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7. FORESTRY

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 This chapter considers the potential effects, including cumulative effects, of the Proposed Development on forest and woodland areas during construction and operation. Where likely significant effects are predicted during construction and operation, appropriate mitigation measures are proposed, and the significance of residual effects are assessed. The assessment is supported by **Volume 4, Appendix 7.1: Woodland Report**, which contains a location specific Woodland Report in relation to forestry and woodland that would be affected by the Proposed Development.
- 7.1.2 This assessment has been prepared by Bidwells Forestry in line with the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) guidance¹. All staff contributing to this chapter have professional experience in undertaking forestry surveys and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
- 7.1.3 Throughout this assessment, areas of semi-natural woodland are referred to as woodland and areas of predominately commercial species are referred to as forests.

7.2 Scope of the Assessment and Methodology

Scope of the Assessment

Extent of the Study Area

- 7.2.1 The Study Area encompasses the area over which all desk-based and field data were gathered to inform the assessment presented in this chapter. The Study Area has been limited to the woodland removal required to create and safely operate the Proposed Development, as set out in **Volume 2, Chapter 3: Project Description**. As a result, the assessment work includes **Volume 4, Appendix 7.1: Woodland Report**, in respect of the forest and woodlands affected by the Proposed Development. The Woodland Report demonstrates how the Proposed Development would be incorporated within ongoing forest management activities. As described in **Volume 2, Chapter 3: Project Description**, it is anticipated that the effects associated with the construction phase could be considered to be representative of worst-case decommissioning effects on forest and woodland areas. As such, a separate assessment of potential decommissioning effects is not included in this chapter.

Consultation Undertaken to Date

- 7.2.2 To inform the scope of the assessment, consultation was undertaken with statutory and non-statutory bodies. **Table 7-1** summarises the scoping and consultation responses relevant to the forest and woodland assessment and provides information on where and/or how points raised have been addressed in this assessment.
- 7.2.3 Full details on the consultation responses and scoping opinion can be reviewed in **Volume 2, Chapter 6: Scope and Consultation**, and associated appendices.

¹ Forest Research (2023) The UK Forestry Standard. Available at: <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/publications/1522-the-uk-forestry-standard-the-governments-approach-to-sustainable-forestry-5th-edition/viewdocument/1522>

Table 7-1 Consultation Responses

Consultee	Response	Action
Aberdeenshire Council	We should also request that information is provided on the forestry clearance proposed in the north-western part of the Site and that potential wind throw risk on remaining trees is thoroughly investigated with any implications with regard to loss of screening assessed.	The landscape impact of any felling will be addressed within Volume 2, Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual . Volume 4, Appendix 7.1: Woodland Report identifies the extent of felling, and any mitigation required to maintain the resilience of the woodland.

Method of Baseline Data Collation

Desk Study

7.2.4 A desk-based appraisal of Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping, aerial photography and review of web-based data provided by Scottish Forestry² identified the existing forest and woodland cover within the Study Area. This was supplemented by consultation with landowners and / or forest managers, and review of existing forest data (provided by the landowners) on woodland type (species / age / class) and the existing woodland management regime, including woodland restructuring and LMP (Land Management Plans) / LTFP (Long Term Forest Plan) information.

Field Study

7.2.5 Forest walkover and mapping surveys were undertaken in October 2024, to confirm the extent of the forest and woodland areas affected by the Proposed Development and to further assess the current woodland characteristics. Photographic records were taken to provide visual samples of the woodland types and are included in **Volume 4, Appendix 7.1: Woodland Report**.

7.2.6 The forest walkovers included the visual assessment of tree health, vigour, ground conditions and existing woodland stability. Observations were also made of potential windfirm boundaries. The forest walkover surveys included consideration of ancillary infrastructure as set out in **Volume 2, Chapter 3: Project Description**.

Issues Scoped Out

7.2.7 Secondary effects resulting from forestry activities, including effects on habitats and species, ornithology, hydrology and landscape and visual effects, would be considered within their respective chapters of this EIA Report and have therefore not been included within this chapter.

Assessment of Effects

7.2.8 There are currently no published criteria, guidance or methodologies for the assessment of effects on forestry. The assessment reported in this chapter is therefore based upon the methodology set out in **Volume 2, Chapter 5: EIA Process and Methodology**, which is based upon the requirements of the 2017 EIA Regulations.

7.2.9 This assessment is made based on professional judgement, with reference to:

- the sensitivity of the different types of forest and / or woodland present in the study area taking account of the degree and rate of change in the forest and / or woodland, both in the recent past and that anticipated in the near future, and therefore the susceptibility / vulnerability of the forest and / or woodland to change;
- the quality of the forest and / or woodland and the extent to which it is rare or distinctive, and the value attributed to the forest and / or woodland through designations;

² Scottish Forestry Map Viewer. Available at:

<https://scottishforestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0d6125cfe892439ab0e5d0b74d9acc18>

- magnitude of change and extent of forest and / or woodland removal;
- duration and reversibility - timescale of effect (days / weeks / months / years) until recovery. Permanent effects are described as such, and likelihood of recovery is detailed where appropriate; and
- adverse / beneficial - if the effect will be beneficial or detrimental to the feature.

7.2.10 The effect on forest and / or woodland is normally considered to be of an adverse nature (i.e. tree felling); however indirect beneficial effects in some areas may arise where the introduction of the Proposed Development allows for the removal of ecologically habitat-poor conifer plantation. This may be followed by natural regeneration or planting of more diverse woodland tree mix or introduction of native woodland species, and the development of more open ground than that which existed originally. While there may be an ecological benefit from the removal of conifer plantation forest, there is a presumption against all forest removal which is supported by the Scottish Governments CoWRP³. As such, for the purposes of this assessment tree removal is to be considered as having an adverse effect. Further arboricultural works, such as crown reduction or limb removal to achieve the necessary safety clearance, removes the need for tree removal, thereby reducing the adverse effect on the forest or woodland habitat.

Sensitivity / Importance of Receptors

7.2.11 Four categories of sensitivity / importance of a forest or woodland are defined in **Table 7-2**.

Table 7-2 Sensitivity Criteria

Category	Description
High	Highly valued, subject of national designation e.g. Ancient Woodland Category 1a. Particularly rare or distinctive in a national context. Considered susceptible to small changes.
Medium	Valued more locally. Rare or distinctive in a regional context. Tolerant of moderate levels of change.
Low	Generally, more commonplace, not designated. Considered potentially tolerant of noticeable change. Undergoing substantial development such that their character is one of change.
Negligible	Already fundamentally changed (e.g. second rotation commercial conifer plantation). Considered tolerant of noticeable change. Has undergone substantial development such that their character is one of change.

Magnitude of Effect

7.2.12 Criteria for assessing the magnitude of change to a forest or woodland is defined in **Table 7-3**.

Table 7-3 Magnitude of Change Criteria

Category	Description
High	A noticeable change to the forest or woodland over a wide area or an intensive change over a limited area.
Medium	Small changes to the forest and woodland over a wide area or noticeable change over a limited area.
Low	Very small changes to the forest or woodland over a wide area or small changes over a limited area.

³ Forestry Commission (2009) The Scottish Government's Policy on Control of Woodland Removal. Available at: <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/publications/285-the-scottish-government-s-policy-on-control-of-woodland-removal/viewdocument/285>

Category	Description
Negligible	No discernible change to the forest or woodland.

Significance of Effect

7.2.13 The sensitivity of the forest and / or woodland (**Table 7-2**) and magnitude of change criteria (**Table 7-3**) are then used to inform a professional judgement on the likely significance of the effect. **Table 7-4** provides a framework for reaching a judgement as to the significance of predicted effects. Any effects rated as Major or Moderate are considered Significant.

Table 7-4 Matrix for Determining the Significance of Effects

		Sensitivity of Receptor / Receiving Environment to Change / Effect			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Magnitude of Change / Effect	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Negligible
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Limitations to the Assessment

7.2.14 Forest information has been provided by the landowners and forest / land manager of each landholding. Cross checking has only been carried out where observations suggested that the immediate conditions varied from the estate forestry records.

7.3 Baseline Conditions

Existing Baseline

7.3.1 The study area includes a small area of commercial forest plantation. In relation to the Aberdeenshire region, the Aberdeenshire Council records the woodland cover across the region as 91,225 hectares (ha). The baseline characterisation identified one landowner with forest or woodland potentially affected by the Proposed Development. A Woodland Report has been prepared for the affected forest or woodland property, which is included as **Volume 4, Appendix 7.1: Woodland Report**. The Site was visited and existing data, sourced from the forest owner and their agents, were reviewed and confirmed against the forestry surveys.

7.3.2 The total areas of forest and woodland habitats recorded within the Site, as shown in **Volume 3, Figure 7.1: Greens Substation Felling Requirements**, during the site surveys include:

- commercial forest (2.46 ha);
- semi-natural woodland (0.21 ha); and
- hedgerow (1.73 ha).

7.3.3 Given the dynamic nature of productive forests, which are subject to restructuring, the environmental sensitivity of the forest as a commercial asset and land use is low. There are areas of semi-natural woodland present within the vicinity of the Site, and these are considered in this assessment to be of medium sensitivity.

Future Baseline

7.3.4 Under the future “do nothing scenario” it has been assumed that coniferous plantation areas will continue to be managed principally in-line with commercial objectives and woodland restructuring, including their felling and replanting with similar species. It is assumed that the semi-natural woodland and hedgerow areas would be managed as long-term retention areas. It is not considered likely that there will be a net reduction in the area of

forest as a result of this scenario overall, although there will clearly be local changes. On this basis, the current baseline has been used for the purposes of this assessment and no further consideration will be given to future baseline scenarios.

7.4 Assessment of Effects, Mitigation and Residual Effects

7.4.1 The embedded mitigation is a combination of decisions taken during the design process to avoid or minimise the potential for likely significant effects, and the implementation of standard practice mitigation measures that are well-established and effective.

Iterative Design Process

7.4.2 The site selection process for the Proposed Development has taken into consideration effects on forestry and woodland, and for such effects to be avoided or minimised where possible. This has continued through the EIA process, with survey data informing the siting of infrastructure and access routes to minimise further potential effects on forestry and woodland, where practicable. This process is detailed in **Volume 2, Chapter 4: The Site Selection Process and Alternatives**.

Good Practice

7.4.3 There will be a contractual management requirement for the Principal Contractor to fully implement a comprehensive and site-specific Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). This document will detail how the Principal Contractor will manage all works in accordance with all commitments and mitigation detailed in the EIA Report, the Applicant's GEMPs and SPPs, statutory consents and authorisations, and industry good practice and guidance, including pollution prevention guidance.

7.4.4 Good practice measures with respect to felling requirements will be incorporated into environmental management controls, including:

- adherence to Forestry Commission (Scottish Forestry) Forest and Water Guidelines⁴ e.g. to ensure protection and enhancement of the water environment;
- management of forestry waste (SEPA)⁵ to ensure all excess waste resulting from forestry operations is correctly disposed of; and
- implementation of tree harvesting and extraction methods to ensure minimisation of soil disturbance and compaction.

Potential Effects

7.4.5 This section considers the potential impacts and associated effect significance of the construction and operation of the Proposed Development based on the typical activities described in **Volume 2, Chapter 3: Project Description**.

Construction Effects

7.4.6 The direct and gross loss of forest and woodland from construction of the Proposed Development is commercial forest (2.46 ha), semi-natural woodland (0.21 ha) and hedgerow (1.73 ha).

7.4.7 The direct loss of commercial, semi-natural woodland and hedgerows resulting from the Proposed Development, is due to the construction of the Substation and associated ancillary works.

7.4.8 The sensitivity of commercial forest within the study area is assessed as low due to its lack of designated status and its common occurrence in the local landscape. Additionally, the woodland is considered to have a potential

⁴ Confederation of Forest Industries (UK) Ltd. Guidance documents. Available at: <https://www.confor.org.uk/resources/forestry-water-scotland/guidance-documents/>

⁵ SEPA (2017) Management of Forestry Waste. Available at: https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/28957/forestry_waste_guidance_note.pdf

tolerance for visible alterations. The combined and direct loss of 2.46 ha of commercial forest is assessed as a low magnitude of change, in the context of a noticeable change over a limited area, equating to a 0.002% impact of forest removal within the regional resource forest area of 91,225 ha. This effect is assessed as **Minor Adverse** and **Not Significant**.

- 7.4.9 The combined and direct loss of semi-natural woodland (0.21 ha) (mixed native broad-leaved woodland), including hedgerows (1.73 ha) due to construction of the Proposed Development would be 1.94 ha. The sensitivity of semi-natural woodland within this assessment is classified as medium. This classification is based on several factors: the woodland holds particular value at the local level, contributing to community identity and ecological diversity; it is considered rare or distinctive within the regional context, thereby enhancing its importance within the landscape; and it demonstrates a capacity to tolerate moderate levels of change without significant degradation to its ecological functions or visual character. The magnitude of change is considered medium and as such the effect is assessed as **Moderate Adverse** and **Significant**.

Construction Effects - Windthrow

- 7.4.10 The tree felling required through areas of mature commercial forest to create the Proposed Development may result in an indirect effect of increasing potentially unstable forest edges where retained trees stand immediately adjacent to the Site. These areas, known within the forest industry as 'brown edges', have relatively unstable trees within them which previously depended upon the now felled neighbouring trees for support. The risk of windthrow is that these brown edge trees would be damaged and blown over due to the lack of shelter.
- 7.4.11 The existing plantation of young commercial forest will not be at an increased risk of windthrow due to the age and characteristics of the trees. Younger stands are generally less susceptible to wind damage, as their smaller canopies and shorter heights reduce wind loads on individual trees, making them more resilient to high winds. Furthermore, young trees have flexible trunks and root systems, which enable them to bend rather than break under pressure. The dense planting within this stand also provides mutual structural support, with each tree helping to buffer its neighbours from direct wind exposure. Since these young trees have not yet undergone thinning, the collective stability of the stand remains high, and windthrow risk is minimised. Consequently, the identified area of young commercial forest is assessed to remain at low risk of windthrow. The sensitivity of commercial forest within the study area is low. The magnitude of impact would be low, and therefore this additional area is assessed as **Minor Adverse** and **Not Significant**.

Operational Effects

- 7.4.12 The direct operational effects on forests and woodland associated with the Proposed Development would be limited to periodic vegetation management as part of the wider maintenance of the Proposed Development. Following the construction of the Proposed Development, there would be an ongoing need to manage the growth of vegetation to facilitate access for maintenance after woodland removal, which is deemed to be of negligible sensitivity and the impact of vegetation management is considered to represent a low magnitude of change. Overall, the effect during operation is assessed as **Negligible**.

Operational Effects - Effects on Forest Management Systems

- 7.4.13 The introduction of the Proposed Development within areas of managed forest would require a review by landowners of the existing management system. Most large commercial forest areas have a LTFP which identifies the operations intended for the ongoing management of the forest over a 20 year period. This LTFP also provides the forest owner with consents from Scottish Forestry, as the forest authority, to undertake felling and replanting of the forest over a 10 year period. The impact of the Proposed Development is therefore only in terms of individual LTFPs having to be revised to address the construction of the Proposed Development and the associated tree clearance works on the future management of forest. In the absence of mitigation, the requirement for forest owners to revisit their LTFP to incorporate the existence of the Proposed Development could be considered to be onerous. The sensitivity of the management system to revision is considered to be low; however, the magnitude of change required in terms of restructuring the LTFP to incorporate felling for the

Proposed Development and potentially additional felling to avoid wind throw could be, locally or for the individual landowner, of high magnitude and thus the effect is **Moderate Adverse** and **Significant**. Details of any LTFPs are included in **Volume 4, Appendix 7.1: Woodland Report**.

Mitigation

Mitigation During Construction

- 7.4.14 The Applicant proposes to implement a suite of standard good practice working methods to ensure that all construction activity (including forest and woodland removal) avoids significant effects on ecological and hydrological receptors.
- 7.4.15 In order to address the likely significant effect predicted for forest land-use management in the absence of mitigation, the Applicant has committed to the development of a Woodland Report for the forestry and woodland interests. The Woodland Report, included within **Volume 4, Appendix 7.1: Woodland Report**, identifies all areas of felling required to form the Proposed Development and access tracks. In addition, the Woodland Report has sought to reduce the risk of future windthrow by identifying felling to stable forest edges (outside of the Site).
- 7.4.16 The Woodland Report also includes, but is not limited to, seeking to agree a forest landscape design following good practice as defined by Forestry Commission (Scottish Forestry) Guidance (2014)⁶. The delivery of the felling identified in the Woodland Report has been developed in conjunction with the landowners / forest managers to deliver felling and restocking out with the Site. The Applicant has agreed the use of the Woodland Report to confirm the extent of forest and woodland removal required. This proposed felling will be further reviewed with the landowners to link this with their existing LTFP / LMP, which once amended, will be required to adhere to the UKFS as part of the approval process with Scottish Forestry. This approval is required prior to any felling being undertaken out with the Site or proposed access tracks. This method of addressing felling has been successfully used on a number of recent large-scale development projects and has delivered forest design to the satisfaction of Scottish Forestry as the statutory authority.

Mitigation During Operation

- 7.4.17 To mitigate the predicted likely significant effect on forest management systems for individual landowners, the Applicant has developed the Woodland Report in conjunction with the relevant landowners and forest managers.
- 7.4.18 Given that the Proposed Development would result in the permanent loss of forest and woodland, the Applicant is committed to making arrangements to plant on-site and off-site the equivalent area of woodland as Compensatory Planting, meeting the Scottish Government’s CoWRP objective of no net loss of woodland (see **Volume 4, Appendix 7.2: Compensatory Planting Management Strategy** and **Volume 3, Figure 7.2: Restructuring Proposals**).
- 7.4.19 Details of the required mitigation is provided in **Table 7-5** below.

Table 7-5 Mitigation Measures

Reference	Description
FO1	There will be a contractual management requirement for the Principal Contractor to implement a comprehensive and site-specific CEMP. This will detail how the Principal Contractor will manage all works in accordance with all commitments and mitigation detailed in the EIA Report, the Applicant’s GEMPs and SPPs, statutory consents and authorisations, and industry good practice

⁶ Forestry Commission (2014) Design techniques for forest management planning. Available at: <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/publications/106-design-techniques-for-forest-management-planning/viewdocument/106>

Reference	Description
	<p>and guidance, including pollution prevention guidance. Good practice measures with respect to felling requirements will be incorporated into environmental management controls, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adherence to Forestry Commission (Scottish Forestry) Forest and Water Guidelines e.g. to ensure protection and enhancement of the water environment; • management of forestry waste (SEPA) to ensure all excess waste resulting from forestry operations is correctly disposed of; and • implementation of tree harvesting and extraction methods to ensure minimisation of soil disturbance and compaction.
<p>FO2</p>	<p>A Woodland Report (Volume 4, Appendix 7.1: Woodland Report) has been created as mitigation for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to address the likely significant effect predicted for forest land-use management during construction and operation; and • to reduce the risk of future windthrow by identifying felling to stable forest edges outside the Site.
<p>FO3</p>	<p>A Compensatory Planting Management Plan has been created to ensure forest and woodland lost through felling is replaced. This will be delivered off-site.</p>

Residual Effects

7.4.23 This section considers the potential residual effects and associated effect significance of the construction and operation of the Proposed Development, following the implementation of the mitigation measures proposed in **Section 7.4** of this chapter.

Construction Residual Effects

7.4.24 The Applicant is committed to making arrangements to plant on-site and off-site the equivalent area of forest and woodland as Compensatory Planting, meeting the Scottish Government's CoWRP objective of no net loss of woodland (see **Volume 4, Appendix 7.2: Compensatory Planting Management Strategy** and **Volume 3, Figure 7.2: Restructuring Proposals**).

7.4.25 The potential to further reduce construction effects through good practice measures have been identified in the Woodland Report (in relation to windthrow); however, at this stage the Applicant is limited to committing to working with landowners to seek to agree felling through the Woodland Reports, which would in-turn lead to changes to the LTFP on land outside of the Applicant's control at this stage. Residual effect is anticipated to be **Negligible** on removal of commercial conifer forest, and **Minor Adverse (Not Significant)** on removal of semi-natural woodland.

Operational Residual Effects

7.4.26 Current and future forest land-use management is likely to be affected by the introduction of the Proposed Development and associated felling requirements. This is likely to require forest managers to amend current objectives, plans and techniques for the relevant forest, in particular, the incorporation of felling requirements into their long-term felling and landscape design plans. Taking account of the proposed mitigation in the Woodland Report, the residual effect on forest management is assessed as **Minor Adverse and Not Significant**.

7.4.27 There would be no significant operational effects pre-mitigation on woodland removal or forestry operations access and consequently, no significant residual operational effects are predicted to occur.

Cumulative Residual Effects

7.4.28 In reviewing the potential for effect interactions between commercial forest or native woodland, no significant residual cumulative effects have been identified.

7.4.29 **Table 7-6** provides a summary of the residual effects.

Table 7-6 Summary of Residual Effects

Receptor / Impact Type	Effect (Pre-Mitigation)	Mitigation Proposed	Residual Effect
Woodland removal (commercial conifer forest) during construction	Direct effect on commercial conifer forest. Minor Adverse and Not Significant based on the area of forest removal.	The Applicant would implement a suite of standard good practice working methods to ensure that all construction activity (including forest removal) avoids significant effects on ecological and hydrological receptors. Equivalent area of forest removed to be planted both on-site and off-site as per Scottish Government's CoWRP.	Negligible.
Woodland removal (Semi-natural Woodland) during construction	Direct effect on Semi-natural Woodland. Moderate Adverse and Significant.	The Applicant would reduce the felling where possible and seek to retain scrub / understorey layers in areas where existing tree cover does not breach safety clearances and construction activities. Equivalent area of woodland removed to be planted both on-site and off-site as per Scottish Government's CoWRP.	Minor Adverse and therefore Not Significant.
Woodland removal (operation)	Limited to periodic vegetation management to maintain the Proposed Development Negligible.	No mitigation is required.	Negligible.
Forest management	Indirect effect on forest management through requirement to incorporate the Proposed Development into LTFP. Moderate Adverse and Significant.	The Applicant has produced a Woodland Report to inform proposed revisions to the relevant LTFP and facilitate agreement with the landowners.	Minor Adverse and therefore Not Significant.

7.5 Cumulative Effects

7.5.1 This section seeks to understand the possibility for cumulative effects with other future developments known to the planning system. The cumulative projects shortlist was agreed with Aberdeenshire Council (see **Volume 2, Section 5.5 Cumulative Effects**). This has been reviewed in respect to forestry and woodland and the developments listed in **Table 7-7**, have been assessed for cumulative effects. Developments not listed in this

table were scoped out of the cumulative assessment because there would be no requirement for removal of woodland / forestry. As stated in **Volume 2, Chapter 5: EIA Process and Methodology**, developments marked with an asterisk are a Stage 1 cumulative development.

Table 7-7 Cumulative Projects

Planning Application Reference	Status	Development	Distance (km) and direction from the Site	Cumulative Effect
ECU00005165	Pre Application	Beauly to Blackhillock to New Deer to Peterhead 400kV OHL*	Passes through the Site	Cumulative effects through potential loss of native woodland
ENQ/2023/0739	Decided-PAC Agreed as Specified in Notice	National Development for Electrical Transmission Infrastructure Comprising Transition Joint Bays, Underground Cable Circuits Within a Cable Corridor, Substation and Ancillary Works	Passes through the Site	No cumulative effects
ENQ/2022/1845	Awaiting decision	Installation of Underground Cable	1.4 km south-east	Cumulative effects through potential loss of native woodland, not significant
APP/2023/1454	Approved	National for Formation of Onshore Landfall Point, Laying of Underground Cable and Erection of Substation	2.3 km south-east	Cumulative effects through potential loss of native woodland, not significant
ENQ/2021/1180	Decided-PAC Agreed as Specified in Notice	Erection of a Synchronous Compensator to Provide Grid Stability Services and Associated Works	1.6 km south	No cumulative effects
APP/2023/2102	Decided-Prior Approval Required	Formation of Forestry Private Way	4.9 km south-west	No cumulative effects
APP/2022/2571	Approved	Formation of Footpaths	4.8 km south-west	No cumulative effects
APP/2021/2773	Approved	Formation of Footpath	1.3 km north	No cumulative effects
APP/2022/0034	Approved	Formation of Footpath	1.4 km north-west	No cumulative effects
APP/2022/0076	Approved	Installation of Footpath and Associated Post and Wire Fencing	4.1 km north-west	No cumulative effects

Planning Application Reference	Status	Development	Distance (km) and direction from the Site	Cumulative Effect
ECU00005004	Pre Application	Smiddybank BESS	4.9 km east	No cumulative effects
ECU00005129	Pre Application	Monquhitter BESS	1.9 km north	No cumulative effects

7.5.2 Given the Scottish Government’s policy on Woodland Removal, it can be assumed that there would be no residual loss of woodland associated with these projects as the developers will be required to undertake compensatory planting for any areas of felling. As such, the cumulative effect is assessed as **Negligible**.

7.6 Summary and Conclusions

7.6.1 The assessment has concluded that the removal of 0.21 ha of semi-natural woodland and 1.73 ha of hedgerows would result in a significant effect (pre-mitigation). With mitigation applied, effects would not be significant. No significant effects predicted for the removal of the commercial forest.

7.6.2 The Applicant is committed to making arrangements to plant on-site and off-site the equivalent area of forest and woodland as Compensatory Planting, meeting the Scottish Government’s CoWRP objective of no net loss of woodland. See **Volume 4, Appendix 7.2: Compensatory Planting Management Strategy** and **Volume 3, Figure 7.2: Restructuring Proposals**.

7.6.3 The assessment identifies the potential for significant effects (pre-mitigation) on forest management, due to the requirement for forest managers to amend current objectives, plans and techniques for their forest, in particular to incorporate the felling requirements for the Proposed Development into their long-term felling and landscape design plans. The Applicant has proposed mitigation in the form of a commitment to develop ‘Woodland Reports’ for the forests and woodlands affected by the Proposed Development (see **Volume 4, Appendix 7.1 Woodland Report**). This mitigation is deemed sufficient to reduce the residual effect on forest management to not significant.