

Landscape Character Type 026

Wooded Estates

Key Characteristics⁸

- Rolling landform of low gently rounded hills and broad valleys.
- Occasional low-lying basins are filled with mosses or lochs.
- Strong woodland structure associated with numerous estate policies.
- Mixed farmland with varying size and pattern of fields, these enclosed by a mix of fences, low stone walls and, in places, thick mixed shelterbelts and field trees.
- Occasional mosses are ringed by birch and Scots pine.
- Numerous and varied archaeological features occur in this landscape and include henges, carved stone balls, recumbent stone circles and Pictish monuments.
- Well settled with a large number of towns and villages. More recent settlement expansion and housing development is particularly evident closer to Aberdeen.
- Significant network of roads radiating out from Aberdeen.
- Long views across open farmland contrast with sudden enclosure by woodland as one passes through this landscape. The prominent Grampian Outlying Hills and Ridges often form a focus in these views.

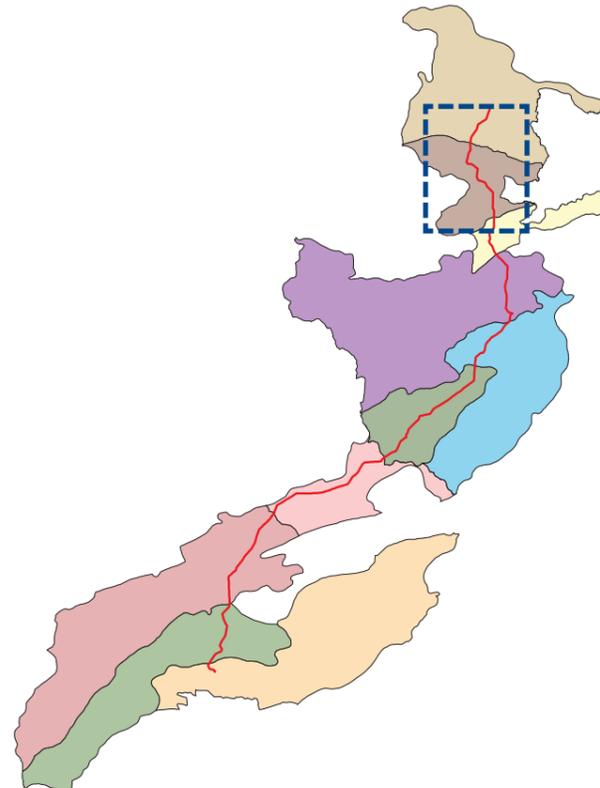
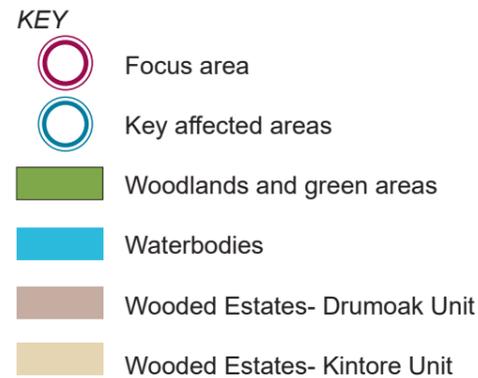


Plate 9.6.26. Location Map- Wooded Estates

Description

This LCT is located within the northern extent of the Proposed Development and covers a large area that broadly extends westwards from the outskirts of Aberdeen towards forested ridges fringing the Cairngorms at Corrennie Forest. Within the area of the LCT in which the Proposed Development extends, the landscape comprises a mosaic of broad valleys, floodplains, dense woodland, and mosses, and a series of low, gently rounded hills.



8. NOTE- NatureScot, 2019. National Landscape Character Assessment. Landscape Character Type 26: Wooded Estates – Aberdeenshire. [Online] Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT 026 - Wooded Estates - Aberdeenshire - Final pdf.pdf>

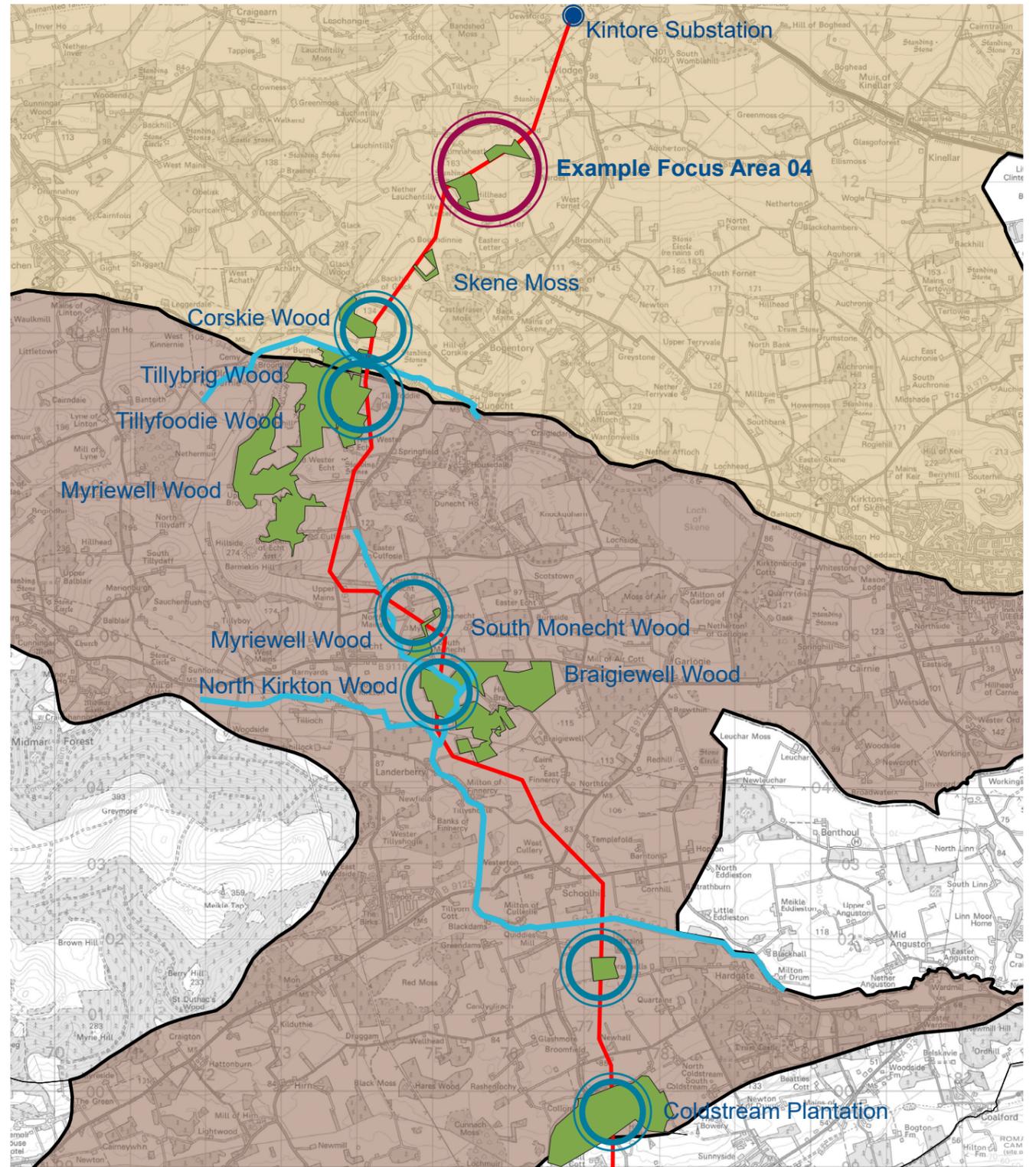


Plate 9.6.27. Key Areas along Proposed Development through Wooded Estates Character Area

Example Focus Area 04

Tower N07-N10

(339,688.1 741,349.1m)

Key Landscape Objectives:

Located within the Wooded Estate LCT, Principles 4 and 5 are used to manage the impact of the Proposed Development on both coniferous and Broadleaved Woodlands. These principles focus on softening the woodland edge created by tree removal and ensuring ecological restoration through targeted planting strategies.

A key objective of both principles is to introduce a diverse mix of native species which would enhance biodiversity while creating a more natural and visually integrated woodland transition, improving the aesthetic quality of the landscape and supporting habitat connectivity, resilience, and long-term ecological stability.



Plate 9.6.28. Open fields

Principles applied-

- 1 Agricultural Land
- 4 Coniferous Woodland
- 5 Broadleaved Woodland



Plate 9.6.29. Principles applicable to Focus Area 04

- Coniferous Woodland to be inter-planted with native trees to avoid a abrupt change of species at the 45 m limit.
- Restoration of vegetation under and adjacent to the OHL would adopt a layered approach, so that new vegetation grades back and integrates with the existing tree cover.
- Agricultural Land to be ploughed to alleviate compaction, for later use by owners.
- If the opportunity presents itself, restore adjacent Broadleaved Woodland to contribute to biodiversity.



Plate 9.6.30. Proposed Plan- Focus Area 04

3. Restoration Principles



3. Restoration Principles

Kintore to Tealing 400 kV OHL

General Principles

This document outlines the approach to potential mitigation measures along the length of the Proposed Development. The measures are aimed at contributing to a reduction in the landscape effects of the development by encouraging the restoration of landscape elements disturbed by the works, with the intention of returning the landscape, as far as practicable, to a pre-development state, or where reasonably possible provide some level of enhancement.

The mitigation aims to minimise the landscape and visual impacts of the Proposed Development and to integrate the infrastructure into the surrounding landscape as effectively as possible. The principles in this document follow the mitigation hierarchy set out in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) including, minimising the impact, restoration and on-site compensation measures. Avoidance of impact, which forms the first step of the hierarchy, has been approached through the design of the OHL and ancillary infrastructure, including the selection of the alignment. Wherever feasible, existing vegetation will be retained. Any vegetation that is disturbed or removed will be reinstated to its original condition. The use of locally appropriate materials and plant species will help ensure ecological continuity and may enhance biodiversity.

Regular monitoring and maintenance should also be implemented post-construction on an annual basis for five years to support landscape restoration and to prevent erosion in areas of exposed soil.

Principle 1 - Agricultural Land

Principle Description

Arable Fields

Where the Proposed Development crosses ploughed fields used for arable crops in this area and which are disturbed during construction, then the soil is to be cultivated to alleviate any compaction, and to ensure the levels are restored to tie into those to either side. Any ruts or piles of topsoil are to be graded out. Careful working is required to ensure topsoil and subsoil is not mixed, and is replaced in the correct order, with subsoil first, then the topsoil left bare so farmers can plant.

Pasture Fields

Where the Proposed Development cross pasture fields in the area which are disturbed during construction, then the pasture is to be restored to tie into the character of the fields to either side, using a locally appropriate native meadow grass and wildflower seed mix, to be agreed with the project ecologists. Appropriate species include Common Knapweed, Cowslip and Meadow Buttercup, as well as Red Fescue and Rough Meadow Grass. See Scotia Seeds Northern Meadow Mix (SCM10) <https://www.scotiaseeds.co.uk/shop/northern-hay-meadow-mix/> and, Wet Meadow Mix (SCM2) <https://www.scotiaseeds.co.uk/shop/wet-meadow-mix/>.



Plate 9.6.31. Arable Fields



Plate 9.6.32. Pasture Fields

Best Practice:

Disturbed soil in general:

- soil separation
- compaction alleviation
- soil grading

Arable:

- soil separation
- compaction alleviation
- soil cultivation
- soil grading

Pasture:

- soil separation
- compaction alleviation
- soil grading
- restore character
- seeding with native wildflower and meadow seed mix