

Volume 5: Appendix 9.6 – Outline Landscape Mitigation Design Guide

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ABBREVIATIONS

OHL- Overhead Line

kV - kilo volt

LCT - Landscape Character Types

EIAR - Environmental Impact Assessment Report

BNG - Biodiversity Net Gain

How to use this document

1. Introduction and Overview

This document is divided into the below four sections. This structure allows readers to first gain understanding and context of the existing landscape in section 2, to then explore principles for its restoration and in some cases enhancement in section 3, followed by specific individual

tools for mitigation (section 4) that feed into the principles. Finally, section 5 focuses on the planting types that would be appropriate in each of the LCA's to support long-term landscape resilience and biodiversity.

2. Landscape Character Types

This section outlines the route of the Proposed Development, extending from Tealing in the south to Kintore in the north. It identifies the various Landscape Character Types (LCT) through which the Proposed Development will pass.

Each LCT is then explored in more detail on the following pages. The key characteristics of the LCT are explained, alongside a description of the area. The accompanying map details the section of the Proposed Development through the LCT, highlighting important areas along the route where mitigation and restoration would be recommended to preserve or repair the existing landscape character.

'Focus Areas' within each LCT have also been identified on the map. These are shown in more detail on the opposite page and have been selected to collectively represent the full range of general mitigation principles.

'Key affected areas' within each LCT identify the areas with the most impact from construction and potential for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on-site or nearby.



LCT Focus area plan example

3. Restoration Principles

Seven core landscape approach principles have been introduced in the pages following the Character Type descriptions. These principles include:

- Principle 1 – Fields/Farmland
- Principle 2 – Field Boundaries
- Principle 3 – Moorland Heath
- Principle 4 – Coniferous Woodland
- Principle 5 – Deciduous Woodland
- Principle 6 – Ditches, Watercourses, and Wetlands
- Principle 7 – Road Edges and Boundaries

These principles outline the recommended approaches for minimising the impact of the Proposed Development. They aim to ensure that disturbed landscape elements are appropriately restored—either to their original, pre-development condition or, where possible, to provide an improvement.

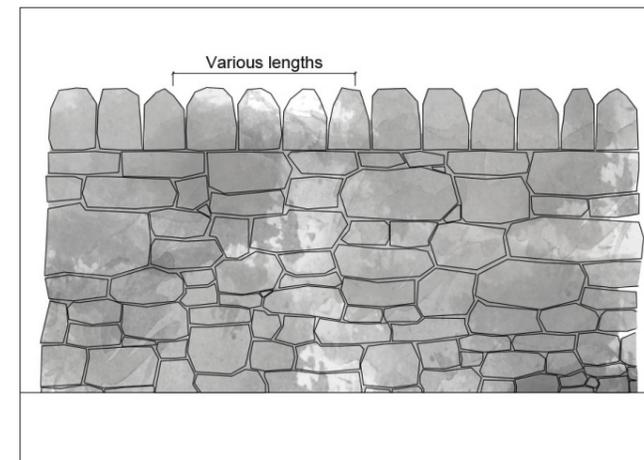
Landscaping beyond reinstatement of existing ground conditions is subject to landowners' agreement.



Example of Principle plan

4. Mitigation Tools

This section introduces the suite of 'mitigation tools' that form the building blocks of each principle. These tools comprise individual components that collectively support the implementation of effective mitigation and restoration.



Mitigation tool - dry stone wall example

5. Planting

Towards the end of this document, there are planting pages, these look to establish a plant palette for each of the Character Types. Some Character Types share the same palette of plants, the associated areas are identified and illustrated through accompanying maps on each page.



Tree planting icon - planting palette

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1. Introduction and Overview

Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL

Outline Landscape Mitigation

This Outline Landscape Mitigation Design Guide sets out methods of best practice alongside aspirational approaches that would guide the restoration of landscape features within the Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL Overhead Line (OHL) (*‘the Proposed Development’*).

This Appendix should be read in conjunction with the following:

Volume 2, Chapter 9: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Volume 1, Chapter 3: Project Description of the EIA for full details of the Proposed Development. This appendix should also be read in conjunction with Volume 2, Chapter 8: Forestry, Chapter 11: Ecology and Chapter 17: Schedule of Mitigation and Volume 5 Appendix 3.3: Outline Site Restoration Plan and Appendix 11.5 Outline Biodiversity Enhancement Plan.

Potential landscape mitigation and restoration proposals apply to the Operational Corridor (OC) of the Proposed Development—generally described as 90 metres in width (45 metres to either side of the OHL centreline), although the actual width may vary along the route depending on site-specific requirements—and to areas temporarily disturbed during construction. The construction of the OHL will look to minimise disruption within the OC and will focus on retaining as much of the existing native woodlands and scrub habitats as possible through soft / sensitive felling techniques.

The corridor represents the area for which SSEN would seek wayleaves for the construction of towers and the installation of overhead lines. The Operational Corridor would therefore be the main focus for landscape restoration in addition to any areas disturbed temporarily to carry out the construction of the OHL, for example, temporary access track, and working areas.

In line with the Outline Site Restoration Plan for the development the nature of the restoration can be separated into the following areas:

- the restoration of landform to reflect the adjacent areas, accommodate new permanent features and minimise the visual appearance of these features where possible;

- the restoration and, where possible, enhancement of pre-construction habitat types with the aim of achieving a net gain for biodiversity; and
- across all disturbed areas, the restoration of vegetation types reflective of existing conditions and avoidance of unstable bare ground where erosion could occur.

This design guide provides a high level framework to support sensitive and appropriate treatment and restoration of landscape features within the operational corridor that may be affected by the construction and operational requirements of the Proposed Development. A full list of the mitigation measures and environmental management commitments for the project can be found within the ‘Volume 2, Chapter 17 : Schedule of Mitigation’ of the EIA.

The restoration of landscape areas and habitats would be considered through four phases as follows:

- pre-construction phase;
- construction phase;
- post-construction reinstatement phase; and
- post-reinstatement monitoring

Refer to the Outline Site Restoration Plan for more details.

This is guided by consideration of landscape character and visual qualities, using general principles proposed for application along the length of the Proposed Development, as well as identifying key areas—presented as ‘Example Focus Areas’—where potential proposals are explored in more detail. This document captures a blend of committed mitigation measures as laid out in the EIA as well as some more aspirational measures to restore and improve



Plate 9.6.1. Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL Location on Scotland Map

the landscape passed through by the development.

Proposals seek not only to create a visually sensitive and appropriate development within the local landscape but also to encourage ecological benefits, through new planting and enhancement of existing vegetation. Refer to the Outline Biodiversity Enhancement Plan for full details of the qualitative assessment of habitats and species that will be affected by the Proposed Development and the associated mitigation, compensation and enhancement proposals.

Document to be read in conjunction with the following SSEN documents:

1. The Consents and Environmental Specification
2. The Outline Site Restoration Plan
3. The Outline Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (OBEP)

2. Landscape Character Types

Kintore to Tealing LCT

Landscape characters and resources are considered to be important in their own right and are valued independently of whether they are seen by people. Effects on views and visual amenities as perceived by people are clearly distinguished from, although closely linked to, effects on landscape character and resources.

The Proposed Development extends across eight landscape character types, based on NatureScot's 2019 National Landscape Character Assessment of Scotland. The landscape character along the length of the Proposed Development varies from low-lying farmland and broad wide straths in the southern sections, to forest-covered upland plateau and wooded estates in the northern sections.

Character Areas

Tealing to Hurlie

-  LCT 387 - Dipslope Farmland
-  LCT 382 - Lowland Hill Ranges
-  LCT 384 - Broad Valley Lowlands- Tayside- Forfar Unit
-  LCT 384 - Broad Valley Lowlands- Tayside- Brechin Unit
-  LCT 022 - Broad Valley Lowlands- Aberdeenshire
-  LCT 024 - Coastal Farmland Ridges and Hills

Hurlie to Kintore

-  LCT 029 - Summits and Plateaux
-  LCT 031 - Broad Wooded and Farmland Valley
-  LCT 026 - Wooded Estates- Drumoak Unit
-  LCT 026 - Wooded Estates- Kintore Unit

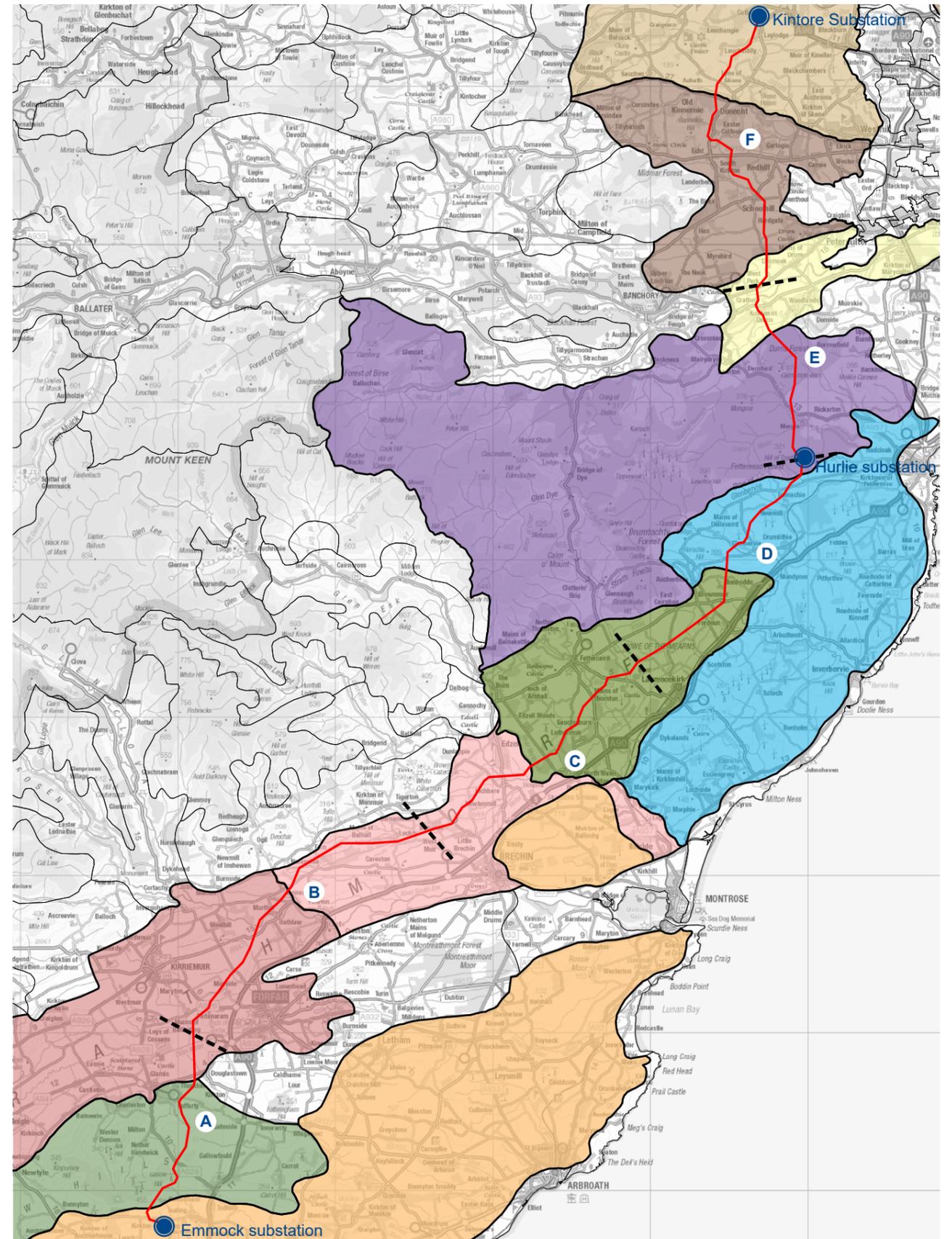


Plate 9.6.2. OHL Location Map across different Character Areas

Landscape Character Type 387 and 382

Dipslope Farmland and Lowland Hill Ranges

Key Characteristics¹ (Dipslope Farmland)

- Extensive area of lowland farmland running parallel to the coastline, generally sloping from Sidlaws and Forfar Hills in north-west to near sea level in the south-east.
- Dominated by productive agricultural land, it has an open, medium-scale character which is predominantly productive arable land use with simple geometric field patterns.
- Low woodland cover, except on large estates which have pine shelter belts and hedgerows, and along river corridors. Where located on the slopes it reinforces the change in gradient.
- Variety of historic sites from different eras ranging from prehistoric, Roman to Medieval, including castles, a number of historic estates and designed gardens which create a rich diverse character and strong local cultural identity.
- Dispersed settlement pattern, including some suburban development which extends out with the historic settlement confines.
- Infrequent single and small clusters of a range of domestic and medium scale commercial turbines along the elevated slopes, prominent due to their elevation and the lack of significant woodland cover.
- Variety of views from within the landscape, but typically, given the broad fall of slope to the east, there is a strong visual relationship with views along the coast and wide panoramas out to open sea. Inter visibility across the Tay firth to the Fife coast is pronounced around Dundee and reduces in clarity with distance and prominence further north.

Description (Dipslope Farmland)

LCT 387 extends across the northern fringes of the Firth of Tay eastwards to the Angus coast, meeting the settlements of Arbroath and Montrose. It comprises a mosaic of geometric arable and pastoral fields.

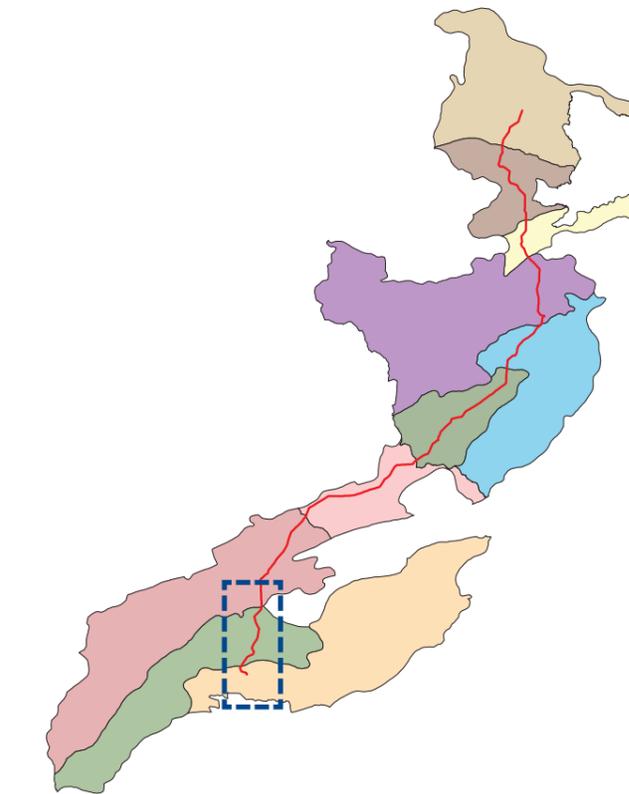


Plate 9.6.3. Location Map- Lowland Hill Ranges and Dipslope Farmland

KEY

-  Focus area
-  Key affected areas
-  Woodlands and green areas
-  Heather, Bracken and Gorse
-  Lowland Hill Ranges
-  Dipslope Farmland

1. NatureScot, 2019. National Landscape Character Assessment. Landscape Character Type 387: Dipslope Farmland. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT 387 - Dipslope Farmland - final.pdf>

2. NatureScot, 2019. National Landscape Character Assessment. Landscape Character Type 382: Lowland Hill Ranges. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT 382 - Lowland Hill Ranges - final.pdf>

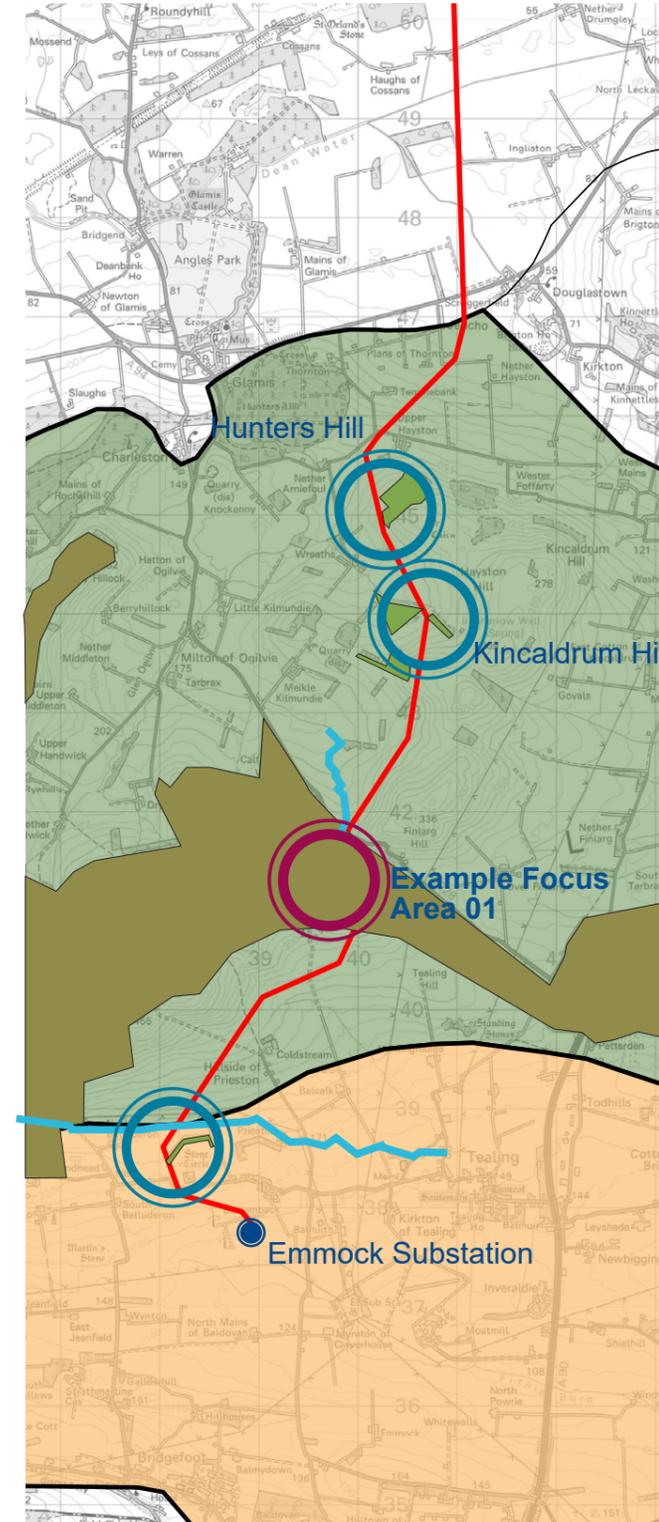


Plate 9.6.4. Key Areas along Proposed Development through Lowland Hill Ranges and Dipslope Farmland Character

Key Characteristics² (Lowland Hill Ranges)

- The Sidlaw and Ochil Hills comprise hard volcanic rocks which appear as relatively uniform ridge lines orientated southwest to northeast, contributing to the much wider strategic grain of landscape character defined by the Highland Boundary Fault geology.
- Recognisable shapes, peaks and slopes, and ridge profiles, the presence of which is emphasised by their location set within low lying agricultural landscape to the north and south.
- Short burns and rivers flowing from dramatic, short steep glens.
- Several large glens through the hills.
- Often distinctive and conspicuous scarp and dipslopes.
- Generally open medium scale landscapes of almost conical summits dominated by grass moorland and upland pasture.
- Sweeping patchwork of regular but not geometric patterns on the dipslopes.
- Some areas of extensive forestry.
- Occasional vertical features such as navigational and Telecom masts, follies, and wind turbines which appear prominent in these elevated locations.
- Popular use for informal recreation by nearby large centres of population.
- A sense of relative tranquillity.
- Importance as a backdrop to many settlements in the surrounding low lying agricultural landscapes.
- Views within, across and up to this character type.

Description

LCT 382 extends from the eastern fringes of Perth northeastwards toward the eastern extents of the Sidlaw Hills. Within this area, the landscape is largely composed of a series of lowland hills, such as Craigowl Hill (455 m above ordnance datum [AOD]) and Balkello Hill (395 m AOD), which form a prominent and characteristic ridgeline as part of the Sidlaw Hills. These hills give way to productive agricultural lowlands, characterized by open fields ranging in size from medium to large scale.