

## VOLUME 5: CHAPTER 10: FORESTRY – ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENT

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## 10. FORESTRY - ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENT

### 10.1 Summary of Forestry Assessment: Proposed Alignment

- 10.1.1 **Volume 1: Chapter 12: Forestry** considered the likely significant effects from the construction and operation of the Proposed Development with the Proposed Alignment on forest and woodland areas. The assessment considered the potential for significant effects on the forest resource, forest management and access.
- 10.1.2 The assessment of forestry impacts concluded that a loss of 5.75 ha of woodland would result from the Proposed Alignment due to the requirement to create an Operational Corridor (OC) for the construction and safe operation of the Proposed Alignment, including the creation of access tracks.
- 10.1.3 The assessment noted that the woodlands within the OC that would be affected by the Proposed Alignment are for the most part recently created native woodlands with one area of semi mature conifer plantation. There are no areas of ancient woodland or ancient or veteran trees present.
- 10.1.4 Mitigation through design is for minimal tree felling and utilising the current unplanted ground where possible.
- 10.1.5 The assessment concluded that there would be no significant effects from the direct loss of woodland as a result of the construction and operation of the Proposed Alignment. The effects of woodland removal, in forestry terms, were assessed as not significant, on the basis of the relatively low magnitude of change in the context of the regional resource, and the low to medium sensitivity of the types of woodland present in the study area.
- 10.1.6 Given that the Proposed Alignment would result in the permanent loss of woodland, 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. The development of compensatory planting scheme agreements would be progressed with landowners within the regional land boundary of the Highland Council as the local authority responsible for the area where the Proposed Alignment is geographically located.
- 10.1.7 The area of woodland removal required for other consented and proposed developments, in the area of the Proposed Development, would expected to be mitigated through Scottish Government's CoWRP objective of no net loss of woodland. In this way, the assessment considered there to be no cumulative effects on forestry.

### 10.2 The Alternative Alignment

- 10.2.1 The Proposed Development with the Alternative Alignment takes a slightly more northerly route than that of the Proposed Alignment to avoid the proposed Melvich Wind Energy Hub (see **Volume 2: Figure V1-1.1 – Overview of the Proposed Development**). Towers 19 – 31 are on the same alignment as the Proposed Alignment, and then from the point at which the Proposed Alignment heads in a broad easterly direction, the Alternative Alignment heads further north and east towards the A836 (Towers A1 – A15). The Alternative Alignment then heads southwards (Towers A16 – A27), returning to join the Proposed Alignment at Tower 47, thereafter following the same alignment as the Proposed Alignment where it would connect into Connagill 275/132 kV substation.
- 10.2.2 The section of the Alternative Alignment that deviates away from the Proposed Alignment would cross no further existing woodland or forest, and as such, would result in no changes to the woodland loss and compensatory planting requirements from that reported in **Volume 1: Chapter 12: Forestry**.
- 10.2.3 Therefore, as per the Proposed Alignment, the assessment of forestry impacts for the Alternative Alignment also concludes a loss of 5.75 ha of woodland due to the requirement to create an Operational Corridor (OC) for

construction and safe operation. Similarly, the assessment findings for the Alternative Alignment are as reported for the Proposed Alignment in **Volume 1: Chapter 12: Forestry**.