

**Annex 1a – Woodland Report****Section 0: Balmeanach****Contents**

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Figure 1 – Balmeanach Location Plan

Figure 2 – Balmeanach Operational Corridor Felling Requirements

Figure 3 – Balmeanach Restock Plan

## 1. Woodland Characteristics

Balmeanach Woodland is owned by Mr C McDowall. It was purchased from the Scottish Government in 2019. The western section of the woodland is accessed from the A863 at Loch Caroy (see **Figure 1**). This commercial conifer plantation has Sitka Spruce as its principal conifer species. The proposed OHL impacts significantly between poles ED021-ED005 (see **Figure 2**)

The forest is managed as per the felling licence, case reference: FPA 7768.

### Wood Pole: ED021-ED005

The tree species present between poles ED021 and ED005 include Sitka Spruce (SS), Lodgepole pine (LP) and Larch (L), growing on flushed peats and peaty gleys on generally very wet ground conditions, with resultant mixed growth rates ranging from severely checked to good growth where the crop is on drier knolls. Creation of a green edge at the Operational Corridor (OC) between poles ED021-ED010 and ED008-ED005 would require additional felling out with the OC. Wind firm edges have been identified to ensure stability of the remaining crop (see Figure 2).

The felling licence shows no felling planned.



Checked Spruce



Potential windfirm edge



Very wet ground conditions



LP and SS, poor quality.

## 2. Development Requirements

A resilient OC of 40m in width either side of the OHL would be required throughout this woodland site. This allows for the widest part of the tower and an allowance for maintaining the necessary safety clearance distances.

The forest is served by a well-constructed Class A forest road running west to east from the A863. Tree felling and timber extraction would be able to utilise existing tracks, prior to any construction activity.

Stump removal and residue mulching would be required for the installation of access tracks within the OC, where required.

## 3. Wind Blow Risk

There is a high wind blow risk across much of the woodland (wind throw hazard class assessed at 5). There are several pole spans where the proposed OC would open a green edge to the prevailing wind, necessitating additional felling out-with the OC to reach a stable edge. In areas where the trees are smaller due to age or exposure then the wind blow risk is reduced along with the requirement for additional felling to wind firm boundaries.

## 4. Woodland Management Impact

The OHL would create additional challenges for the future management of the forest as it dissects existing management units and introduces an electrical hazard. The constraint associated with the electrical hazard would be reduced by regular maintenance of the OC which would avoid the incidences of “Red Zone” trees (reference FISA 804 “Electricity at Work: Forestry”). Along the eastern part of the route through this woodland, open space and poorer crop areas would reduce the loss of high value woodland and the requirement

for machine movement below the OHL conductor. As part of construction works, dedicated crossing points would be discussed once the OHL has been constructed, thus ensuring safe future working within the woodland.

The total loss of native broadleaved woodland resulting from the proposed OHL within this woodland is Nil.

## **5. Mitigation Opportunities**

Towers ED009-ED005: Upland Birchwood (W4) and Willow (W7) is likely to regenerate in the OC in the vicinity of the wood poles post construction and present an opportunity to replace some of the woodland loss from construction of the Proposed Development.

### **a. Restructuring**

Clear felling and restocking of Balmeanach is ongoing and will continue to be undertaken by the landowner in the future, regardless of development felling, as detailed in the felling licence. It is recognised that the proposed OHL would result in felling being brought forward. The felling of the OC for the Proposed Development, would create a new green edge, allowing the landowner to carry out future clear fell more safely in proximity to the new OHL.

### **b. Restocking**

Restocking would be carried out by the landowner in all areas out-with the OC with suitable species to continue the commercial viability of the forest. It is anticipated that native broadleaved regeneration is likely to occur within the OC in the vicinity of tower ED009-ED005 and to some extent due to the presence of upland Birchwood.

Any opportunity to restock within the OC would be discussed with the landowner following felling to link in with adjacent planned felling coupes where appropriate.

Refer to **Figure 3** which indicates the areas of proposed on-site restocking.

## 6. Net Effect/Summary

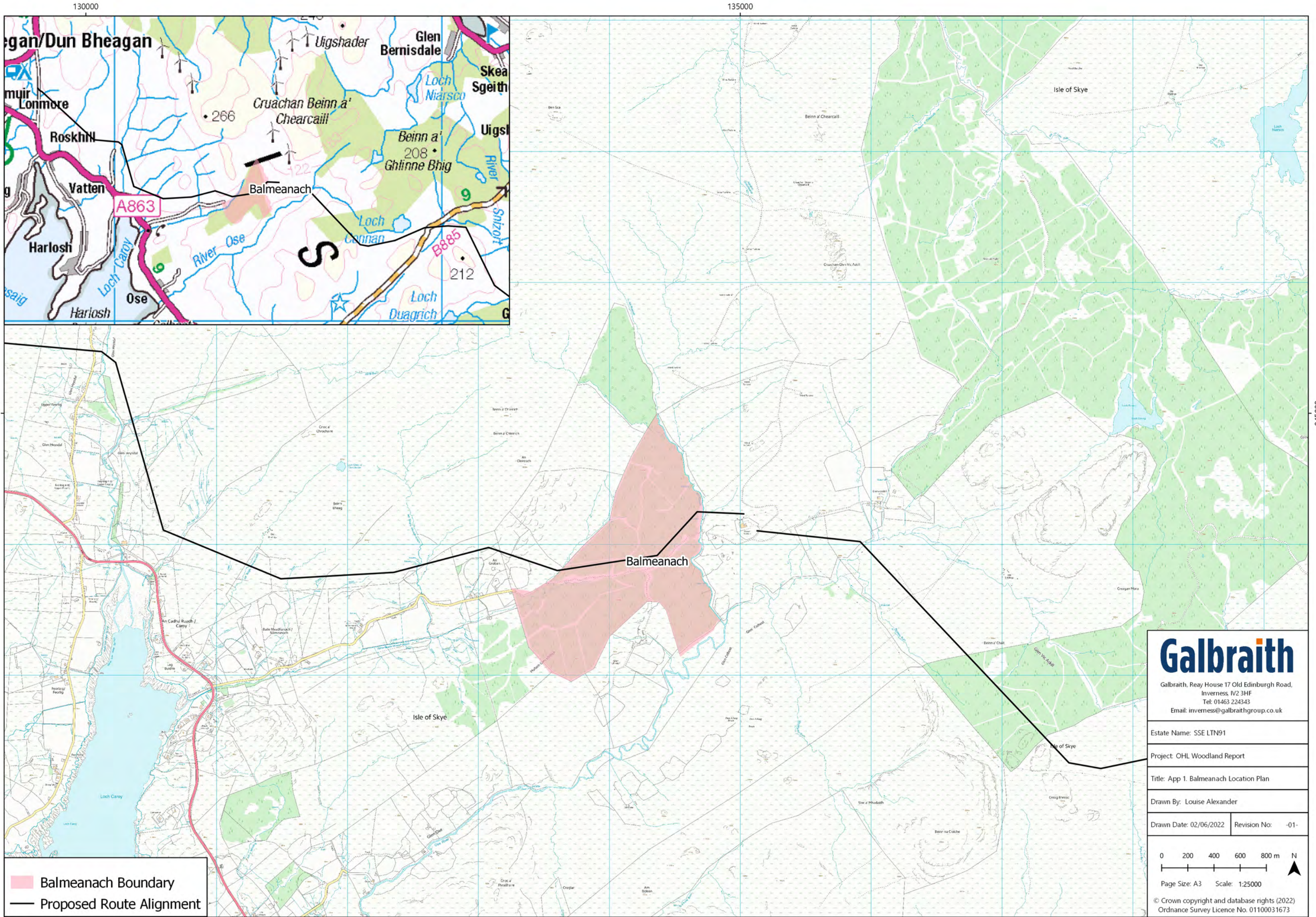
Wood Pole Spans	Operational Requirements
ED005-ED021	Gross area of OC felling required, to be undertaken by the Applicant. - Clear fell all standing commercial trees within OC – LP/SS/L – 7.8 ha
Additional area of recommended felling outside OC for wind throw or forest design purposes (landowner to fell under forest plan revision or felling licence)	Clear fell to windfirm edge – LP/SS/L – 6.8ha
Compensatory Planting Options	
Potential onsite replacement planting/ regeneration within OC	0
Net effect (Loss of Woodland)	7.8 ha
Operational Works	
	Total Area (ha)
Clear fell harvesting within OC	7.8
Clear fell harvesting out with OC	6.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14.6</b>

## 7. Compensatory Planting

The total amount of net felling requiring compensation under the Control of Woodland Removal Policy is 7.8 hectares.

In order to provide a greater balance limiting long term impacts on forestry interests it is proposed that the majority of this woodland loss is compensated via offsite compensatory planting. It is proposed that full details of the areas subject to this offsite compensatory planting is notified to Scottish Forestry prior to energising the OHL.

The dismantling of the existing 132 kV OHL could allow potential opportunities for compensatory planting where practical and in agreement with the landowner.

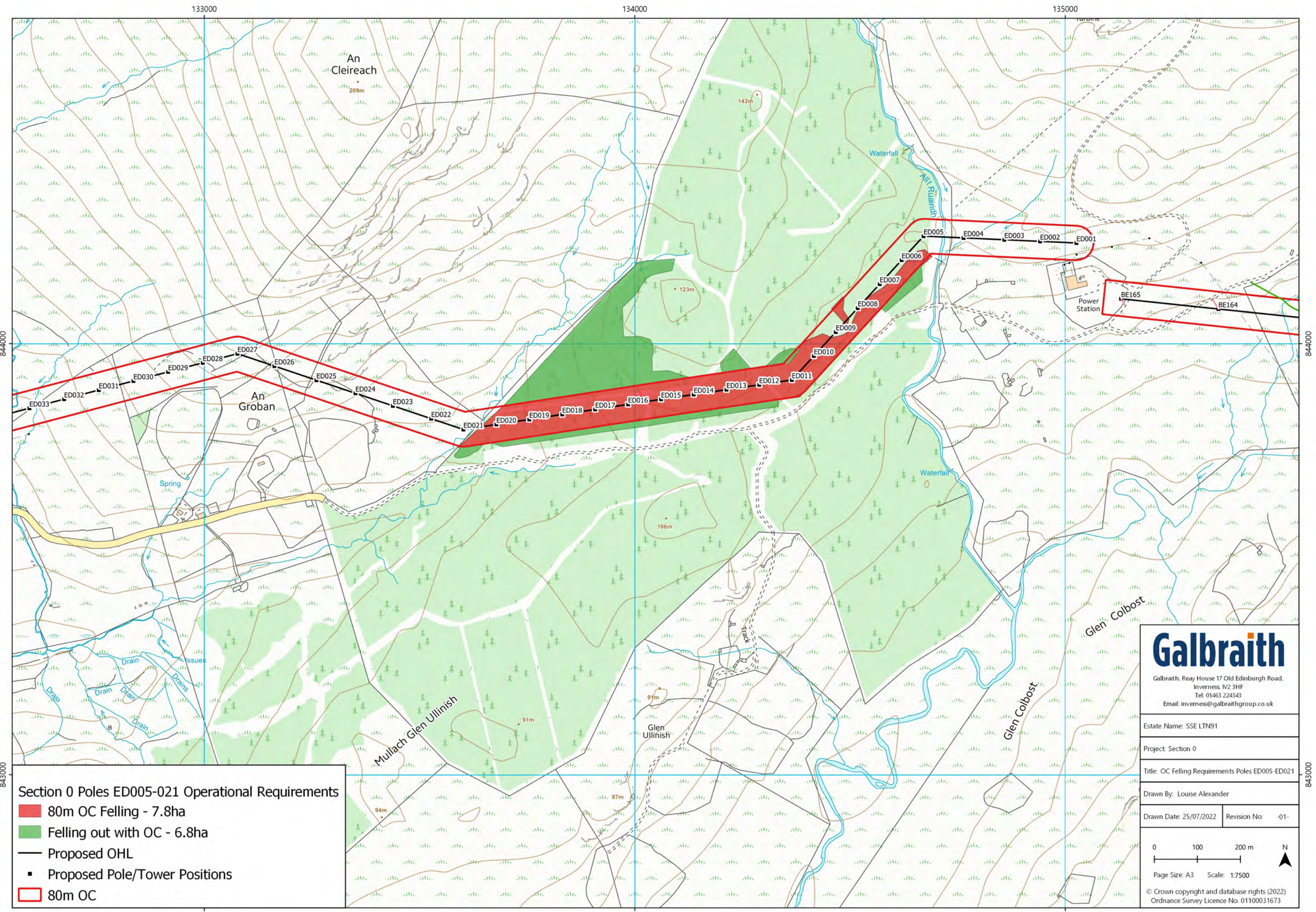


Balmeanach Boundary  
 Proposed Route Alignment

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Estate Name: SSE LTN91  
 Project: OHL Woodland Report  
 Title: App 1. Balmeanach Location Plan  
 Drawn By: Louise Alexander  
 Drawn Date: 02/06/2022    Revision No: -01-

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**Section 0 Poles ED005-021 Operational Requirements**

- 80m OC Felling - 7.8ha
- Felling out with OC - 6.8ha
- Proposed OHL
- Proposed Pole/Tower Positions
- 80m OC

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Estate Name: SSE LTN91	
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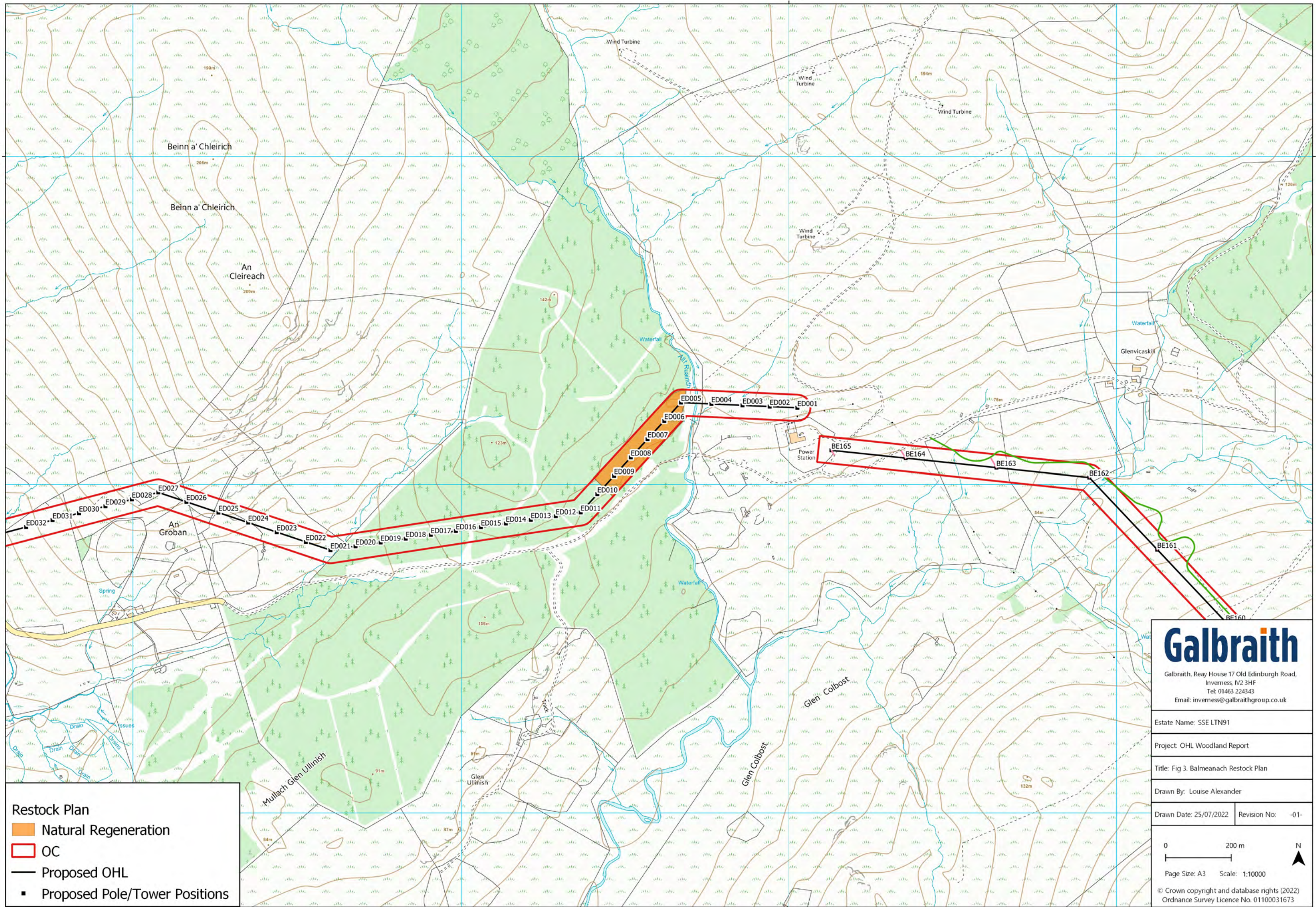
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**Restock Plan**

- Natural Regeneration
- OC
- Proposed OHL
- Proposed Pole/Tower Positions

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Estate Name: SSE LTN91	
Project: OHL Woodland Report	
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