been submitted. THC note "Bats are a European Protected Species and therefore a material consideration for planning, with the impacts upon the species to be taken into consideration prior to planning decisions".

2.4.3 In relation to biodiversity enhancement, THC note that the application does not comply with the requirements of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Policy 3. THC did not specify the provision of the policy which the objection refers to, however the intent of Policy 3 is to protect biodiversity, reverse biodiversity loss, to deliver positive effects from development, and to strengthen nature networks. THC note "the Toolkit data has not been provided with the application and the BNG [Biodiversity Net Gain] report only includes a summary, which is not sufficient for checking and assessing the results, as requested in Highland Council Biodiversity Enhancement Planning Guidance".

2.4.4 Additionally, THC note that as offsite locations for biodiversity enhancement have yet to be explored, they are unable to fully assess the enhancement measures against NPF4 Policy 3.

Applicant Response

2.4.5 To address THC's objection in relation to bat survey information, further surveys were undertaken in June, along the Scheme as Submitted access track alignment, and in September/October 2025, to cover design updates to a section of the track associated with the Revised Scheme. Relevant results are presented in a Bat Technical Note (see **Appendix A**), and discussed below in **Table 3-1.** The surveys undertaken in June along the Scheme as Submitted track alignment are no longer relevant as this part of the track is no longer impacted due to the new alignment. Taking into consideration the results of these bat surveys and following an appraisal of the revised design, mitigation and compensation (see **Appendix A**) is proposed as a result of the Revised Scheme. These proposals would be captured in a bat Species Protection Plan.

2.4.6 Within **Appendix A**, a precautionary approach has been applied to the impact assessment, mitigation, and compensation proposals presented. It is considered that **Appendix A** presents sufficient detail to allow THC to appropriately progress the determination of the

planning application. Ultimately, there is considered to be no change to the conclusions of the EA as a result of the Revised Scheme with respect to bats.

2.4.7 To address THC's objection in relation to biodiversity enhancement, an updated BNG Report has been produced and the BNG Toolkit is provided as part of the updated BNG Report. To supplement this report, SSEN Transmission has included an Off-Site Strategy Document (see Biodiversity Net Gain Report, **Appendix I**) which provides further detail for the biodiversity enhancement for the Scheme as Submitted.

2.5 THC Request for Information – Forestry

THC Request for Information (25_00592_FUL-RESPONSE_-_FORESTRY_OFFICER-3653118)

2.5.1 THC requests the Applicant "provide a summary table of all areas of woodland (including clear-fell areas) to be removed, by woodland type". THC further requests the Applicant to "clarify the total extent of compensatory planting proposed for the substation […and] a summary table of all areas of woodland (including clear-fell areas) to be removed from the OHL, by woodland type along with the extent of planting proposed for the OHL".

2.5.2 THC requests this information to ensure the application adheres to NPF4 Policy 6c, and THC expects the applicant to confirm "what area of woodland would require to be removed to accommodate development and provide and equivalent area of compensatory tree planting with at least the equivalent woodland-related net public benefits (i.e. same woodland types)".

2.5.3 THC states "the impact on woodland could be accepted providing the compensatory planting is adequate".

Applicant Response

2.5.4 In response to THC's request for detail on types of woodland to be removed, including a summary table of areas to be removed specifically for the OHL, a Forestry Technical Note (**Appendix B**) is provided. The Forestry Technical Note gives a breakdown of the area of woodland to be removed detailing woodland types. It also provides the woodland type and area to be removed specifically for the works associated with the OHL.

2.5.5 Additionally, in terms of compensatory planting the Applicant is committed to making arrangements to plant off-site the equivalent area of woodland as Compensatory Planting, meeting the Scottish Government's Control of Woodland Removal Policy (CoWRP) objective of no net loss of woodland.

2.5.6 In line with NPF4 Policy 6, which confirms that "*where any woodland is removed, compensatory planting will most likely be expected to be delivered*", the Applicant will go beyond a like-for-like replacement.

2.5.7 The Compensatory Planting Strategy (**Appendix C**) will be developed further to compensate for the area of woodland removed, ensuring a net positive effect on biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and ecological connectivity.

2.6 The Woodland Trust Objection – Ancient Woodland

The Woodland Trust Objection (25_00592_FUL-WOODLAND_TRUST-3618999)

2.6.1 The Woodland Trust object to the application with regard to the impact on ancient woodland. The Woodland Trust ask THC to take into consideration the impacts on ancient woodland and

"ensure that ancient woodland is protected and that any development within ancient woodland is relocated outside of and away from the woodland area".

2.6.2 In its current form, The Woodland Trust consider the application to be in contrary to planning policy due to the impact on ancient woodland, and will maintain its objection *"until the applicant can commit to protecting the ancient woodland appropriately"*.

Applicant Response

2.6.3 In response to The Woodland Trust's objection in relation to ancient woodland, the onsite habitat surveys recorded many of the areas listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) as now being commercial plantation woodland. No indicators of ancient woodland remain in the majority of locations listed on the AWI and ground disturbance is present due to long-term commercial forestry operations.

2.6.4 **The Ancient Woodland Inventory** (**Appendix D**) sets out specific details on the locations where the project insects with areas listed on the AWI. As detailed in **Appendix D**, felling has occurred in some areas along the existing access track between June 2016 and May 2020. A small area (0.25 ha) present at the northernmost area of the Site is native woodland (identified as likely being Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and listed on the AWI as 2a, due to floristic character and woodland structure). The upgrade of the existing access track, notwithstanding this impact on ancient woodland, presents as the best design option for the Revised Proposed Development, removing the need for construction of a new additional access track to connect the Updated Proposed Development to the A831. A long linear stand of ancient woodland adjacent to the A831, as well as very steep topography and gradient restrictions (therefore constraining the movement of abnormal loads) further restricts any alternative alignment options. The utilisation of the existing track seeks to minimise overall impact predicted to result from alternative alignments creating a new, longer access track. A new additional access track would result in a larger area of habitat loss, including woodland along the existing track which is likely to currently be impacted by edge effects. A new track would introduce new disturbance to a previously undisturbed area.

2.6.5 **Appendix D** provides details on individual parcels of habitats within the Site listed on the AWI, demonstrating the extent of areas within the Site and providing a detailed review of each area, in terms of the habitats currently present, historical land use and information regarding the current status and ecological value of woodland. The details provided in this assessment demonstrate that the majority of areas listed on the AWI within the Site are categorised as Ancient Woodland 2a and considered to be Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) rather than ASNW. Mitigation would be in line with the felling and restocking plans outlined in the Glen Affric Management Plan[1] and as detailed within the BNG report, the Applicant will seek appropriate compensation to account for the loss of this habitat.

2.7 RSPB Comment – Corrimony Reserve

RSPB Comment

2.7.1 The Site is partly within the Corrimony RSPB reserve. Corrimony supports a number of characteristic highland birds, butterflies, moths and invertebrates through the management of key habitats across the reserve. 'Wet flushes' and 'wet mires' are the highest priority habitats at Corrimony as they are rich in invertebrates, providing an essential food supply for growing chicks. The Scheme as Submitted access track design transected a northerly area of the reserve. In considering the proposed access track alignment RSPB raised a concern to the Applicant that the proposed access track would adversely impact on sensitive habitats ('wet

[1] Forestry and Land Scotland (2021) *North Region Glen Affric Land Management Plan* [Online]. Available at: https://forestryandland.gov.scot/media/xw5gfizf/glen-affric-lmp-full-text-170221.pdf

flushes') within the Corrimony RSPB Reserve. As this habitat is a key element of the reserve, minimising impact was requested in order to best support biodiversity and the healthy population of species including Black Grouse and Rannoch Brindled Beauty moth.

Applicant Response

2.7.2 To address RSPB's concerns regarding the potential for impact on sensitive habitats within the Corrimony RSPB reserve, the alignment and design of the Scheme as Submitted access track has been updated. The updated design has significantly less intersection with 'wet flushes' than the Scheme as Submitted. The access track alignment that forms part of the Revised Scheme has been deemed the most suitable alternative option following consideration of RSPB's concerns alongside wider constraints, including avoiding impacts on nearby AWI listed areas. It is also hoped that the revised design would be preferable to SEPA by representing a reduced impact on groundwater dependant terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTEs). The revised design is presented in **Appendix E Figures**, **Figure 8-2.**

3. APPRAISAL OF DESIGN UPDATES

3.1 Background

3.1.1 The main design updates to the Bingally Substation Application (reference 25/00592/FUL) comprised changes to substation area and access track, as described in the sections below.

3.1.2 **Appendix E Figures, Figure 1** presents the design submitted as part of the planning application overlayed with the revised design.

Substation Area

3.1.3 At the substation, changes to the design include minor changes to the substation platform and earthworks, peat cells, alterations to part of the access track, reconfiguration of temporary laydown and compound areas, alterations to drainage and landscaping proposals.

3.1.4 The design updates reduce the Revised Scheme footprint for the temporary and permanent layouts at the substation area by approximately 50%, avoiding areas of deepest peat and providing a solution to peat reuse on site. This figure excludes volumes associated with the OHL and main access track.

Access Track

3.1.5 The access track design and alignment has been updated where it intersects with the Corrimony RSPB reserve. This addresses concerns raised by RSPB in relation to potential impacts on habitats in the reserve and reduces disturbance to watercourses, including the introduction of eight bridges instead of culverts. The locations of these are shown on Drawing the Proposed Watercourse Crossing Realignment Location Plan (Drawing reference BING-LT521-SEBAM-DRAI-EXT-D-C-0584 Rev P04).

Ancillary Design Changes

3.1.6 Further design updates have been made to the Scheme as Submitted including amendments to the northern compound including to facilitate a new one-way traffic system, the bellmouth layout and other minor alignment amendments to the access track. These design updates are driven by the design development process.

3.1.7 The use of three existing borrow pits (borrow pits 1, 2 and 4) and one new borrow pit (borrow pit 3) on site will reduce the amount of offsite material required for the platform and other infrastructure. Restoration proposals for the borrow pits are included within the LHMP.

3.1.8 The following figures in the existing EA have been updated to reflect the design updates (refer to **Appendix E Figures**):

- Figure 3-2 Permanent Site Layout;
- Figure 3-3 Construction Elements of the Proposed Development;
- Figure 8-2 Ancient and Native Woodland and Peatlands;
- Figure 8-5 Mammal and Other Notable Species Survey Results;
- Figure 12-2 Peat; and
- Figure 13-3 Predicted Construction Noise Levels.

3.2 Approach to Design Updates

3.2.1 The Applicant voluntarily submitted the EA as a matter of good practice to support their planning application. The EA evaluated whether any specific environmental effects are likely to occur resulting from the Scheme as Submitted and identified mitigation recommended to

avoid or minimise associated environmental effects during construction. **Table 3-1** presents a review of the EA, in the context of the most recent design iteration (that which was submitted as part of the planning application). Specifically, this reviews the revised design against:

- Previously identified environmental effects;
- New or reduced environmental effects as a result of the design updates;
- Alterations to the conclusions of the original topic assessments in the EA; and
- Altered / new mitigation as a result of the design changes.

Limitations

3.2.2 This review of the EA in the context of the revised design constitutes a desk top review. Previous survey data gathered for the existing EA report has been considered where relevant. Further bat survey data has been collected and peat probing has been undertaken along a section of the realigned proposed access track within the Corrimony Reserve. A ground level tree assessment for potential bat roost features, and aerial inspection to categorise the suitability of the features was undertaken. In the case that aerial inspection was not possible or a feature could not be fully inspected, an emergence survey was undertaken.

3.2.3 Peat probing was undertaken in a general 25m x 25m grid to cover a small section of the realigned access track where suitable probing was missing. The findings of the additional peat probing is discussed in the updated PMP (refer to **Appendix F**).

3.2.4 This Report assumes that where new mitigation is proposed, this will be captured in the Principal Contractor's Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) in advance of construction.

3.2.5 **Table 3-1** below assesses if the revised design as outlined in **Section 3.**

Table 3-1 Appraisal of Design Updates

Environmental Topic	Environmental Effects (Existing EA)	New Environmental Effects (Revised Design)	Alterations to the conclusions of the existing EA	New / altered mitigation proposed
Landscape Character and Visual Impact	**Landscape Effects** • Landscape Designations: Glen Affric National Scenic Area (NSA), Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch Special Landscape Area (SLA) and the Central Highlands Wild Land Area (WLA) are located within the Study Area. With implementation of the secondary mitigation measures outlined in the LHMP the significance of the effect of the construction and operation of the Scheme as Submitted to these designations are Neutral to Minor Adverse. • Landscape Character Types (LCT): There are four LCTs found within the Study Area. With implementation of the secondary mitigation measures outlined in the LHMP the significance of the effect of construction of the Proposed Development to the landscape character is **Negligible** to **Minor Adverse**. The significance of the effect on operation of the Scheme as Submitted to the Landscape Character following the mitigation measures outlined in the LHMP is **Neutral** to **Minor Adverse**.	**Landscape Effects** • There will be no additional changes to the magnitude of effects identified on the Glen Affric NSA, Strathconon, Monar and Mullardoch SLA and Central Highlands WLA as a result of the design updates. • There will be no additional changes to the magnitude of effects identified on the four LCTs found within the Study Area. • A**ppendix G LHMP** has been updated to reflect the Revised Scheme design. **Visual Effects** • There will be no significant changes to the visual amenity in relevant viewpoints within the Study Area due to the landscape mitigation proposals maintaining a similar level of screening. The magnitude and significance of construction and operational effects will be similar to that of the design of the Scheme as Submitted. • **Appendix H Visualisations** has been updated to reflect the updated landscaping plan within the LHMP.	There would be no change to the EA.	**Appendix G LHMP** has been updated to reflect the Revised Scheme design, including: • Amendments to the peatland restoration around the proposed substation platform. • Peat re-use within peat-cells. • Additional heathland restoration along the re-aligned proposed access track and proposed substation platform earthworks. • Alteration of proposed woodland planting around new proposed temporary settlement lagoons. • Alteration of proposed heathland restoration to woodland planting along temporary compound (north). • Alteration of proposed woodland planting along central section of proposed access track to retain existing baseline habitat • Restoration proposals within the borrow pits.

Environmental Topic	Environmental Effects (Existing EA)	New Environmental Effects (Revised Design)	Alterations to the conclusions of the existing EA	New / altered mitigation proposed
	Visual Effects • Operational effects: Nine Viewpoints have been identified to represent the visual receptors within the Study Area. Viewpoints 5, 7a/b and 9 are likely to have a Moderate to Major Adverse effect on visual receptors during construction of the Scheme as Submitted. The effect of the operation of the Scheme as Submitted on the remaining viewpoints is Neutral to Minor Adverse. • Construction Effects: After one year of operation of the Scheme as Submitted, Viewpoint 7a/b is expected to have **Moderate Adverse** effect on the landscape. Following screening by topography and woodland, the remaining Viewpoints would have a **Neutral** to **Minor Adverse** effect. After 15 years of operation of the Scheme as Submitted, the proposed mitigation outlined in the LHMP would have established therefore the significance of the effect of the Scheme as Submitted on visual receptors is **Neutral** to **Minor Adverse** at all viewpoints.			
Ecology	**Ancient Woodland** No AWI woodland is present within the substation area of the Site. The majority of the AWI woodland within the Site (in the extreme north) is now	**Ancient woodland** The total area of land listed as AWI woodland is 3.38 hectares (ha), which includes: wet heath; Other coniferous (plantation) woodland (mature and	There would be no change to the existing EA effects for habitats or protected and notable species.	The peat within cells must be maintained under a suitable hydrological regime so that the peat will remain an active (i.e. peat-forming) functioning habitat (as described in **Appendix F PMP**).

Environmental Topic	Environmental Effects (Existing EA)	New Environmental Effects (Revised Design)	Alterations to the conclusions of the existing EA	New / altered mitigation proposed
	clearly not a natural woodland, however, parcels of natural birchwood are present. Lost ASNW is not fully replaceable, owing to its antiquity. Considering the extremely small area of AWI lost and that it would be partially mitigated by the proposed planting, there will be a **Negligible Effect** on Ancient and native woodland from the Scheme as Submitted during the construction phases and this is **Not Significant**. No notable woodlands are present within the substation area of the Site. The Scheme as Submitted would lead to the permanent loss of notable woodlands (other woodland types and scrub) without compensation measures. However, this would be mitigated by the proposed planting, so the loss of notable woodlands is considered to be **Negligible effect** and therefore is **Not Significant**. **Habitats** The Scheme as Submitted includes a large swathe of Peatland restoration within the Site that will seek to restore the hydrological condition of Degraded bog within the Site that will more than off-set the loss of the overall Blanket bog resource in a regional context. Considering the compensatory measures to restore Blanket bog, the residual effects of	felled); Dense scrub; Other broadleaved woodland; Other mixed woodland; Bracken; Upland birchwood; and, the existing access track. The land is categorised as 2a, woodland which was present and of semi-natural origin during 1860 and has been continuously wooded to the present day. Areas categorised as 2a could be planted with non-native species, however these are still considered to be ancient woodland due to longevity of woodland on the land, and are referred to as PAWS. As a conservative approach, all baseline habitats within the area listed as PAWS are considered to be irreplaceable habitat, even those that do not currently possess trees, such as Bracken habitats (as the precise date these were felled cannot be known with certainty and may still be able to regenerate into woodland). This is with the exception of the existing track that is hardstanding and not wooded / not a natural habitat (an area of 0.62 ha) – this is not classified as semi-natural ancient woodland. Further details are provided in **Appendix D**. Lost ancient woodland is not fully replaceable, owing to its antiquity, and therefore will be compensated as an irreplaceable habitat. However, the majority of the small area of ancient woodland to be lost is PAWS, on land which is heavily disturbed by long-standing use of the land as a commercial	The revised design will result in 3.29 ha of lost of AWI-listed woodland, of which, 2.67 ha is considered to be PAWS (category 2a), the remaining 0.62 is existing hardstanding / access track and is not considered to be ASNW. There would be no change to the existing EA on the amount of ASNW (0.25 ha). This area of woodland was identified in the EA as the only true area of ASNW (as it is the only woodland within the area listed as AWI that appears to be continuously wooded and is also natural in character). This 0.25 ha of land is part of the land area assessed within the greater 3.29 ha of AWI-listed land that the Proposed Development falls within. See **Appendix D** for details.	Mitigation (as outlined in **Appendix A**) is required to compensate for the loss of potential bat roosts as a result of the Revised Scheme and would be captured in a bat Species Protection Plan. Woodland removed for the Revised Scheme would be compensated as detailed in the Compensatory Planting Strategy.

Environmental Topic	Environmental Effects (Existing EA)	New Environmental Effects (Revised Design)	Alterations to the conclusions of the existing EA	New / altered mitigation proposed
	loss of Blanket bog and Degraded bog are considered to be a **Permanent Minor Positive Effect** and therefore is **Not Significant.** There will be a **Negligible Effect** on Blanket bog and Degraded bog from the Scheme as Submitted during the construction phases and this is **Not Significant**. Losses to other notable habitats (including groundwater dependant terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE)) are considered a **Permanent Adverse effect** of Local Significance, which is **Not Significant.** Direct losses to other notable flora would constitute a **Negligible effect**, which is **Not Significant.** Two small watercourses are present within the substation area of the Site. Notable river habitat within the Site comprises tributaries to notable watercourses of the Beauly catchment. There will be no direct loss of river habitat, except for a tiny fraction of minor watercourses as a result of the creation of watercourse crossings in eleven highly localised areas. Therefore, there is an extremely low impact, and the effect is **Negligible** and **Not significant**.	forestry crop. Therefore, there is expected to be a **Negligible Effect** on ancient woodland and native woodland overall from the Revised Scheme during the construction phases and this is **Not Significant.** Although no significant impacts are identified, in line with SSEN's commitments, compensation will be provided at appropriate level with respect to the loss of an area listed on the AWI. Further details are provided in the updated BNG assessment report. **Habitats** • The footprint of the Revised Scheme has changed from design submitted as part of the planning application, most notably at the proposed substation platform, a re-alignment of the proposed access track and the inclusion of four borrow pits. The reduction of size of the proposed substation works would lead to reduced impacts on peatland, as a smaller overall area would be disturbed. The other changes are relatively minor. The updated BNG report will provide details on the areas of blanket bog, permanently and temporarily affected and will detail that offsite compensation will be sought for this. • Removal of the Temporary Areas 1-4 / borrow pit reduces the area of Degraded bog (non-irreplaceable)		

	Protected and Notable Species There will be a **Negligible** effect on roosting bats, otter *Lutra lutra*, water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, red squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*, pine marten *Martes martes*, badger *Meles meles*, aquatic invertebrates, from the Scheme as Submitted during the construction phase and this is Not Significant. There will likely be a **Permanent Negligible Positive Effect** on terrestrial invertebrates. If no special mitigation is employed, a **Temporary Minor Adverse Effect of Local Significance** on adder *Vipera berus* (and Site Significance for other widespread reptiles) is predicted due to the potential for mortality or injury to individuals, where reptile refugia could be damaged or destroyed by works. Following the employment of successful mitigation measures a **Temporary Negligible** effect on reptiles including adder is predicted, which is **Not Significant**. With specific mitigation in place and adhered to, all construction and operational phase impacts that are not already Negligible would become Negligible, and therefore all effects would be **Not Significant.**	impacted by footprint of the Revised Scheme. • Proposed cell-like peat storage solution largely sited on Poor condition wet heath which has been previously disturbed by commercial plantation forestry. • Change in the size and position of welfare and compound areas reduces the area of Degraded bog impacted by footprint of the Revised Scheme, instead direct impacts on heathlands (in Poor and Good condition) are expected – these are non-irreplaceable capable of being restored to Moderate condition. • Two of the proposed temporary settlement lagoons (west and southwest) are to be sited in non-replaceable habitat (Modified bog in Poor condition) that can be suitably restored. The temporary settlement lagoon to the north is sited in and upslope of GWDTE (National Vegetation Classification (NVC) types = M6c and M25a), therefore direct impacts are expected to these potential GWDTE. However, these types (and in this situation associated with surface water) are not considered likely to be highly dependent on groundwater to maintain their condition and are unlikely to be GWDTE. Overall, the area of potential GWDTE is small and the impacts would be temporary, as habitat restoration would be implemented during construction.		

		Protected and Notable Species • There would likely be no change to the conclusions made for the design submitted as part of the planning application as a result of the design updates. There is potential for a minor improvement for foraging animals and semi-aquatic mammals. • The removal of the proposed access track to the south of the proposed substation platform would reduce some of the risk to semi-aquatic mammals (otter and water vole), as it would result in the need for one less water crossing. • The reduced footprint could lead to an improvement for foraging mammals (such as pine marten) with reduced area of disturbance over the construction period. **Bat survey data** In response to THC's holding objection on the application due to incomplete survey information on bat presence / absence, further work was undertaken and is presented in a Bat Technical Note (refer to **Appendix A**). The location of the proposed access track has been re-aligned away from the area subject of the holding objection. The re-aligned section of access track has been surveyed for PRFs by AECOM and HED, as outlined in **Appendix A**. The surveys identified Trees with potential to support roosting bats that would be impacted by the revised Scheme: five were classified as PRF-M and 10 as PRF-I trees. No bat roosts		

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		were confirmed during the surveys. The following species were confirmed as present in the area: common pipistrelle; soprano pipistrelle; and brown long-eared bats. Although there is an increase in the magnitude of effect (i.e. increased number of roosts lost compared to the EA), the mitigation and compensation proposed below is sufficient to ensure there will be a **Temporary Adverse effect of no more than Site importance** from the direct loss of or damage to bat roost sites (a slight increase from the assessment in the EA but which is still **not significant**). **Watercourses** In response to SEPA's objection regarding potential significant impacts on watercourses, the revised design reduces the risk of impacts to sensitive ecological features (as a shorter length of watercourse would be impacted by culverting). The impacts on linear habitats following the revised design, are outlined in **Appendix I BNG report.** Biodiversity gains will be made through habitat creation/enhancement including wet woodland areas to be created alongside watercourses. Secondary benefits are also anticipated in the reduction of silt pollution risk, which in turn reduces potential impacts on notable semi-aquatic mammals and aquatic invertebrates.		

Environmental Topic	Environmental Effects (Existing EA)	New Environmental Effects (Revised Design)	Alterations to the conclusions of the existing EA	New / altered mitigation proposed
Ornithology	Temporary disturbance of black grouse *Tetrao tetrix* leks during construction is taken as an effect of Medium magnitude, which in combination with the Medium (Regional) importance ('sensitivity') assigned to black grouse, results in an effect of **Moderate significance**. To ameliorate non-negligible effects, specific mitigation will be implemented and therefore all effects would be **Not Significant**. The Corrimony RSPB Reserve (High sensitivity - National importance) is not within (or within close proximity to) the proposed substation area of the Site. The proposed substation works are well over 1 km from known black grouse leks. It will be necessary to adhere to standard nesting bird mitigation in order to comply with protection of all wild bird nests under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).	The reduced area of works could potentially reduce the risk of direct impacts to ground nesting birds (such as meadow pipit *Anthus pratensis*) a common and widespread breeding bird. The revised design has changed the potential disturbance zone for the Revised Scheme for black grouse, with an overall decrease in potential area of disturbance. The re-design of the access track through RSPB Corrimony Nature Reserve reduces potential impacts on habitats important to black grouse. Grasslands referred to by the RSPB as 'wet flushes' (associated with watercourses) are likely to be an important resource for feeding black grouse chicks (as confirmed by the RSPB in consultation). The addition of temporary settlement lagoons (north, west and southwest) potentially elevates the risk to breeding red kite *Milvus milvus* that could potentially breed in the woodlands to the west of the Site. However, the increased level of risk is negligible, as the additional construction of the three temporary lagoons is small in area and temporary in nature. Regardless, red kite breeding has not been confirmed by desk / field studies within a distance from the updated design that would cause an issue. The only record of red kite (a	There would likely be **no change** to the conclusions made for the design submitted as part of the planning application as a result of the revised design.	No new mitigation proposed.

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		breeding attempt) is over 2 km from the proposed substation area.		
Cultural Heritage	Known heritage assets within the Site boundary There is a single non-designated asset within the Site. This is an area of field clearance cairns (MHG63345) in the area of a section of proposed access track that requires upgrading. The field clearance cairns represent a type of asset that is common throughout the upland areas of Scotland, with a number recorded in the Study Area as well as the wider landscape. While they have some archaeological and historical significance linked to the information they could provide on land use and settlement, they are considered to be of **Low Value** (Sensitivity). It is recommended that a phased approach to mitigation is developed, with initial survey in this area to confirm the location of the clearance cairns and their positioning in relation to the final track design. This might be followed by excavation or archaeological monitoring if any part of the cairns are to be disturbed during track construction. With mitigation in place the residual significance of effect would remain **Negligible**.	Known heritage assets within the Site boundary There will be no change to the effect on heritage assets and their setting, as there are no previously recorded heritage assets within the proposed substation platform area of the Revised Scheme design. The reduced disturbance area for the design updates would still impact a single, previously recorded, non-designated asset. This is an area of field clearance cairns (MHG63345) in the area of a section of proposed access track that requires upgrading. The scope of works in the area of this asset has not changed. Therefore, there is no change from the existing EA conclusions.	There is **no change** to the heritage conclusions made from the existing EA.	No new mitigation proposed.

	Previously unrecorded heritage assets The area of highest potential for previously unrecorded assets to survive is between approximately NGR NH 34626 30528 in the northeast to NH 32703 28969 in the southwest, where the landscape has not been subject to commercial forestry operations or other recent disturbance. This potential is, however, considered to be **low** and it is assumed any previously unrecorded assets will be of local significance and therefore of **Low Value** (Sensitivity). Works would have the potential to fully remove any previously unrecorded assets if micro-siting was not possible, which would be considered a **High Magnitude of Change.** On an asset of **Low Value** (Sensitivity), this would result in a **Moderate Effect**. It is recommended that a phased approach to mitigation is developed, with a detailed walkover of the final access track alignment undertaken prior to construction commencing, to record any previously unrecorded heritage assets. This may be followed by other archaeological mitigation works including survey, excavation, recording, and / or archaeological monitoring, as well as the temporary fencing of assets to avoid accidental damage, should any assets be identified. With this mitigation in place, any resultant **Moderate Effect** on any previously unrecorded assets that might exist			

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	would be expected to be reduced to a **Minor Effect**.			
Traffic and Transport	It is forecast that there will be residual significant effects across the following categories: • Severance of Communities (Direct, Temporary, moderate adverse); • Non-motorised User Amenity and Delay (Direct, Temporary, moderate adverse); and • Road Vehicle Driver and Passenger Delay (Direct, Temporary, moderate adverse). It should be noted that these effects, while significant, would be temporary and short term.	It is assumed that there will be no change to the construction traffic forecast assessed in the EA. The EA assessed a construction traffic forecast which is considered to be a worst-case scenario. There are therefore no new environmental effects for Traffic and Transport as a result of the design updates.	There would likely be **no change** to the conclusions made for the design submitted as part of the planning application as a result of the design updates.	No new mitigation proposed.
Hydrology and Hydrogeology	**Effects on Groundwater** Groundwater Levels and Flow: Changes to groundwater levels and flow are predicted to have a minor (not significant) effect. This is primarily due to the relatively small footprint of the proposed foundations in comparison to the extensive size of the underlying aquifers. Accidental Spillages and Contaminated Runoff: The risk of impact from accidental spillages or contaminated surface runoff is considered to be minor (not significant), based on standard mitigation measures and the limited scale of potential contamination.	**Effects on Groundwater** The updates to the temporary drainage arrangement would provide additional treatment of runoff from the construction site. Rather than increasing the risk to the water environment, these measures would help to reduce the potential for groundwater contamination. **PWS** The design updates would not result in a change in effect on PWS as reported in the EA. **Surface Water** There will now be less works around the tributary to Allt Ball a'Chadaich and	There would likely be no change to the conclusions made for the design submitted as part of the planning application as a result of the revised design for the following: • Effects on Groundwater; • PWS • Surface water: The addition of new temporary Settlement Lagoons will allow for the treatment water runoff and therefore help to reduce impacts to the wider water environment.	No new mitigation proposed.

	Private Water Supplies (PWS) Accidental Spillages and Contaminated Runoff: The potential for contamination affecting nearby PWS has been assessed as **minor** (**not significant**), given the distance from the works and the implementation of appropriate controls such as monitoring. **Surface Water** Contaminated Runoff: With the implementation of standard mitigation measures as outlined in the CEMP and water quality monitoring, all of the surface water bodies are predicted to experience negligible or minor effects. Accidental Spillages: With the implementation of standard mitigation measures as outlined in the CEMP and water quality monitoring, all of the surface water bodies are predicted to experience negligible or minor effects. **Hydromorphology** Outfalls: the installation of the outfalls onto Allt a' Bhuachaillie (labelled at F9 in the EA) and the unnamed watercourse (labelled at F10 in the EA) was negligible. Culverts and Crossings: crossings are predicted to have a negligible effect to the hydromorphology from changes the sediment transport process. Re-alignment of Tributary of Allt an Rathain: negligible effect is predicted	catchment, eliminating potential contamination risk. The peat storage area to the east is 40 m from the tributary of Allt an Rathain. There may be a risk of peaty runoff from the storage area to the watercourse. However, with standard and embedded mitigation in place this risk would be mitigated. The updates to the temporary drainage arrangement would provide additional treatment of runoff from the construction site. Rather than increasing the risk to the water environment, these measures would help to reduce the potential for contamination in surface waterbodies. **Hydromorphology** The design updates around the proposed substation platform area removed the need to re-align Tributary of Allt an Rathain, thus removing the risk to the hydromorphology of the watercourse. The update to clear span bridges along the access track instead of culverts will minimise disturbance to the riverbed and banks[2]. This significantly reduces the risk of sediment build-up and, consequently, the potential impact on the water environment compared to the Scheme as Submitted design.	• Hydromorphology: – The proposed permanent access track to the south of the substation has now been removed from the design. Therefore, the re-alignment of the Tributary of Allt an Rathain has also been removed. Therefore, there is no longer any impact to the hydromorphology of tributary of Allt an Rathain as a result of re-alignment. – There would be no change in the impact on hydromorphology from the new bridge crossings. However, it should be noted that the use of clear-span bridges represents an improvement in design compared to the previous crossing structures. – For all other hydromorphological impacts there would likely be no change.	

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	to Allt an Rathain as a result of the re-alignment. Filling in of Allt Bailen a h-Aibhne, results in negligible effect.			
Geology, Soils and Peat	**Peat** As noted in the existing EA Sections 12.5.5 to 12.5.10, peat is recorded within the Site. According to the 2016 Carbon and Peatland Map this ranges from Class 5 peat soils (which is the predominant type where peat is recorded) to Class 1 Nationally Important peat soils. Peat probing across the Site typically indicated peat deposits <1.0m in thickness, although pockets and channels of deep peat (>1.0m in thickness) were identified. The effects on the peat could result in the following: • Disturbance and loss of deposits of peat; • Structural deterioration of the peat during excavation, soil handling, storage and replacement; and • Ground instability in the form of a peat landslide. • Considering the mitigation embedded / proposed, the effect on the peat is considered to be minor adverse and not significant.	**Peat** The design updates would result in no change to the overall effect on peat, as peat would still be disturbed, however there will be a reduction in the volume of peat that is proposed to be disturbed by approximately 50 per cent in the proposed substation platform area. Other changes to the effects on peat include: The temporary platform compounds now avoid a pocket of deeper peat deposits. The access track south of the proposed substation platform would no longer be disturbed, thus reducing effects on the peat in this area. Use of borrow pits for site won material has the potential to effect peat deposits. However, two of the borrow pits along the proposed access track are also understood to be existing, with these proposed to be reopened for the Revised Scheme. Opening of existing borrow pits should reduce the disturbance on peat deposits, although disturbance would still be anticipated as these will likely be expanded.	**Peat** Based on the revised design, there is a reduction in the total volume of peat disturbed with all peat excavated proven to be reused / reinstated within the Site. There may be an increase in the peat instability given the potential of blasting local to the borrow pits and eastern peat cell. Considering the mitigation embedded / proposed, the revised design is unlikely to alter the findings and conclusions of the EA. **Soil** Based on the revised design, the reduction in excavation of soil in general is expected to reduce the already limited impact on soil (excluding peat) receptors. From a soils (excluding peat) perspective, the revised design is unlikely to alter the findings and conclusions of the EA.	**Peat** The Peat Management Plan (PMP) (**Appendix F**) and PLHRA (**Appendix J)** have been amended to take account of the revised design. Any new / altered mitigation related to these aspects is presented in these documents and taken forward for the Revised Scheme. **Soil** No new mitigation proposed. **Geology** No new mitigation proposed. **Land Contamination** No new mitigation proposed.

[2] Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). (2010) WAT-SG-25: Engineering in the Water Environment – Good Practice Guide: River Crossings (Second edition, November 2010). Stirling: SEPA. Available at: https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/151036/wat-sg-25.pdf (Accessed: 19 September 2025).

Environmental Topic	Environmental Effects (Existing EA)	New Environmental Effects (Revised Design)	Alterations to the conclusions of the existing EA	New / altered mitigation proposed
	Geology, Soils and Land Contamination • Over compaction of soils cause by the use of heavy machinery on site; • Structural deterioration of soil materials during excavation, soil handling, storage and replacement; • Erosion and loss of soils during soil handling, storage and replacement; • Leakages from fuel and chemical storage areas in the Site; • Ground disturbance as a result of heavy machinery and traffic on site; • Ground instability; and • Inhalation of dust and dermal contact with soils of workers and the public. All effects listed above result in a **negligible** residual impact and are **not significant**. Based on review of *Bingally 400 kV substation and Access Track, Geotechnical and Geo-environmental Desk Study, Project No. 60701792-R-001* (AECOM 2024), potential sources of contamination within the investigation area are considered limited and predominantly related to Made Ground associated with both	Blasting could cause a trigger factor which may induce peat instability in the locale of the blasting areas. The updated Peat Hazard Landslide Risk Assessment (PLHRA) (refer to **Appendix J**) assessed the effect of blasting in further detail. **Geology and Soils** The impacts to natural superficial deposits which comprise Peat (covered above) and Glacial Till (Till Devensian-Diamicton) is expected to be reduced due to the revised and reduced construction footprint of both temporary and permanent work areas. **Contaminated Land** The design updates are not expected to have a significant impact on the contamination risk as outlined in the existing EA, and no additional assessment is considered to be required.	**Geology** The design updates and impact to the local geology as outlined in the EA is not expected to be a limiting factor of environmental significance and no additional assessment is considered to be required. **Land Contamination** No alterations to the conclusions of the EA.	

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	onsite and offsite infrastructure that was identified during desktop review. The 2024 ground investigation (proposed substation area only) did not encounter significant Made Ground on site, with only isolated areas of re-worked natural material encountered. If contamination sources are identified, potential receptors include human health, the water environment and the built environment. Both construction and proposed post development land-use further reduces potential impacts to off-site human health and environmental receptors by severing pathways. Additionally, the Site has no past construction history which supports the assessment that contamination sources are unlikely. The contamination risk to the water environment is considered low, due to expected lack of significant sources of contamination on-site. None of the surface water features are located in the area of the proposed substation. With appropriate mitigation measures, including temporary and permanent surface water management during and post construction proposed, the risk to the surface water features from a contaminated land perspective is low. The SEPA objection related to			

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	impacts to the water environment is related to increased run-off and is discussed in the Hydrology and Hydrogeology section above. Finally, potential ground gas could be generated from the infilled quarry (on-site) and peat deposits (on-site/off-site), with pathways to human health receptors via inhalation, migration / build-up of ground gas / explosive risk, respectively. However, the risk rating is low as the recent ground investigation records generally low concentrations of ground gas, with generally low flows.			
Noise and Vibration	Considering the distances to sensitive receptors (see Table 15-11 of the EA) and / or the nature of the planned construction activities adverse vibration impacts for buildings or people are unlikely to occur. Following the additional information received it is understood blasting may be required at the four borrow pits and substation platform. The EA (see Table 15-15) provided Predicted Access Track traffic noise levels at receptors during the Peak Month for construction traffic flows and it was discussed that magnitude of impact in the day-time and evening period is Very Low which for high-	The EA did not highlight any risks in regard to groundborne vibration to potential blasting requirements at the four borrow pit locations as this was not a consideration at the time. The use of blasting introduces a new potential cause of vibration at the residential receptors which has been considered as part of this Additional Information Report. Initial calculations indicate that it is feasible to undertake blasting within the borrow pits and platform area without causing significant adverse vibration effects at the closest residential receptors. The contractor will control the blasting vibration to adhere to the limits set out in BS 6472-2:2008. Predictions also comply with the BS	**Construction Vibration** No alterations to the conclusions of the EA. **Construction Traffic using the Access Road** No alterations to the conclusions of the EA.	In the event that higher vibration levels are expected to exceed the guidance set out in BS 6472-2:2008 at the closest residential receptors, for example due to an increase in the Maximum Instantaneous Charge Weight (MIC, Kg) needed for the blasting or variations in underlying geology, the contractor will discuss a suitable schedule and Blasting Plan with the local authority. No new mitigation proposed.

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	sensitivity receptors is a Negligible effect which is Not Significant. Following the additional information received it is understood works will require additional trips between the proposed substation platform and the four borrow pits on the proposed access track for a range of tasks.	5228-2 limit of 15 mm/s for transient vibration sources and remain below the widely accepted residential receptor threshold of 6–12 mm/s commonly applied by quarries. The borrow pits create a requirement for additional vehicle flows on the proposed access track within the Revised Scheme Site. The increase in HGV movements introduces the potential for increased construction traffic noise at the residential receptors which has been considered as part of this Additional Information Report. With reference to the EA, predicted noise levels from vehicle movements on the proposed access track were based on peak-month traffic flows associated with the Revised Scheme. This was 604 daily vehicle movements, of which 226 were HGVs, distributed evenly over the day and evening periods. Using the sound propagation calculation methodology that is defined within BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014 and model configuration outlined in Appendix O of the EA (Section 1.2, Construction Phase), the predictions have been updated by adding 345 additional movements (the highest average daily flow month - July 2027) to the 226 and assuming these are all HGV vehicles movements.		

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		Access track vehicle flow noise levels were predicted for a 12-hour daytime and a 4-hour evening period, based on vehicle speeds of 10 km/h along the access track. As specified in the EA chapter, the construction traffic noise limits were set to Category A: 65 dB $L_{Aeq,12hr}$ for daytime and 55 dB $L_{Aeq,T}$ for evening. At the worst-affected receptor (NSR1) the existing EA predicted 50 dB $L_{Aeq,12hr}$ in the day and 46 dB $L_{Aeq,4hr}$ in evening. The revised assessment indicates 54 dB $L_{Aeq,12hr}$ during the daytime and 49 dB $L_{Aeq,4hr}$ during the evening and weekend. On this basis, in any period, the effects remain **Not Significant** at all NSRs.		
Climate Change	**GHG Assessment** When compared to a without-project baseline, the Scheme as Submitted will result in additional GHG emissions; however, it is important to consider its role within the wider UK and Scottish policy context aimed at decarbonising the electricity grid. This context is a key consideration when assessing its overall impact on the climate. The Scheme as Submitted will facilitate the continued expansion of renewable energy generation within the UK energy system by providing	**GHG Assessment** The design updates would result in reduced impacts on peatland, which would result in indirect carbon benefits. The design updates are anticipated to reduce the extent of peat excavation, may optimise earthworks, and could lower the volume of imported materials required. In the absence of detailed design information, the GHG implications of these changes have been considered qualitatively. Key elements that may contribute to reduced emissions include:	**GHG Assessment** In accordance with ISEP (formerly known as IEMA) guidance, despite indications that the design changes have the potential to reduce emissions compared with the design submitted as part of the planning application assessed in the EA, the outcome of the assessment remains **Minor Adverse** and **Not Significant**.	No new mitigation proposed.

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	the infrastructure necessary to increase the transmission of low-carbon electricity. This will contribute to the continued decarbonisation of the electricity grid, as renewable sources increasingly replace higher-carbon generation, and supports the UK Government's target of achieving a fossil-fuel-free electricity system by 2035. Embedded mitigation measures, such as the PMP, Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP) and other relevant controls, will ensure that appropriate measures are in place to limit GHG emissions. These measures are aligned with existing and emerging policy requirements and reflect best practice design standards for minimising GHG impacts. As set out in **Sections 14.7.6** and **14.7.12** of the EA, the Scheme as Submitted GHG impacts during construction and operation have been quantitatively assessed against relevant carbon budgets and net-zero targets. The Scheme as Submitted is consistent with UK and Scottish policies to decarbonise the electricity grid and achieve net zero by 2045 and 2050, respectively. Its GHG impacts are therefore considered to be fully in line with applicable policy requirements and good practice	• Peat storage cells which enable excavated peat to be stored and reused on-site, which would avoid off-site disposal emissions and could support the restoration of carbon sequestration potential. • Reduced development footprint **which** would reduce construction material requirements, resulting in lower associated embodied emissions from aggregate production and transport, and help to limit peat disturbance, which may lower emissions from peat decomposition. • Bridging of eight watercourses (replacing culverts in the Scheme as Submitted design) would help maintain natural hydrological connectivity, reducing long-term peat drainage and associated carbon losses. This would help maintain peatland condition, lower the risk of deterioration over time, and preserve its carbon sink potential. Use of four borrow pits (for site-won material) would reduce the need for imported aggregates, thereby lower associated embodied carbon and transport emissions, as well as minimise construction traffic movements. While this may result in a small, localised increase in peat disturbance along sections of the proposed access track, the overall level of disturbance is still anticipated to be lower than in the	**CCRA** As no material changes to the identified climate risks were observed as a result of the design updates, the effects of climate change risk on the Revised Scheme are assessed as **Not Significant**. **ICCI Assessment** As no material changes to the identified climate risks in the surrounding environment were observed as a result of the design updates, the risk posed to sensitive surrounding receptors is assessed as **Not Significant**.	

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	design standards for projects of this nature. In accordance with ISEP[3] guidance (see **Section 14.3** of the EA), the emissions associated with the construction and operation of the Scheme as Submitted are assessed as **Minor Adverse** and **Not Significant**. A project with 'not significant' effects is considered consistent with the measures necessary to achieve the UK's and Scotland's trajectories towards net zero. Furthermore, the Applicant's commitment to the Science-Based Targets initiative (SBTi) provides a framework for managing minor residual GHG emissions and aligns with policy requirements, further supporting the project's contribution to the net-zero transition. The Applicant's Sustainability Strategy[4] also reinforces this alignment by setting clear goals to reduce the organisation's emissions in line with the 1.5°C target of the Paris Agreement[5]. This includes a commitment to engage with suppliers to adopt science-based targets (SBTs) by 2026, with an expectation	validated design submitted as part of the planning application. The updated PMP (refer to **Appendix F**) confirms the extent of peat disturbance and set out best-practice measures for handling, storage, and reinstatement. **CCRA and ICCI Assessment** The design updates are not anticipated to result in any material change to the findings of the CCRA or the ICCI Assessment. The updates do not introduce new climate-related risks, nor do they increase the severity of previously identified risks. In some cases, such as the bridging of watercourses and the introduction of peat storage cells, the updates are expected to provide a minor beneficial effect by improving hydrological connectivity and reducing ground disturbance, which supports the resilience of the Revised Scheme and the surrounding environment under future climate scenarios.		

[3] In July 2025, the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) was rebranded as the Institute of Sustainable and Environmental Professionals (ISEP).

[4] SSEN (2023) SSEN Distribution Sustainability Strategy. Available at: https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/documents/new-sustainability-documents-2024/strategies/ssen-transmission-sustainability-strategy-2024 [Accessed 11/11/2024]

5 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (2016) Paris Agreement UNFCC; Available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement [Accessed 18/10/2024]

Environmental Topic	Environmental Effects (Existing EA)	New Environmental Effects (Revised Design)	Alterations to the conclusions of the existing EA	New / altered mitigation proposed
	that 35% of suppliers will align with SBTs within this timeframe. Climate Change Resilience Assessment (CCRA) The CCRA identified 12 construction-related and 14 operational climate change risks for the Scheme as Submitted. For the construction phase, the majority of risks were initially rated as Medium, primarily associated with increased winter precipitation, extreme cold weather, and more frequent and severe storm events. These risks could result in damage to infrastructure or pose health and safety risks to personnel. Following the implementation of the embedded mitigation and adaptation measures outlined in **Volume 3, Appendix P: Climate Change Risk Assessment**, all construction-related residual risks have been reduced to Low, with no remaining Medium, High, or Extreme risks. For the operational phase, most risks were assessed as Low or Medium, with only one risk initially rated as High (injury or fatality during a wildfire event). Following the implementation of the embedded mitigation and adaptation measures outlined in Volume 3, Appendix P: Climate Change Risk Assessment — together with the application of health and safety plans — this risk was reduced to Medium. The final residual risk			

Environmental Topic	Environmental Effects (Existing EA)	New Environmental Effects (Revised Design)	Alterations to the conclusions of the existing EA	New / altered mitigation proposed
	profile comprises nine Low and five Medium risks, primarily associated with flooding from projected increases in winter precipitation, extreme cold weather, and more frequent and severe storm events. Overall, the assessment concluded that no significant residual climate change risks are anticipated for the Scheme as Submitted during either construction or operation, provided that all identified mitigation and adaptation measures are successfully implemented. The effects of climate change risk on the Scheme as Submitted are therefore assessed as **Not Significant**. In-Combination Climate Change Impacts (ICCI) Assessment An ICCI assessment was undertaken in accordance with the methodology set out in **Section 14.3** in the EA. The assessment considered the potential combined effects of the Scheme as Submitted and projected climate change on surrounding sensitive receptors. The assessment identified only **low** or **negligible** effects on receptors. On this basis, the risk posed by ICCIs is considered **Not Significant**, and no additional mitigation or enhancement measures are required beyond those already embedded in the design.			

4. SUMMARY

4.1.1 In summary, the Applicant submitted a planning application (THC reference 25/00592/FUL) seeking consent from THC for the Scheme as Submitted under the 1997 Act in February 2025. The planning application was supported by a voluntary EA amongst other supporting documents.

4.1.2 Objections to the application and requests for information were received from SEPA, THC and The Woodland Trust regarding amendments to watercourse crossings, peat reuse and avoidance, insufficient supporting information with regard to biodiversity enhancements and forestry, and concerns over ancient woodland. RSPB also raised concerns directly with the Applicant regarding the potential for the Scheme as Submitted to have an impact on sensitive habitats within the Corrimony RSPB reserve.

4.1.3 The Applicant has updated the design that was submitted as part of the planning application to address the objections and concerns raised.

4.1.4 This Additional Information Report presents supporting information from the Applicant to respond to the objections and concerns raised by THC, SEPA, The Woodland Trust and RSPB. It provides a comparison between the revised design and the design submitted with the planning application.

4.1.5 The appraisal of design updates within the context of the EA that supported the Scheme as Submitted are detailed in **Section 3** and are summarised as follows:

- Landscape Character and Visual Impact: There would be no change to the EA effects. The LHMP and Visualisations have been revised to reflect the design updates;
- Ecology: There would be no change to the EA for habitats, protected species and notable habitats and ASNW;
- Ornithology: There would be no change to the EA for Ornithology;
- Cultural Heritage: There would be no change to the EA for Heritage;
- Traffic and Transport: There would be no change to the EA for Traffic and Transport; and
- Hydrology and Hydrogeology: There would be no change to the EA for the effects of groundwater, PWS and surface water;
- Hydromorphology: There is no longer any impact to the hydromorphology of the tributary of Allt an Rathain as a result of the design updates.
- Geology, Soils and Peat: There would be no change to the EA for Geology, Soils and Peat;
- Noise and Vibration: There would be no change to the EA for Nosie and Vibration; and
- Climate Change: There would be no change to the EA for Climate Change.

4.1.6 While the design updates do not alter the conclusions of the EA, the updates are regarded as an overall improvement and effectively addresses the concerns raised by THC, SEPA and the Woodland Trust.

Appendix A Bat Technical Appendix

Appendix B Forestry Compensation Technical Note

Appendix C Compensatory Planting Strategy

Appendix D Ancient Woodland Inventory Note

Appendix E Figures

Appendix F Peat Management Plan

Appendix G Landscape Habitat Management Plan

Appendix H Visualisations

The following viewpoints have been updated for the Revised Scheme:

- Viewpoint 5
- Viewpoint 7 a/b; and
- Viewpoint 9.

Appendix I Biodiversity Net Gain Report

Appendix J Peat Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment