Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beauly 400 kV OHL Connection

Environmental Impact Assessment

Volume 5 | Technical Appendix

Appendix 8.7 | Report to Inform Habitat Regulations Appraisal (Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA)

July 2025

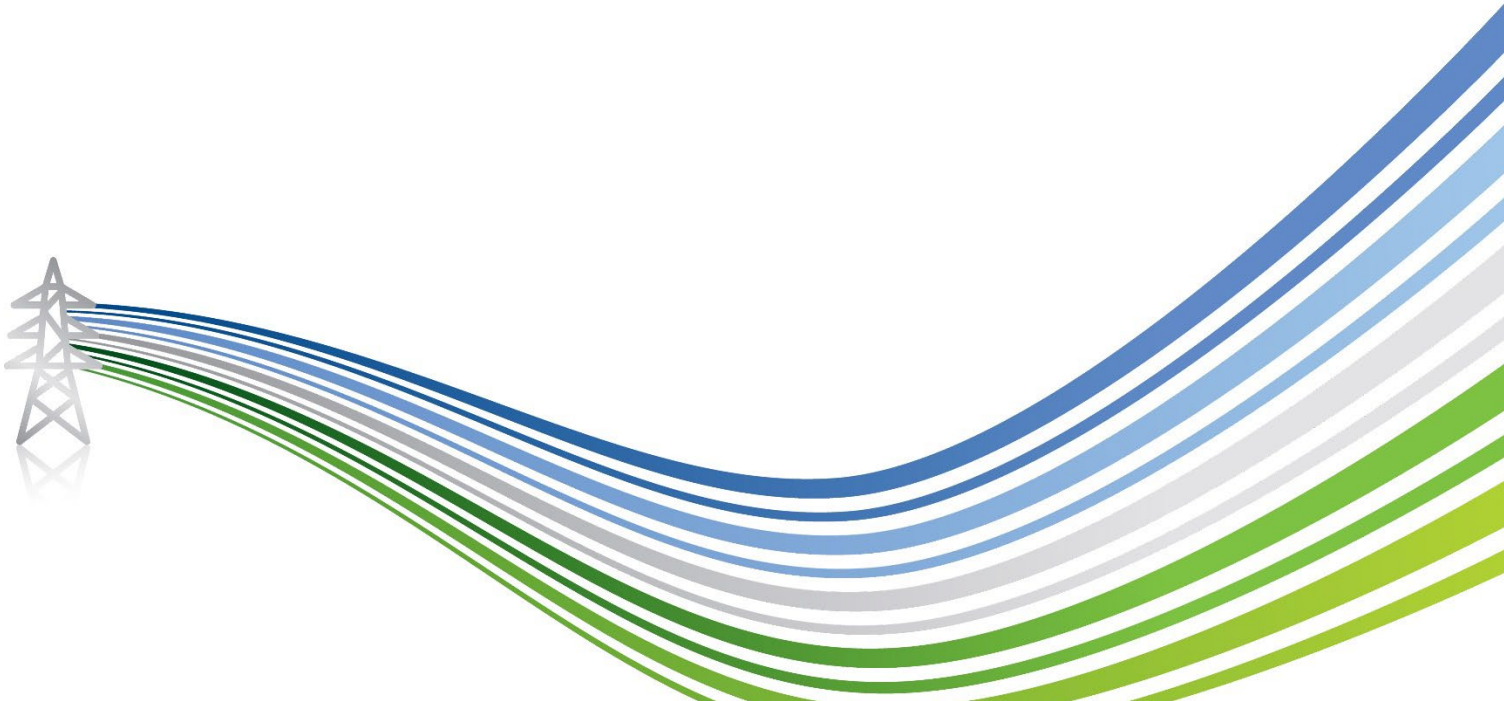
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

TRANSMISSION

Spittal – Loch Buidhe – Beauly 400 kV OHL Connection

Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) Report to inform Appropriate Assessment Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors Special Protection Area

July 2025



Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

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CONTENTS

Figures

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This report has been produced to inform the Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) process for Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission ("SSEN Transmission") application for consent to construct and operate the Spittal to Loch Buidhe to Beauly 400 kV Overhead Line (OHL) Connection (Proposed Development). The project description and overview of the HRA process are presented in the HRA Screening Assessment Report (Screening Assessment) (**Volume 5, Appendix 8.7**). The Screening Assessment presents the HRA Stage 1 Screening Stage assessment of the Proposed Development with respect to its potential to have a Likely Significant Effect (LSE) on European and Ramsar sites of nature conservation importance, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

1.1.2 Separate reports have been produced for each European or Ramsar site identified in the HRA Screening Report as requiring further assessment.

1.1.3 This report provides information to allow the Competent Authority (i.e. the Scottish Ministers for the Proposed Development) to undertake an HRA Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA) for the Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors Special Protection Area (SPA). The SPA is 14,700.61 hectares (Ha) in area and qualifies[1] under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive by regularly supporting a population of European importance, the Annex I species hen harrier (*Circus cyaneus*). The site is estimated to support 12 breeding pairs (mean value between 2002- 2004), representing about 2.5% of a GB population of 483 pairs.

[1] NatureScot Site Link – Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA Citation https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/special-protection-area/9190/spa-citation.pdf

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The approach to the HRA has followed that set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended ('The Habitats Regulations') and NatureScot guidance on the consideration of plans or projects affecting SACs and SPAs [2, 3, 4]. It has also taken account of a range of other guidance material including the DTA Publications HRA Handbook [5] and that produced by the European Commission (EC) 2018a [6], 2018b [7], 2007 [8], 2002 [9].

2.2 Overview of the HRA Process

2.2.1 The HRA process comprises four main stages:

- **Stage 1 Screening** to identify the likely effects of a project on a European site and consider whether the effects are likely to be significant.
- **Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment** to determine whether the integrity of the European site will be adversely affected by the Project.
- **Stage 3 Assessment of Alternative Solutions** to establish if there are any that will result in a lesser effect on the European site.
- **Stage 4 Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)** and **Compensatory Measures** to establish whether it is necessary for the project to proceed despite the effects on the European site, and to confirm that necessary compensatory measures are in place to maintain the coherence of the National Site Network.

2.2.2 The term "Habitats Regulations Appraisal" encompasses both the initial screening stage and, where required, the follow-on Stages 2 – 4. Stage 1 Screening was described in the HRA Screening Report and will not be considered in this report. Stage 2 is discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.3 Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment

2.3.1 An AA is undertaken by the Competent Authority to determine potential effects of a project upon the integrity of European sites. As the person applying for consent, the Applicant should provide and analyse sufficient information to allow the Scottish Ministers to determine whether the aspects of the project pertinent to their consents will or will not adversely affect the integrity of European sites.

2.3.2 AA should exclusively focus on the qualifying features of the European site, and it must consider any impacts on the conservation objectives of those qualifying interests. It should also be based on and supported by evidence that can stand up to scientific scrutiny. EC guidance states that without proper reasoning the assessment does not fulfil its purpose and cannot be considered 'appropriate' and therefore the development cannot be consented. In terms of what is reasonable, guidance states "*to identify the potential risks, so far as they may be reasonably foreseeable in the light of such information as can be reasonably obtained*" [10].

[2] NatureScot (Updated 2025) Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) Guidance. Accessed July 2025 at https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/planning-and-development/environmental-assessment/habitats-regulations-appraisal-hra
[3] NatureScot (2022). European Site Casework Guidance – How to consider plans and projects affecting Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).
[4] NatureScot (2019). Guidance Note - The handling of mitigation in Habitats Regulations Appraisal - the People Over Wind CJEU judgement.
[5] Tyldesley, D. and Chapman, C. (2013) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook, December 2024 edition UK, DTA Publications Limited.
[6] European Commission (2018). Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.
[7] European Commission (2018). Guidance on energy transmission Infrastructure and EU nature legislation.
[8] European Commission (2007). Guidance Document on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
[9] European Commission (2002). Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites.
[10] NatureScot (2001). Natura casework guidance: Consideration of proposals affecting SPAs and SACs.

2.3.3 In undertaking an AA, there are two phases:

- a scientific evaluation of all the likely significant effects of the project on the relevant qualifying interests of a European site; and
- a conclusion based on outcomes of the scientific evaluation whether the integrity of a European site will be compromised.

2.3.4 The initial onus when carrying out an AA is to prove that no adverse impacts due to a project will occur, either alone or in-combination with other projects, which would compromise a European site's integrity (Section 63(5) & (6) of the Habitats Regulations). Site integrity can be defined as: "*The coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area that enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it was classified*" [11].

2.3.5 The assessment will also consider any avoidance or mitigation measures which will be implemented to avoid or reduce the level of impact from the project. The Competent Authority may also consider the use of conditions or restrictions to help avoid adverse effects on site integrity.

2.3.6 If the AA concludes that the integrity of the European site would be adversely affected, consent can only be granted if there are no alternative solutions, IROPI is applicable, and compensatory measures have been secured (Section 64 of the Habitats Regulations).

[11] NatureScot (2014). Natura casework guidance: How to consider plans and projects affecting Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

3 INFORMATION TO INFORM THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The Screening Assessment determined that an AA was required for the Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA because the potential for LSEs could not be ruled out for the qualifying interest feature, breeding hen harrier (*Circus cyaneus*).

3.1.2 The LSEs on these features are considered to result from:

- direct loss of hen harrier from mortality due to collision with infrastructure;
- direct loss of hen harrier breeding habitat within the SPA;
- indirect loss of hen harrier breeding habitat within the SPA due to disturbance and displacement; and
- potential barrier effects as a result of the presence of infrastructure.

3.1.3 This section assesses the impacts of the Proposed Development on hen harrier in relation to the conservation objectives for the site. The aim is to identify whether no adverse effect can be concluded (as described in **Section 2**), or whether there will be adverse effects on the integrity of Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA.

3.1.4 The assessment has drawn on the ornithology survey findings which are presented within **Volume 2, Chapter 9 Ornithology** of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report ("EIA Report") and associated Technical Appendices in **Volume 5**.

3.2 Conservation Objectives and Latest Assessed Condition

3.2.1 The Conservation Objectives (COs)[12] for Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA are set out in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1 Conservation Objectives for Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moor SPA

Qualifying Interest Feature	Conservation Objectives

Hen harrier (breeding)	• to avoid deterioration of the habitats of the qualifying species or significant disturbance to the qualifying species, thus ensuring that the integrity of the site is maintained; and
	• to ensure for the qualifying species that the following are maintained in the long term:
	  • population of the species as a viable component of the site;
	  • distribution of the species within the site;
	  • distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species;
	  • structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species; and
	  • no significant disturbance of the species.

[12] NatureScot Site Link – Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA COs https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/special-protection-area/9190/conservation-objectives.pdf

3.2.2 The latest assessed condition of hen harrier as a qualifying interest feature of the SPA is listed in Table 3-2 as detailed on the NatureScot SiteLink [13] site.

Table 3-2 Summary of Site Condition

Qualifying Interest Feature	Latest Assessed Condition	Date of Assessment	Negative Pressures
Hen harrier (breeding)	Unfavourable Declining	5th July 2021	• agricultural operations; • burning; • development; • forestry operations; • game/fisheries management; and • plant pests and diseases.

3.3 Potential Impacts and Relevant Mitigation Measures

3.3.1 Figure 1 illustrates the location of the Proposed Development in relation to the Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA. An approximate 11 km stretch of the Proposed OHL runs east-west through the northern part of the SPA. Both temporary and permanent infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development are situated within this SPA. An Operational Corridor (OC) is required through areas of woodland and commercial forestry to ensure the safe operation of the OHL, which requires some felling and management of trees. The width of the OC would be variable depending on the nature of the forest or woodland. Within areas of commercial forestry the OC would require a distance of 45 m either side of the OHL, whilst in areas of native woodland it may be possible to reduce the OC. Further detail on proposed felling requirements is set out within the Forestry Chapter (see **Chapter 13: Forestry**) and woodland reports (See **Volume 5, Appendix 13.1: Woodland Reports**).

3.3.2 The Screening Assessment, taking a precautionary approach, concluded that in the absence of mitigation, there is potential for construction activities to result in LSEs by way of disturbance and displacement impacts on the SPA as a result of both direct and indirect loss of habitat, as well as accidental mortality due to collision with and potential barrier effects as a result of the presence of infrastructure. Mitigation measures relevant to the AA are therefore those relating to Schedule 1 and breeding bird species.

3.3.3 Embedded project mitigation measures will be implemented throughout the construction and operation phases of the Proposed Development, including the timing of, and installation / siting of permanent and temporary structures to avoid or minimise interaction with sensitive ornithological receptors. Embedded project mitigation measures are set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and the General Environmental Management Plans (GEMPs) (**Volume 5, Appendix 3.5**), Species Protection Plans (SPPs) (**Volume 5, Appendix 3.6**) and will be further reinforced in the final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) (an outline CEMP has been included in **Volume 5, Appendix 3.9**).

3.3.4 The Bird SPP has been developed in consultation with NatureScot and kept under review to ensure that it is in line with current guidance, and, if appropriate, updated accordingly. Measures within the Bird SPP relevant to the SPA include, but are not limited to:

- The Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will review whether construction activities are likely to affect breeding birds and, if so, what mitigation options are available. A hierarchical approach to mitigation will be applied to any occupied bird habitat that may be affected under the Project works. Priority will be given to assessing and mitigating impacts to species listed on Schedule 1.

[13] NatureScot 2025. Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA. Accessed Jan 25 at: https://sitelink.nature.scot/site/9190

- The ECoW will attend site on a regular basis throughout the construction period to ensure all environmental mitigation relevant to breeding birds is delivered.
- A hierarchical approach to mitigation of Programme / Avoid / Risk Assess will be applied to any birds that may be affected under the Project works. Works to be programmed outwith breeding season, where practicable.
- Appropriate protection zones will be put in place (see Appendix A of Bird SPP) and will be set by the ECoW.
- Buffer zones for breeding and roosting hen harrier is recommended to be 300 - 750 m [14]. Non-breeding roosts are important in pair formation and the 750 m buffer will be maintained as a minimum 1 hour before and 1 hour after sunset and sunrise respectively to avoid disturbance. Sudden noisy works will also be avoided at these times.
- A Protected Species Risk Assessment will be completed by the ECoW when works need to be done in protection zones, to assess if disturbance can be avoided.
- An emergency procedure will be implemented if breeding birds are encountered, with all works within 50 m (non-scheduled species) or max protection distance (scheduled species) immediately ceasing.
- Specific mitigation such as dissuasion techniques (habitat management, active dissuasion/disturbance) and removal of disused nests.

3.3.5 The mitigation measures set out in the EIAR follow industry best practice and are routinely deployed on SSEN Transmission projects. They will be stipulated in construction contracts and the implementation and audit of these measures will be overseen by a suitably qualified and experienced Environmental / Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW).

3.3.6 In addition to the embedded mitigation measures, one species-specific mitigation measure for the hen harrier is that bird flight diverters will be installed between towers 270 – 297 within the Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA.

3.4 Assessment of Effects

3.4.1 NatureScot SPA connectivity guidance[15] gives a core foraging range from their nest site during the breeding season of 2 km for hen harrier, with maximum range of 10 km.

3.4.2 An approximate 11 km stretch of the Proposed OHL runs east-west through the northern part of the Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA. Both temporary and permanent infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development are situated within this SPA, with sections of forestry felling proposed within the site.

Direct loss from mortality due to collision with infrastructure

3.4.3 During baseline surveys within Section B and C, seven hen harrier flights were observed crossing the proposed alignment at Collision Risk Height (CRH) within the SPA with another four within 2 km of the SPA. Avoidance rates for OHLs have not been calculated for birds in the UK; however, hen harrier avoidance rates for wind turbines have been estimated at 99% indicating a relatively good ability to avoid colliding with structures whilst in flight[16]. Baseline surveys recorded hen harriers foraging across and under existing infrastructure (132Kv

[14] Disturbance Distances in selected Scottish Bird Species – NatureScot Guidance | NatureScot

[15] Scottish Natural Heritage (2016). Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs); Version 3 – June 2016. Available online at: Assessing connectivity with special protection areas.pdf.

[16] NatureScot (2025) Wind farm impacts on birds - Use of Avoidance Rates in the NatureScot Wind Farm Collision Risk Model. https://www.nature.scot/doc/wind-farm-impacts-birds-use-avoidance-rates-naturescot-wind-farm-collision-risk-model

OHL and 275Kv OHL) within the SPA and the species is considered to generally have a low risk of collision with OHLs.

3.4.4 Anecdotal evidence indicates a higher risk of juvenile hen harrier colliding with OHLs. As a result, given the relatively high concentration of historic territories along Section B in Strath Carnaig and importance of the Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA hen harrier population, in the absence of mitigation there is the potential for an impact on hen harriers from the SPA within Section B. Therefore, bird flight diverters will be installed between towers 270 and 297 within the Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA. Research suggests that overall, marking OHLs with bird flight diverters can result in an average reduce of 56-78% of collision risk[17] [18].

3.4.5 With the presence of bird flight diverters on the tower locations mentioned above, it is anticipated that the Proposed Development will not result in direct loss from mortality due to collision with the Project's infrastructure. No adverse effects on hen harrier in relation to the conservation objectives for the site are predicted.

Direct loss of hen harrier breeding habitat within the SPA

3.4.6 During construction of the Proposed Development, it is estimated that there will be a permanent direct loss of approximately 35.63 ha of habitat and temporary direct loss of 50.35 ha of habitat from the SPA, resulting from the construction of 30 towers in Section B and four towers in Section C and related access tracks. Of this 35.63 ha of permanent loss, 27.95 ha comprises coniferous plantation forest, which will be permanently converted to open habitats which will benefit hen harrier. Approximately 30 ha may also be subject to management felling within the SPA however this is expected to be re-stocked to coniferous plantation forestry. The area of habitat that will be permanently lost equates to approximately 0.24 % of the total area of the SPA. Excluding coniferous woodland, the permanent loss equates to 0.05% of the SPA. The non coniferous-woodland habitats lost to the Proposed Development comprise predominantly open moor / heather moorland.

3.4.7 The area of land-take resulting from the construction of the Proposed Development will have a negligible impact on the availability of suitable foraging habitat for hen harrier within the SPA, given the abundance of suitable alternative habitat which will not be affected. Felling of the coniferous woodland and the conversion to open habitats will help towards improving the favourable conservation status of the SPA, as one of the pressures on the site is the forestation of open habitats. Habitat loss from within the SPA is therefore not predicted to have an adverse effect on hen harrier in relation to the conservation objectives for the site.

Indirect loss of hen harrier breeding habitat within the SPA due to disturbance and displacement

3.4.8 Hen harriers have a core foraging range of 2 km, extending up to 10 km. No winter hen harrier roosts were recorded during baseline surveys. Desk studies identified six historical breeding territories within the SPA and within the disturbance distance for hen harriers (750 m) of the Proposed Development. These territories are historic sites, where a breeding attempt has taken place during 2021 or 2022. The six historic territories, if all occupied at the same time, represent 50% of the SPA population.

3.4.9 Construction activity will result in a temporary loss of habitat associated with displacement of birds from construction areas; however, this impact will be restricted to individual tower locations at any one time and will be short term and temporary in nature. Through the application of embedded mitigation measures, principally avoiding construction works that could disturb breeding birds, and oversight of works by an ECoW, disturbance to nest sites will be avoided. All of the historic territories are located within 750 m of existing OHLs which are closer to the territories than the Proposed Development. As such birds are expected to continue to use

[17] Barrientos R, Alonso JC, Ponce C, Palacín C. 2011. Meta-analysis of the effectiveness of marked wire in reducing avian collisions with power lines. Conserv Biol. 2011 Oct;25(5):893-903.

[18] Bernadino, J., Martins, R.C., Bispo, R & Moreira F. (2019) Re-assessing the effectiveness of wire-marking to mitigate bird collisions with power lines: A meta-analysis and guidelines for field studies. J. of Env. Man. Vol 252, 109651

territories during operation of the Proposed Development. As a result, the impacts of displacement and disturbance on the SPA population are not considered to have an adverse effect on hen harrier in relation the conservation objectives for the site..

Potential barrier effects as a result of the presence of infrastructure.

3.4.10 Barrier effects occur where the vertical configuration of wires and towers creates an actual or perceived barrier which birds may not cross. There are existing 132 kV and 275 kV OHLs which run in parallel or in proximity for much of the length to the Proposed Development which baseline surveys have shown are frequently crossed by birds. This demonstrates that birds habituate to the presence of OHLs. Due to the bird's ability to adapt their behaviour to avoid OHLs, the presence of the Proposed Development is not anticipated to have a negative effect on hen harrier in relation to the conservation objectives for Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA.

In-combination Effects

3.4.11 The Proposed Development will have no adverse effects on the hen harrier qualifying interest feature of the SPA alone. Nine projects were identified that could potentially result in effects on the SPA qualifying hen harrier population in-combination with the Proposed Development.

Carnaig 400 kV Substation

3.4.12 The Carnaig 400 kV Substation application is a separate application that seeks planning permission for the construction of a new 400kV substation to interconnect with the Proposed Development. Key impacts anticipated to arise are disturbance to breeding and foraging hen harrier (the qualifying feature of the Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA), during the construction phase. Mitigation will comprise pre-construction surveys for hen harrier and minimising the potential impacts on birds during construction (through implementation of the Bird SPP) and the effects of more environmentally hazardous construction activities (through implementation of GEMPs). If construction timelines for the Carnaig Substation and the Proposed Development overlap there is the potential for cumulative disturbance impacts. However implementation of SSENs Bird SPP will avoid disturbance and displacement of breeding birds or birds at regularly used winter roosts. The felling of plantation woodland for an associated peat management area will result in an overall gain in the area of open habitats preferred by hen harrier. The reduction in areas of forestry within the Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA as a result of the Proposed Development mean changes in habitat are likely to have an overall minor positive in-combination effect on supporting habitats for hen harrier. As a result, no in-combination adverse effect on hen harrier is predicted.

Garvary Wind Farm

3.4.13 A consented wind farm development comprised of 25 turbines, with associated battery energy storage system (BESS) facility and infrastructure, located adjacent to the Proposed Development. The EIAR identified potentially significant impacts on Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA, though the subsequent assessment concluded that as a stand-alone development it would not result in significant effects. A cumulative collision risk assessment was undertaken for hen harrier but found that effects were not significant. As such, given the negligible collision mortality predicted for the Proposed Development, in-combination effects are not predicted.

Balblair Wind Farm

3.4.14 A proposed nine turbine wind farm located adjacent to Proposed Development. The Scoping Report (issued 23.09.2024) defined important ornithological areas in the vicnity, including Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA which is located approximately 1 km east of the wind farm. However as the EIA has not yet been published, there is insufficient information available at this time on the impacts of Balbalir Wind Farm to

undertake an in-combination assessment. It is assumed that when it is prepared, the EIAR for Balblair Wind Farm will assess in-combination effects with the Proposed Development.

Acheilidh Wind Farm

3.4.15 A proposed 12 turbine wind farm located approximately 2 km from the Proposed Development at its closest point and immediately adjacent (0.1 km) to the Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA. No significant effects were identified in the EIAR for Acheilidh Wind Farm on bird receptors. However, there is likely to be some loss of habitat outwith the SPA used by the SPA hen harrier population within their core foraging ranges of the SPAs. The land-take within the site is 16.72ha which represents a very small proportion the land available within the core foraging distances for hen harrier (2 km) and in the context of the areas of the SPAs. There is no direct loss of any SPA habitat resulting from the installation of the Wind Farm. With appropriate mitigation measures in place, including a habitat management plan and bird protection plan, NatureScot advised that the wind farm would not adversely impact the features of the SPA and could be progressed. In-combination effects could occur on Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA with the Proposed Development. However with the embedded and additional mitigation measures in place for the Proposed Development, in-combination effects are not predicted. Although the Proposed Development will overlap supporting habitat within the SPA, as the area of habitat that will be lost is negligible, in-combination effects are not predicted.

Creag Riabhach Wind Farm Connection

3.4.16 An approved application, currently under construction, comprising the installation of 22 km of OHL for a 132 kV circuit to connect Creag Riabhach Wind Farm to the National Grid at Dalchork substation in Lairg. The route of the OHL passes within 2km of Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA. Scottish Ministers concluded that with mitigation in place, no adverse effects on the integrity of the SPA would occur alone or in-combination with other projects. Although the Proposed Development will overlap supporting habitat within the SPA, as the area of habitat that will be lost is negligible, in-combination effects are not predicted.

Chleansaid Wind Farm

3.4.17 Chleansaid Wind Farm is a consented wind farm located approximately 15 km north of the closest point of the Proposed Development and approximately 7.9 km north of the Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA. No significant effects were identified in the EIAR on identified bird receptors and as such. As the wind farm is beyond the core foraging range of hen harrier (2 km) from the SPA, in-combination effects are predicted to be negligible and will not result in an adverse effect on the hen harrier population with the Proposed Development.

Strath Tirry Wind Farm

3.4.18 A consented four turbines wind farm located 17 km north-west of the Proposed Development. The EIA dated December 2020 identified potential effects on Caithness and Sutherlands SPA; Strath Brora Lochs and Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA. However, the assessment only brought forward impacts on greylag goose, pink-footed goose, greenshank and crossbill. The proposed wind farm is approximately 5 km north of the SPA. As the wind farm is beyond the core foraging range of hen harrier (2 km) from the SPA, in-combination effects are predicted to be negligible and will not result in an adverse effect on the hen harrier population with the Proposed Development.

Shinness Wind Farm

3.4.19 A proposed 16 turbine wind farm situated 20 km north-west of the Proposed Development. The EIAR assessed impacts on Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA for breeding hen harrier. However, with the embedded and additional mitigation measures in place for the Proposed Development, in-combination disturbance and displacement or collision impacts are not predicted. Although the Proposed Development will overlap

supporting habitat within the SPA / Ramsar site, as the area of habitat that will be lost is negligible, in-combination effects are not predicted.

3.5 Summary of Effect on Site Integrity

3.5.1 Any potential effects on hen harrier will be managed through the mitigation measures set out in the project Environmental Management Plans and the installation of bird flight diverters between towers 270 and 297. With these measures in place, the impacts of direct and indirect habitat loss or degradation, and risks of collision and of barrier effect and displacement is reduced to negligible.

3.5.2 No adverse effects on hen harrier in relation to the conservation objectives for the site are predicted and therefore no adverse effect on the integrity of the Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA is anticipated, either alone or in-combination with other projects.

Strath Carnaig
and Strath
Fleet Moors SPA

Carnaig
Substation

S5
S1
NGantry
N295
N297
N290
N285
N280
N275
N270
N265
N260

Section B - C

- Tower Location
- Alignment Section B
- Alignment Section C
- Special Arrangement
- Temporary Tower Compound Area
- Equipotential Zones (EPZs) (Pulling Locations)
- Temporary Access Track - Cut/Fill
- Temporary Access Track - Floating
- Permanent Access Track - Cut/Fill
- Permanent Access Track - Floating
- Alignment Section Break
- Special Protection Area (SPA)

A9

0 0.5 1 1.5 2
Kilometres

N

SCALE: See Scale Bar	VERSION: A03
SIZE: A3	DRAWN: CI
PROJECT: 0652629	CHECKED: PW
DATE: 8/11/2025	APPROVED: KG

Figure 1
Spittal - Loch Buidhe - Beauly 400 kV OHL Connection
Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet SPA

ERM

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PROJECTION: British National Grid