

Fanellan Hub 400 kV Substation and Converter Station Environmental Impact Assessment Report

Outline Landscape and Habitat Management Plan

February 2025



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GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Amenity	The natural environment, cultural heritage, landscape and visual quality. Also includes the impact of SHE Transmission's works on communities, such as the effects of noise and disturbance from construction activities.
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
BU	Biodiversity Unit - this is a nominal figure that is derived from a calculation using numerical values assigned for the distinctiveness, condition and size (area), connectivity and strategic significance of a habitat. Post-Development Biodiversity Units are calculated using risk factor multipliers to aid the discussion of loss, impacts avoided and gains of habitat as a result of management and development activities. The BNG toolkit automatically calculates the number of Biodiversity Units based on the information that the user inputs.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A formal process set down in The Electricity Works (EIA) (Scotland) Regulations 2000 (as amended in 2008) used to systematically identify, predict and assess the likely significant environmental impacts of a proposed project or development.
Habitat	Term most accurately meaning the place in which a species lives, but also used to describe plant communities or agglomerations of plant communities.
INNS	Invasive non-native species
LU	Linear Unit – is the same as a Biodiversity Unit except that the measurement unit is length instead of area. BU and LU cannot be added together for this reason.
Core Paths	Core paths are key routes that are part of the wider path network of long-distance walking and cycling routes, and local and community paths.
Mitigation	Term used to indicate avoidance, remediation or alleviation of adverse impacts.
Plantation Woodland	Woodland of any age that obviously originated from planting.
Final Long Term Habitat Management Plan (LTHMP)	Title of document that will supersede this OLHMP. It will include all management and monitoring specifications for onsite and offsite habitat creation, restoration and compensation and landscaping.

Term	Definition
Species Protection Plan (SPP)	A document that helps to ensure that works related to a proposal take into account any protected species present on site.
SuDs	Sustainable Drainage System
НСА	Habitat Condition Assessment
Term	Definition

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

- 1.1.1 Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc (hereafter the 'Applicant'), operating and known as Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission (hereafter 'SSEN Transmission'), seeks consent under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) to construct and operate a new 400 kV substation and a new High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) converter station at Beauly, near Inverness (hereafter the 'Proposed Development' and/or 'Fanellan Hub'). This would be located on land southwest of Kilmorack and the River Beauly; approximate National Grid Reference at centre NH 48736 43135. The footprint of the Proposed Development is hereafter referred to as the 'Site'. The location of the Site is shown on Appendix B Figure 1.1 Location Plan and the layout of the Proposed Development is shown on Appendix B Figure 3.1 Proposed Development. For full details of the Proposed Development, please refer to SSEN Fanellan Hub Environmental Impact Assessment¹.
- 1.1.2 WSP UK Ltd has been commissioned by SSEN Transmission to create an outline Landscape and Habitat Management Plan (oLHMP) for the Proposed Development and sets out the initial, proposed or measures for onsite habitat creation in relation to the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.3 This report has been produced with reference to the Fanellan Hub Environmental Impact Assessment Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment² in Chapter 8: Landscape Character and Visual Amenity. Chapter 8 assesses the effect of the Proposed Development on landscape and on visual amenity. It describes and analyses the existing landscape of the area that may be affected and considers its sensitivity to the type of development proposed. It defines the extent to which the Proposed Development would be visible and illustrates and analyses a representative sample of views to give a clear indication of the effect the development might have on visual amenity. Mitigation Measures are set out on Appendix B Figure 8.11 Landscape Mitigation Plan.
- 1.1.4 This report has also been produced with reference to the Proposed Development's Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report³, which is presented as a stand-alone document. SSEN Transmission is committed to protecting and enhancing the environment by minimising the potential impacts from their construction and operational activities. As part of this approach, SSEN Transmission has made commitments to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on all new projects gaining consent from May 2023⁴. The BNG assessment considers the condition, distinctiveness and spatial extent of habitats within the Site and the BNG Report aims to demonstrate how positive effects for biodiversity could be achieved through habitat creation and/or enhancement, should the Proposed Development be consented.
- 1.1.5 At the time of writing this oLHMP, the full BNG assessment has not been completed. However, sufficient landscape and habitat proposals have been finalised to sufficiently identify the high-level habitat management and monitoring requirements for the creation of this oLHMP.

1.2 Aims

1.2.1 This document follows recommendations from The Highland Council planning response 24/02655/SCOP Item 3.44 dated 06/08/2024 which states:

"NPF4's commitment to deliver positive effects for biodiversity through development. Policy 3 states that, 'Development proposals for national, major and of EIA development should only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will conserve and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks within and adjacent to the site, so that they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention, including through future management.' A draft or outline Habitat Management Plan (HMP) and Species Protection Plan should be produced as part of the EIA, including any proposals for mitigation and enhancement in relation to important habitats and species. Any compensatory planting plans should be carefully considered and included in the HMP. The HMP

¹ SSEN (2024) Fanellan Hub Environmental Impact Assessment Volume 2, Chapter 3: Description of the Proposed Development

² SSEN (2024) Fanellan Hub Environmental Impact Assessment Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Chapter 8 Landscape Character and Visual Amenity

³ SSEN (2025) Fanellan Hub Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.

⁴ Delivering a positive environmental legacy - SSEN Transmission (https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/globalassets/documents/sustainability-andenvironment/environmental-legacy-booklet) (2023)

should include a comprehensive monitoring programme for all habitat improvements, and breeding birds on the site." ⁵

- 1.2.2 This document aims to meet the requirements of The Highland Council's Scoping Opinion 24/02655/SCOP relating to the provision of *"a draft or outline Habitat Management Plan"*. Requirements for creation of Species Protection Plans (SPPs) and considerations of breeding birds have been considered separately.
- 1.2.3 This document is an outline operational guide to the maintenance and management⁶ of the current proposed landscape and habitats at the Site post development of the Proposed Development. It sets out the draft details of short-term landscape operations required to be undertaken within the first five years and an overview of the anticipated longer term management requirements for up to 30 years. Proposed requirements included relate to the operational works, monitoring and reporting of habitat, ecological and landscape elements for the Proposed Development.
- 1.2.4 This document also aims to provide SSEN Operations Team with a clear picture of the current proposed soft landscape estate and anticipated post development habitat types.
- 1.2.5 A final Long Term Habitat Management Plan (LTHMP) will be created following finalisation of the detailed design and once the final scope and scale of landscape mitigation is known and any required offsite land ownership and maintenance requirements have been agreed. The LTHMP is to be used by the appointed contractor and advisors as an operational manual for undertaking management and maintenance works, including monitoring and reporting.
- 1.2.6 Due to constraints within the Site, it is anticipated that the Proposed Development will not meet the required 10% Biodiversity Net Gain and offsite habitat enhancement or creation will be required. At the time of writing, requirements for offsite habitat creation or enhancement have not been identified or finalised with landowners are not included within this report. The LTHMP will incorporate the offsite monitoring and management requirements.
- 1.2.7 The final LTHMP will incorporate recommendations specified within this oLHMP and will also include:
 - specific management and monitoring prescriptions;
 - confirmation of onsite and offsite habitat creation and enhancement areas for BNG;
 - confirmation of all landscaping requirements; and
 - measures of success.
- 1.2.8 The final LTHMP will be agreed with NatureScot and The Highland Council prior to the commencement of works on the Proposed Development and will follow current guidance⁷.

1.3 Document Structure

- 1.3.1 This report is comprised of six sections as follows:
 - 1. Introduction sets out the aim of this oLHMP, background information (presented above), Site summary and summary of data sources.
 - The Proposed Development presents an overview of the landscape and BNG/habitat commitments of the Proposed Development and targeted aims and mitigation requirements of each habitat type/landscape element.

⁵ In order to meet the requirements of the above planning condition, BNG Assessment and Landscape Assessment, this document has been titled outline Landscape and Habitat Management Plan (oLHMP).

⁶ N.B. this document borrows from the landscape ecological management plans as described by British Standard 42020:2013 Biodiversity — Code of practice for planning and development. However it diverges from the BS structure because it is designed to address the practical issues of establishment maintenance of the landscape assets, Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and planning condition. Additionally, it takes into consideration planning and other commitments, and is designed to be useable as a management reference by a Contractor maintaining the site.

⁷ NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)) (2016) Planning for Development: What to consider and include in Habitat Management Plans. Available online: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2023-12/160324%20-%20HMP%20guidance.pdf

- 3. Soft Landscape and Habitat Design sets out the function of each habitat type/landscape element and summarises proposed planting and anticipated habitat type.
- 4. Maintenance and Management outlines maintenance and management prescriptions for each of the habitat types and landscape elements.
- 5. Monitoring sets out anticipated monitoring requirements for each of the habitat types and landscape elements.
- 6. Appendix A summarises the key maintenance and management prescriptions.

1.4 Site Summary

- 1.4.1 The Site is situated south of the A831, on the southeast facing side of a broad valley above the River Beauly. The Site lies at the top of a hill adjacent to Ruttle Wood. To the north and west of the Site, the land is densely wooded, featuring broadleaved woodland, conifer plantations, and areas of woodland that extend down to the banks of the River Beauly. In contrast, the land to the south and east is much more open as it slopes down the opposite valley side and is dominated by arable land.
- 1.4.2 Figure 8.11 Landscape mitigation Plan shows the solid red line denoting the planning application boundary and the blue line showing the land ownership boundary.

1.5 Data Sources

- 1.5.1 This document should be read in conjunction with the following reports from the SSEN Fanellan Hub Environmental Impact Assessment Report⁸:
 - Volume 2 Chapter 8 Landscape Character and Visual Amenity.
 - Volume 2 Chapter 9 Ecology.
- 1.5.2 This document should also be read in conjunction with the following figures from the Fanellan Hub Environmental Impact Assessment Report⁹. These figures have been appended to this oLHMP and are available in Appendix A: Figures.
 - Volume 3 Figure 8.10 Landscape Sections Indicative cross-sections.
 - Volume 3 Figure 8.11 Landscape Mitigation Plan SHEET 1 and SHEET 2.
 - Volume 3 Figure 9.1.1 UK Habitat Classification: Baseline.
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Post Development Habitats¹⁰.

⁸ SSEN (2024) Fanellan Hub Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

⁹ SSEN (2024) Fanellan Hub Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

¹⁰ At the time of writing this figure has not been finalised. It will be published as part of the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.

2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Landscape Overview

- 2.1.1 There are significant local sensitivities regarding the Proposed Development, arising from the development of the Beauly Denny overhead line (OHL), the Beauly 132kV substation, existing OHLs, and electricity infrastructure in the area.
- 2.1.2 Details of landscape receptors and key issues that influenced the landscape and habitat design are given in Volume 2, Chapter 8 Landscape Character and Visual Amenity of the EIA Report.
- 2.1.3 The key landscape consideration for the management of Fanellan Hub was to ensure that the Site was adequately screened from the sensitive visual receptors outlined in the EIA Report¹¹ and/or integrated into the surrounding landscape as far as possible. In order to achieve an effective design solution, it was imperative to position the development at the lowest possible elevation. This involved 'cutting in' to the hillside, whilst creating a naturalistic landform on the down-slope side, utilising materials sourced from the Site and planted with native vegetation, thereby enhancing the visual integration of the Proposed Development within the hillside. The landform was designed to help ensure that the Proposed Development is largely screened by the new landscape forms for most receptors.

2.2 Landscape Aims

- 2.2.1 The aims of the landscape design are as follows:
 - Site the Proposed Development and create new landform in such a way as to help fully integrate it into the local landscape to most observers, the Proposed Development will appear to sit within the existing landscape at the top of the hill.
 - Reduce the extent to which the Fanellan Hub buildings would be visible, through a combination of landform and architectural design (including colour) to a degree sufficient to avoid adverse visual effects on all but a few or most local residential receptors.
 - Introduce landscape features such as landform, woodland, and wildflower meadow in a way that not only provides screening of the Proposed Development but also complements and enhances the existing landscape character.
 - Introduce new and enhance existing native habitat types in keeping with local biodiversity targets to encourage wildlife and help combat climate change.

2.3 Habitats and BNG Overview

2.3.1 The key habitat commitment for the management of Fanellan Hub was to achieve a 10% net gain for biodiversity as part of the Proposed Development. In order to achieve this, it is imperative that post development habitats designed on site as part of the Landscape Mitigation Plan contribute to achieving the anticipated condition specified within the BNG Assessment. In order to achieve the anticipated condition and therefore achieve 10% net gain, the habitats must be created, enhanced and managed following the outline management and requirements specified within this report in conjunction with offsite BNG provision due to the space constraints on site. Further to this, the habitats must be monitored to ensure the condition is being achieved and to identify any adaptive management that may be required where condition is not on track.

2.4 Habitats and BNG Aims

- 2.4.1 The aims for habitats and BNG are as follows:
 - Include features of biodiversity value within Proposed Development's landscape design.

¹¹ SSEN (2024) Fanellan Hub Environmental Impact Assessment Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Chapter 8 Landscape Character and Visual Amenity

- Focus the design of proposed habitats and species on the Site's nature conservation interest, informed by the Site's biodiversity value, community engagement and consideration of local priorities for biodiversity.
- Incorporate habitats and floral species suitable to support a relevant terrestrial invertebrate assemblage, which in turn will provide a foraging resource for protected and notable species, including bird and bat species.
- Mitigate disturbance to wildlife and environment during all phases of the development, where possible.
- Achieve a 10% net gain for biodiversity.
- Define applicable biodiversity maintenance and monitoring methodology.
- Landscape, Habitat and BNG Mitigation
- 2.4.2 Commitments to be developed, maintained, and managed for the life of the Proposed Development are:
 - Introduction of a belt of native broadleaved woodland planting to the southern aspect of the substation and converter station buildings, to extend and enhance the existing woodland.
 - Introduction of five Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) basins seeded with appropriate wetland and marginal species for functional, visual and biodiversity reasons. Profiles of the SuDs basins to be maintained to retain a natural profile.
 - Areas that cannot be planted as a result of non-ecological or landscape constraints shall be seeded with a species-rich neutral grass and wildflower seed mix.
 - Undeveloped areas of ground disturbed by the construction works shall be seeded with a species-rich neutral grass and wildflower seed mix.
 - Areas of ground disturbed by the construction works and being returned back to the landowner post development shall be reinstated to the baseline habitat type and condition. Pastoral land shall be seeded with a suitable grass seed mix.

3. SOFT LANDSCAPE AND HABITAT DESIGN

- 3.1.1 The soft landscape estate at Fanellan Hub has been designed to integrate landscape, habitat and BNG aims defined in Section 2.2 and 2.4, including the environmental commitments made by SSEN Transmission. This section describes the soft landscape estate in terms of landscape elements - areas of different types of landscape and thus different habitat types. It sets the function of each element, which may be landscape driven (e.g. screen planting), ecology driven (e.g. habitat creation to achieve 10% BNG) or a combination of the two.
- 3.1.2 Habitat types are described in terms of the UK Habitat Classification¹²¹³. Landscape elements are described in terms of LD 117 Landscape Design¹⁴, part of the suite of documents under the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).

Neutral wildflower grass seeding LE1.3

3.1.3 The proposed seed mix for neutral wildflower grass seeding combines Scotia Seeds MG5 Meadow Mix¹⁵ (SCM8), or similar, alongside the Bee Bird and Butterfly Mix¹⁶ (SCF13), which is a wildflower only mix. These seed mixes, or similar, will visually integrate with the surrounding pastureland that is characteristic of the area but will add additional biodiversity value to the area, with particular value for pollinating insects provided by the wildflower only mix. The presence of wildflowers will also add some limited visual amenity interest. The anticipated UKHab classification of wildflower grassland will be g3c other neutral grassland.

Existing pastoral land – to be returned to landowner LE1.6

- 3.1.4 This element contributes to local landscape character as pastoral land is characteristic. On completion of the works, areas of pastoral land disturbed by the proposed works will be re-graded (if necessary) and re-seeded with a suitable grazing seed mixture to restore its pastoral properties. Appropriate seed mix and management until returned to the landowner is to be identified in coordination with the landowner to ensure it is fit for purpose. Management must ensure the removal of weeds as identified by the landowner e.g. ragwort to ensure safe grazing.
- 3.1.5 As this element is handed back to the landowner following construction, its future on-going use and maintenance will be outside SSEN Transmission control.

Existing woodland and hedges to be retained LE2.1

- 3.1.6 This element is retained within the Proposed Development's design in order to maintain its screening function, biodiversity value, and contribution to local landscape character. Existing habitat type and condition will be maintained as far as possible with minimal maintenance required only to prevent degradation or as a health and safety consideration e.g. remove ivy where reducing tree health or remove damaged limbs where they may cause injury or damage. No interplanting is proposed.
- 3.1.7 It will be protected for the duration of the construction works and ownership will be handed back to the landowner on completion of the works. Its future on-going use and maintenance will be outside SSEN control.

¹² UKHab Ltd. (2020). UK Habitat Classification, Version 1.1. Available at: https://www.ukhab.org

¹³ It is acknowledged that a more recent UKHab Version 2.0 is available however, Version 1.1 was current at the time of survey and therefore proposed habitats are classified using V1.1 to ensure consistency throughout the EIA and oLHMP.

¹⁴ Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (2024). LD 117 Landscape design, Version 0.1.0. Available at: https://standardsforhighways.co.uk/search/23894e23-0626-4b57-bab4-38c123582433

¹⁵ MG5 Meadow Mix – Scotia Seeds

¹⁶ https://www.scotiaseeds.co.uk/shop/bee-bird-butterfly-mix/

Woodland and Woodland Edge planting LE2.2

- 3.1.8 The primary function of this planting is for screening purposes, particularly from the south and south-west of the Site. The woodland, once mature, will help integrate the Site into the local landscape, helping to screen it from receptors, and visually connect with Woodlands the northwest and other surrounding woodland blocks. It also provides secondary functions of increasing the biodiversity value of the Site, as well as contributing to local landscape character.
- 3.1.9 The woodland and woodland edge planting will consist of the native broadleaved species, listed below in Table 3-1. The anticipated UKHab classification for these areas will be w1g other woodland broadleaved. The proposed species have varying rates of establishment and final height resulting in a naturalistic woodland structure. This variety of species also provides both aesthetic and habitat diversity and greater climate change resilience.

Common Name	Scientific Names
Silver Birch	Betula pendula
Goat Willow	Salix caprea agg.
Sessile Oak	Quercus petraea
Blackthorn	Prunus spinosa
Wild Cherry	Prunus avium
Hawthorn	Crataegus monogyna agg.
Hazel	Corylus avellana
Rowan	Sorbus aucuparia
English Elm	Ulmus procera

Table 3-1 - Species used in new woodland planting

Proposed drainage ponds and pond margins LE6.1

3.1.10 Water bodies of all sizes are characteristic of the area, providing ecologically valuable habitats as well as contributing to local character. The anticipated UKHab classifications of the habitat are g3c other neutral grassland for the partially inundated areas which should be seeded with Scotia Seeds wet meadow mix¹⁷ or Scotia Seeds pond margin mix¹⁸ or similar depending on the levels of inundation with anticipated species listed in Table 3-2. The anticipated UKHab classification for the permanently wet areas is f2e reedbeds and should be seeded with the Scotia Seeds pond margins mix or equivalent with plug planting of the species listed within Table 3-2.

¹⁷ https://www.scotiaseeds.co.uk/shop/wet-meadow-mix/

¹⁸ https://www.scotiaseeds.co.uk/shop/pond-edge-mix/

Table 3-2 - Species proposed for permanently wet areas and pond margins

Common Name	Scientific Name		
Permanently wet areas and pond margins			
Reed Canary-grass	Phalaris arundinacea		
Common Reed	Phragmites australis		
Common spike-rush	Eleocharis palustris		
Jointed rush	Juncus articulatus		
Floating sweet-grass	Glyceria fluitans		
Pond margins only			
Meadowsweet	Filipendula ulmaria		
Ragged-robin	Lychnis flos-cucli		
Yellow flag	Iris pseudacorus		
Marsh marigold	Caltha palustris		
Brooklime	Veronica beccabunga		

3.1.11 The proposed seeding and species mix will help to integrate the waterbodies into the local landscape more quickly.

3.1.12 The proposed seeding will also contribute to the biodiversity value of the Site and help prevent soil erosion, whilst aesthetically the seeding will ensure the water bodies appear more naturalised. The seeding will help ensure that large areas of the Site are not left as 'bare earth' or as visible large muddy basins.

Drains LE6.2

- 3.1.13 Water courses of all sizes are characteristic of the area, providing ecologically valuable habitats as well as contributing to local character. The anticipated UKHab classifications of the habitat are g3c other neutral grassland for the partially inundated areas which should be seeded with Scotia Seeds wet meadow mix or Scotia Seeds pond margin mix or similar depending on the levels of inundation with anticipated species listed in Table 3-2.
- 3.1.14 The margins of the drains will be seeded where the ditch profile allows. Once established, this will increase biodiversity value of the Site and help reduce soil erosion, whilst aesthetically the seeding will ensure drainage ditches appear more naturalised, helping to integrate them into the landscape more quickly.

4. MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT

- 4.1.1 The maintenance and management actions for each of the proposed landscape elements/habitats are designed to ensure that the aims set out above are achieved. They will also enable the successful establishment and on-going presence of a sustainable and healthy landscape whilst fulfilling the landscape, visual and ecological functions to which SSEN have committed and/or as planning conditions require for the duration of this oLHMP. Additionally, maintenance and management requirements are essential to ensure that the proposed habitats achieve the anticipated habitat type and condition required to achieve the desired 10% net gain as defined within the BNG assessment.
- 4.1.2 The proposed maintenance and management requirements are presented in **Appendix A** and will form the foundation of the subsequent final LTHMP which shall be regularly reviewed every five years as the landscape and habitats mature.
- 4.1.3 The following are the over-arching requirements that apply to the soft landscape estate as a whole, and at all stages:
 - The entire site shall be cleared of any litter and debris at each maintenance visit.
 - A majority of waste (wildflower grass cuttings, leaves, tree and shrub clippings) shall be normally removed from site and composted (either by the Contractor or disposed of at an appropriate composting facility).
 - With the agreement of the Site and project managers, a proportion of green waste that is free of weeds seed may be kept on Site to form habitat piles, in discrete locations where there is no risk of nuisance to the public, Site operations or safety.
 - In any area where there is more than the occasional plant or seeding failure, the root cause shall be investigated and the problem addressed before replanting or reseeding is carried out.
 - Weeds shall be managed without herbicide use wherever possible. Herbicides shall normally only be used to treat injurious weeds as defined under the Weeds Act 1959 and Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) as defined by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 (as amended).
 - INNS shall be fully mapped, removed/controlled by a suitably licence practitioner, and arisings disposed of in accordance with current legislation and guidance, following an appropriate INNS management plan.
 - All works on existing trees shall be carried out in accordance with the latest versions of British Standard (BS) 3998:1989 British Standard Recommendations for Tree Work, and British Standard (BS) 5837:2012: Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - recommendations, and should be undertaken by certificated personnel from the Arboricultural Association's list of Registered Contractors.
 - All works shall be avoided within root protection areas of trees.
 - All operations shall be carried out using machinery appropriate to the task, and when weather and ground conditions are suitable.
 - All native species planting will be carried out using plant material of local provenance (the closest provenance that is available in commercial quantities) to ensure maximum benefit for local biodiversity.
 - Turfs from the areas stripped for the works will be safeguarded for use in reinstatement and restoration wherever practical.
 - Operations shall be suspended where ground conditions prevent the use of machinery without damage to the ground surface.
 - Species shall be of local provenance as identified above using local suppliers and ordered well in advance of planting to ensure availability of required stock.
 - Plants shall be sturdy, with a healthy leading shoot, and will have been grown and managed in the nursery to ensure a compact and fibrous root system.

4.2 Woodland Site Preparation and Planting

4.2.1 Woodland Site preparation and planting specifications will be defined in detail within the LTHMP. Steps are likely to include the following:

Selection of tree species

4.2.2 Tree species selection has followed guidance with respect to local seed zones, to ensure those included are appropriate to the region¹⁹. Accordingly, all plants shall be of Scottish Origin and from seed zone 201 and targeted based on broadleaved tree species present within the wider area.

Appropriate sourcing of plants

- 4.2.3 The planting will adhere to Scottish Forestry's policy¹⁹ for sourcing planting material for native species of trees and shrubs, and therefore should help achieve both the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources, in accordance with the UK's international commitments.²⁰
- 4.2.4 Scottish Forestry promote the availability and use of planting stock that will:
 - Be both fit for purpose and ecologically adapted to the planting site.
 - Maintain or enhance both genetic adaptation/fitness of our tree and shrub populations, and their capacity to adapt to changing environmental conditions.
 - Sustain sufficient genetic variation to provide for future uses of trees for all purposes.
 - Help to maintain and restore natural genetic processes in tree populations, especially gene flow and natural selection.
 - Help conserve patterns of the genetic structure of tree populations that reflect their evolutionary history.
- 4.2.5 All plants shall be obtained from stock conforming to the Forest Reproductive Material (Great Britain) regulations 2002, and a Horticultural Trades Association (HTA)21 accredited nursery in the Nursery Certification Scheme or membership of the Confor Nursery Producers' Group22. Where the plant supplier is not accredited with the HTA or Confor Nursery Producers' Group, written approval shall be sought from NatureScot providing suitable evidence that the nursery complies with the latest best practice guidance on plant handling and production, prior to obtaining stock.
- 4.2.6 The Contractor shall provide written confirmation of the provenance of the proposed planting material and that the native plant species have been sourced from the highest available preference for selecting native seed sources. This confirmation shall include confirmation of the seed certificates for the plants used in the Works.

Development of planting methods

- 4.2.7 Planting shall be carried out via a combination of single species or multi-species clumps to obtain a naturalistic effect. Generally (and unless dictated otherwise by soil type/micrositing), this shall involve plants being planted in random clumps comprising single-species groups with dominant plants planted throughout the mix area. Planting will be done with varied spacing within clumps or adjacent clumps to avoid the appearance of rows and grids and to provide a range of light and other conditions with the aim of enhancing biodiversity in line with landscape screening requirements.
- 4.2.8 The cultivation method will be determined by the contractor undertaking the planting to create a good tilth (lose friable soil) in which to plant while minimising disturbance of adjacent ground. Ground preparation shall be undertaken under moderate conditions, if possible²³. This would minimise any increased risk of erosion and water

¹⁹ https://forestry.gov.scot/publications/18-seed-sources-for-planting-native-trees-and-shrubs-in-scotland/viewdocument/18 [Accessed 02/02/2025]

²⁰ The Forest Reproductive Material (Great Britain) Regulations 2002

²¹ https://hta.org.uk/

²² https://www.confor.org.uk/about-us/

²³ Both wet and dry conditions should be avoided.

run-off and damage to soil structure during, and/or drying of roots. Undertaking this work during the autumn will also minimise weed colonisation before planting, whilst still allowing approximately 2 months before planting to allow any cultivation of the ground to settle.

4.2.9 Planting timescales will be determined based on the nature of the stock used. In the event of bare rooted stock this shall be planted between December and February, or container grown nursery stock shall be planted from November to February during favourable weather conditions.

5. MONITORING

- 5.1.1 This oLHMP outlines anticipated monitoring requirements, summarised in Table 5-1 below. Full targeted monitoring requirements will be specified within the LTHMP and include targeted Habitat Condition Assessment (HCA) values required to meet the required 10% BNG. Additionally, monitoring is required to check on the establishment of the landscape elements and their progress towards achievement of their designed functions.
- 5.1.2 Vegetation monitoring must be undertaken by suitably qualified landscape and ecological professionals who will monitor the success of the grassland, wetland and woodland creation and highlight the need for any further management measures. A suitably qualified or experienced person must undertake the HCA in years 2, 5 and 10.
- 5.1.3 The results of the monitoring surveys will inform future management requirements. In any cases where issues are noted, a proposal for reinstatement/repair or remedial work shall be required. An annual monitoring report should be produced, which will detail management measures undertaken to date, monitoring survey results and any proposed adaptive management measures for the next reporting period. The results of the monitoring will be reviewed to ensure the oLHMP and LTHMP objectives are being met and to determine any appropriate amendments.
- 5.1.4 The Site shall be inspected at least once a year to identify any adaptive management requirements including but not limited to:
 - any damage, compaction or excessive wear to grass areas;
 - any damage or disease to tree and shrub areas;
 - presence of INNS;
 - overcrowding or excessive growth within SuDS/basins requiring removal or thinning of plant species
 - any tree or shrub growth that may provide a climbing aid to scale security fences or which intrudes into the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) visibility zone around the security fence; and
 - any trees considered at active risk of falling onto the security fence or into the live substation.

Table 5-1 - Monitoring Requirements

Landscape / habitat element	Monitoring Requirement	Frequency
LE1.3: New neutral grass and wildflower seeding	Inspection by suitably qualified and experienced personnel to monitor the condition of the grassland. The inspection shall include but not be limited to: health of plants and overall habitat, coverage of grass vs wildflower, INNS, coverage of weeds, browsing damage, bare areas.	Years 1-5, 7, 10 (frequency requirement to be revisited at year 10)
	Habitat Condition Assessment - to establish progress towards targeted condition, by a suitability qualified ecologist	Years 2, 5, 10 (frequency to be reviewed at year 10)
	Reporting of management and monitoring and proposals for any adaptive management	Annual – years 1 to 10 inclusive
LE1.6: Existing pastoral land – to be returned to landowner	Inspection by suitably qualified and experienced personnel to monitor the condition of the grassland. The inspection shall include but not be limited to: health of plants and overall habitat, coverage of grass vs wildflower, INNS, coverage of weeds, browsing damage, bare areas.	Annual until returned to landowner
	Reporting of management and monitoring and proposals for any adaptive management	Annual until returned to landowner
LE2.1: Established woodland areas to be retained	Inspection by suitably qualified and experienced personnel to monitor the condition of the woodland The inspection shall include but not be limited to: All trees inspected and condition noted including health, disease, losses, damage including browsing damage, INNS.	Annual until returned to landowner
	Reporting of management and monitoring and proposals for any adaptive management	Annual until returned to landowner
LE2.2: New woodland and woodland edge planting	Inspection by suitably qualified and experienced personnel to monitor the condition of the woodland and edge habitat. The inspection shall include but not be limited to: All plants inspected, and condition noted including health of trees, disease, losses, damage including browsing damage, weeds, INNS.	Years 1-5, 7, 10 (frequency requirement to be revisited at year 10)
	Habitat Condition Assessment - to establish progress towards targeted condition, by a suitability qualified ecologist	Years 2, 5, 10 (frequency to be reviewed at year 10)
	Reporting of management and monitoring and proposals for any adaptive management	Annual– years 1 to 10 inclusive

Landscape / habitat element	Monitoring Requirement	Frequency
LE6.1: SUDS Basin – wetland grass seed mix	Inspection by suitably qualified and experienced personnel to monitor the condition of the grassland. The inspection shall include but not be limited to: health of plants and overall habitat, overcrowding, coverage of grass vs wildflower, INNS, coverage of weeds, bare areas.	Years 1-5, 7, 10 (frequency requirement to be revisited at year 10)
	Habitat Condition Assessment - to establish progress towards targeted condition, by a suitability qualified ecologist	Year 2, 5, 10 (frequency to be reviewed at year 10)
	Reporting of management and monitoring and proposals for any adaptive management	Annual– years 1 to 10 inclusive
0	Inspection by suitably qualified and experienced personnel to monitor the condition of the grassland. The inspection shall include but not be limited to: health of plants and overall habitat, overcrowding, coverage of grass vs wildflower, INNS, coverage of weeds, bare areas.	Years 2, 5, 10 (frequency to be reviewed at year 10)
	Habitat Condition Assessment - to establish progress towards targeted condition, by a suitability qualified ecologist	Years 2, 5, 10 (frequency to be reviewed at year 10)
	Reporting of management and monitoring and proposals for any adaptive management	Annual – years 1 to 10 inclusive

APPENDIX A: LANDSCAPE AND HABITAT MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

Table A-1

/ habitat	UKHab Classification and Planting proposals	Proposed Management and Monitoring	Required (years)
neutral g3 grass and gra wildflower seeding Pr mi (S Be Mi W	g3c other neutral grassland Proposed Planting mix: Scotia Seeds MG5 Meadow Mix (SCM8) or similar and Bee bird and Butterfly Mix (SCF13) Wildflower only mix or similar	All areas of grassland within the SSEN ownership boundary that are not occupied by woodland or ponds shall be seeded with neutral wildflower grass seeding as identified on Fanellan Hub Landscape Mitigation Plans. All grass areas to be maintained as open species-rich grassland. Area shall be sown following guidance for the specific seed mix selected. Sowing will be undertaken in either spring sowing (March to May) or autumn sowing (Mid-August to late September).	Seeding – Year 124
		Generally, if there is significant weed growth to 30cm after 8 weeks of planting, an early cut should be completed to a minimum of 10cm.	8 weeks in Year 1
			Annual - Years 1 to 10 inclusive
		Survey area for INNS or noxious weeds at every site visit. If found, remove by hand. Spot-treatment with herbicide may be agreed by the Project Manager if area is away from basins.	3-4 times in Yea 1 Annual from Year 1
		Survey to inspect % cover of grass. If grass starts to dominate, cut grass and seed area with yellow rattle.	Annual from Year 2
LE1.6: Existing pastoral land – to be	g4 modified grassland	All areas of grassland outside the SSEN ownership boundary that are not occupied by woodland, as identified on Fanellan Hub Landscape Mitigation Plans, shall be seeded with a suitable pasture grass seed mix. All grass areas to be maintained as g4 modified grassland. Area shall be sown and cut following guidance for the specific seed mix selected.	Seeding

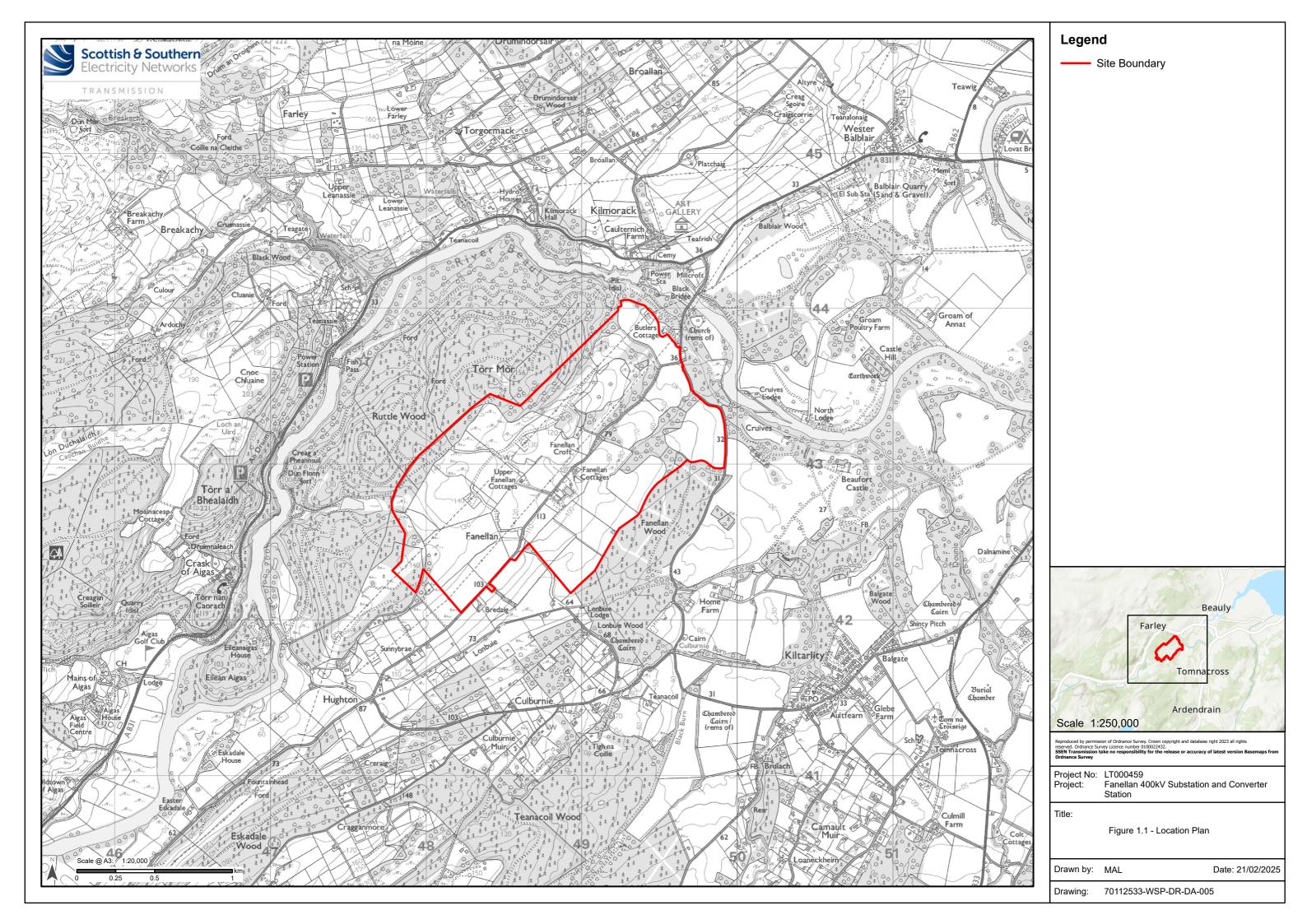
 $^{^{\}rm 24}$ and any additional years where seeding has failed

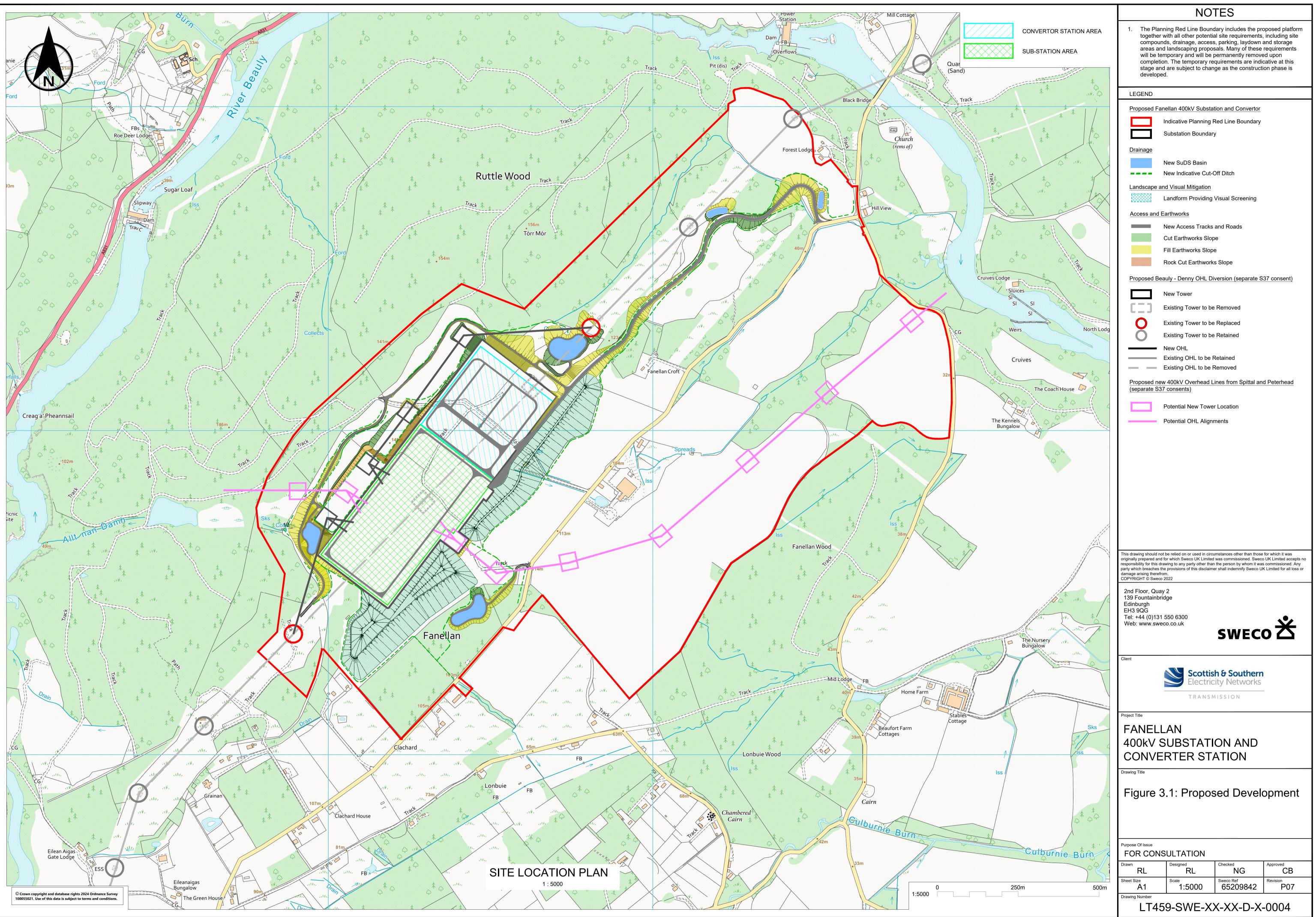
Landscape / habitat element	UKHab Classification and Planting proposals	Proposed Management and Monitoring	Required (years)
landowner	Proposed Planting mix: To be determine by landowner to ensure it is fit for their intended purpose (grazing, cropland, fallow etc)	3-4 weeks after sowing, apply a nitrogen-based fertiliser at the manufacturer's recommended rate.	3-4 weeks
		Grass to be mown as required for the specific seed mix and via agreement with landowner	Determined by Landowner
		Survey area for weeds at every site visit. If found, remove by hand. Spot-treatment with herbicide must be agreed by the Project Manager and landowner. List of weeds for removal to be determined by landowner to ensure area is fit for purpose following handover e.g. removal of ragwort to allow for safe grazing by livestock.	At each cut. Year 1 prior to handover.
		INNS survey and removal in line with guidance	Annual - Years 1 to 10 inclusive
woodland	l as baseline habitat type shown in UK	All woodland areas to be retained will be maintained to ensure the existing habitat type and condition. Retain woodland understorey except where ivy is identified that could destabilise the tree. In such instances, ivy stems should be severed.	Year 1 prior to handover
retained		Survey area for nuisance weeds. If found, remove by hand. Spot treatment with herbicide may be agreed by Project Manager. Survey for INNS and remove in line with guidance	Year 1 prior to handover
		Maintain suitable protective fencing around retained woodland.	Year 1 prior to handover
		Carry out bat surveys on any mature trees subject to any remedial work in accordance with NatureScot's policy and legal requirements.	As and when required
woodland	w1g other woodland	All areas of proposed woodland within the SSEN ownership boundary, as identified on Fanellan Hub Landscape Mitigation Plans, shall be planted with the appropriate species.	Planting
	broadleaved	All woodland areas to be maintained as UKHab classification w1g other woodland broadleaved. Planting will follow guidance for the specific species and size selected.	

/ habitat	UKHab Classification and Planting proposals	Proposed Management and Monitoring	Required (years)
edge planting	Proposed Planting mix: Silver Birch Goat Willow Sessile Oak Blackthorn	Apply sufficient water during the growing season and more regularly during periods of drought and hot summer months. At each maintenance visit check the extent of natural regeneration around each plant: if regeneration is such that it is affecting tree growth, treat as weeds and remove all from around each plant. Any noxious or farm weed species are to be removed, and all weeds are to be removed from within plant shelters by hand. Plant beds are to be strimmed twice annually or as and when required to ensure trees receive adequate light and to ensure noxious weeds do not set seed. All trees to be firmed up as necessary.	Planting Year 1-2
	Wild Cherry Hawthorn Hazel Rowan	Minimum three maintenance visits/year (spring, summer, late autumn) and four if replacement planting is required, unless agreed otherwise by SSEN. Inspect planting for wind-throw, re-firm trees and check staking and tree tie/tube requirements; refix, straighten, replace, and remove ties/tubes where necessary. All trees that are missing or dead, or which are failing to make satisfactory extension growth, are to be replaced at the end of each growing season. Replacement trees shall match the original specification. Protect and check tree safety through annual visual tree assessment and monitoring by a qualified arboriculturist. Visual tree assessment is to be used to identify structural and physiological defects and requirements for maintenance. Report any requirements for remedial works to SSEN.	3 Visits per year for years 1-3 Annually years 4-10
		ALBACOTE B controlled release fertiliser, or similar agreed fertiliser, is to be applied annually in March or April in the second and third year after planting, at the manufacturer's recommended rate. INNS survey and removal in line with guidance. Thin out the density of tall young trees where required to allow the best examples to develop. Inspect at every visit and report any requirements for remedial works to SSEN.	Spring in Year 2 and 3 Annual Annual or as required
LE6.1: SuDS Basin –	UKHab Classification:	Remove and recycle tree ties, guards & stakes once plants are established. Ensure SuDS are clear and functional. If SuDs vegetation becomes too dense for appropriate function, vegetation will be thinned. Undesirable species or areas of vegetation to be subject to weed control shall be removed by hand or mechanically. Herbicide shall NOT to be applied to weeds in or near waterbodies, including the banks and edges of SuDS basins.	As Required Annual

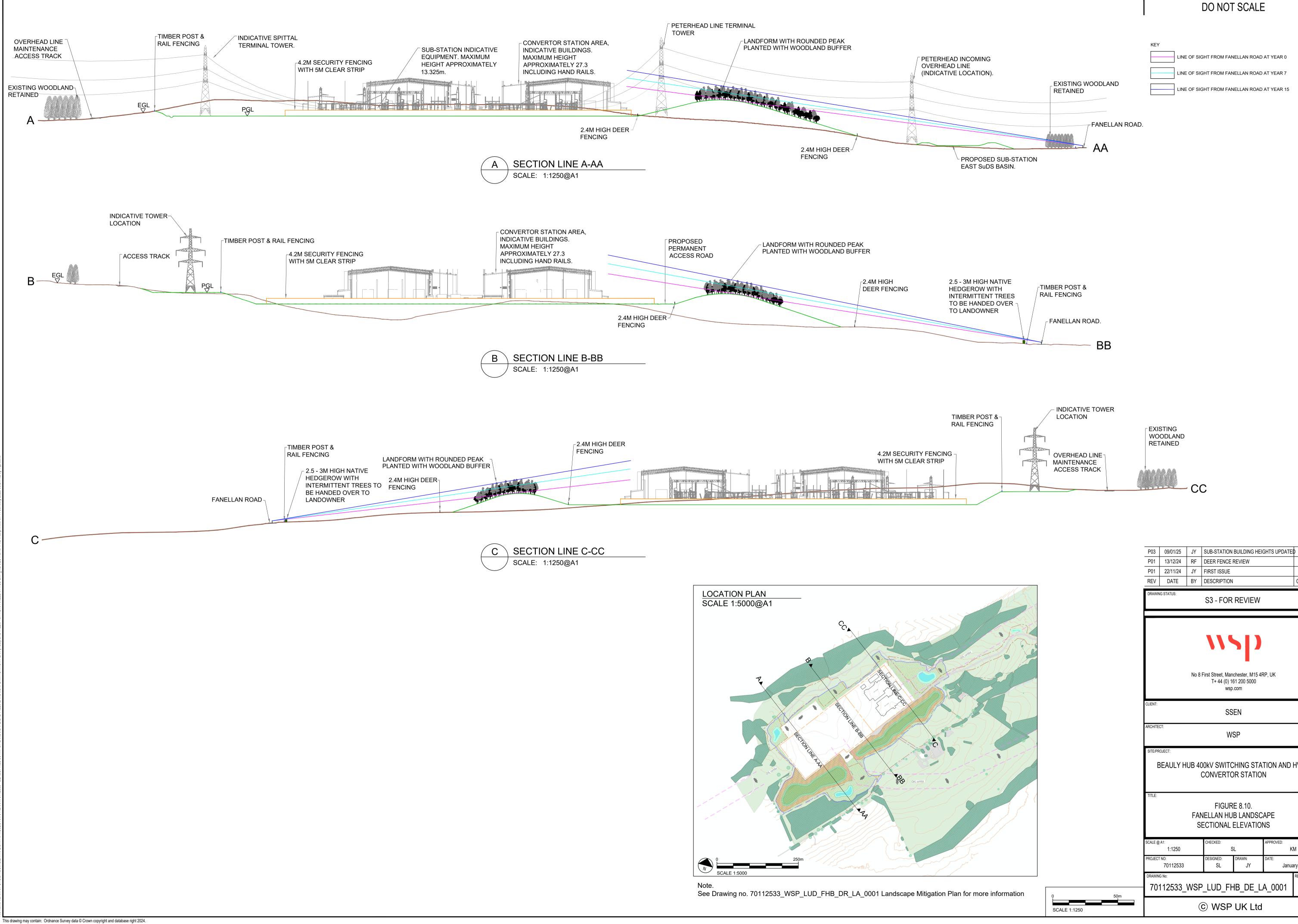
/ habitat	UKHab Classification and Planting proposals	Proposed Management and Monitoring	Required (years)
wetland grass seed mix	Partially inundated areas: g3c other neutral grassland	Plug planting or application of additional seed mix where species diversity is poorer than anticipated or planting failed due to inundation levels	Annual
	Permanently Wet	Inspect annually and report any requirements for remedial works.	Annual
	Areas: f2d Reedbed Proposed Planting Mix: Partially Inundated Areas: Scotia Seeds Wet Meadow Mix (SCM2) & Scotia Seeds Pond Margins mix Permanently Wet Areas: Scotia Seeds Pond Margins mix and plug planting	INNS survey and removal in line with guidance.	Annual
Drainage ditches – marginal wetland seed mix	UKHab Classification: g3c other neutral grassland Proposed Planting Mix: Scotia Seeds Wet Meadow Mix (SCM2) & Scotia Seeds Pond Margins mix	Ensure ditches are clear and functional. If ditch vegetation becomes too dense for appropriate function, vegetation will be thinned. Undesirable species or areas of vegetation to be subject to weed control shall be removed by hand or mechanically. Herbicide NOT to be applied to weeds in or near waterbodies, including banks adjacent to ditches.	Annual
		Plug planting or application of additional seed mix where species diversity is poorer than anticipated or planting failed due to inundation levels	Annual
		Inspect annually and report any requirements for remedial works.	Annual
		INNS survey and removal in line with guidance.	Annual

APPENDIX B: FIGURES





P:\6551\65209842_Beauly_Hub\000\D-Z-0000_Drawings\Site Layout Drawings\AutoCAD\0000 - Planning Application Notice\ LT459-SWE-XX-XX-D-X-0004_P07 Simplified.dwg



OVERHEAD LINE MAINTENANCE ACCESS TRACK	CC						
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	REV DATE BY DESCRIPTION CHK DRAWING STATUS: S3 - FOR REVIEW						
	No 8 First Street, Manchester, M15 4RP, UK T+ 44 (0) 161 200 5000 wsp.com						
	CLIENT: SSEN ARCHITECT:						
	WSP						
	SITE/PROJECT: BEAULY HUB 400kV SWITCHING STATION AND HVDC CONVERTOR STATION						
	FIGURE 8.10. FANELLAN HUB LANDSCAPE SECTIONAL ELEVATIONS						
	SCALE @ A1: CHECKED: APPROVED: 1:1250 SL KM						
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SCALE 1:1250	© WSP UK Ltd						



DO NOT SCALE TECHNICAL CONSTRAINTS Site Boundary Land Ownership Boundary Existing fencing To be retained Existing Watercourse Burn to be retained Secure boundary fencing 4.2m high Overhead Lines (Existing and Proposed) with indicative 90m easement Note: No alteration to landform or planting of trees FEATURES TO BE HANDED OVER AFTER COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT Existing Vegetation to be retained Existing Tree to be retained Pastoral Land to be re-seeded and made good PROPOSALS Timber post and rail fencing Deer fencing with badger gates 2.4m high Vehicle access roads Landform Screen Woodland and woodland edge (e.g. Scots Pine, Birch, Oak) Neutral wildflower grass seeding -Wildflower Meadow Mix, Emorsgate EM34 or similar approved Seeding to SUDS basin floor -Wetland Meadow Mix, Emorsgate EM8 or similar approved Wetland margin grass seeding -Wetland Meadow Mix, Emorsgate EM8 or similar approved NOTES All existing hedgerows to be retained on the Site boundary where possible. Cable and drainage construction easements may restrict potential to add in replacement hedgerow planting. This will be finalised at detail design stage. The current assumption is to retain as much of the existing boundary hedgerows as possible. Bat roost features (e.g., bat boxes) to be added to retained trees and as standalone features – the number and location to be finalised at detailed design stage. P04 26/02/25 RF OHL UPDATED SL KM SL KM P03 09/01/25 JY RETAINED VEGETATION UPDATED P02 13/12/24 RF RETAINED VEGETATION REVIEW SL KM P01 22/11/24 JY FIRST ISSUE SL KM CHK APP REV DATE BY DESCRIPTION NG STATUS: S3 - FOR REVIEW **** No 8 First Street, Manchester, M15 4RP, UK T+ 44 (0) 161 200 5000 wsp.com SSEN WSP E/PROJEC Fanellan 400kV Substation & Converter Station FIGURE 8.11. FANELLAN HUB LANDSCAPE MITIGATION PLAN SHEET 1 0F 2 SCALE @ A1: 1:2500_1 KM SL ROJECT NO ESIGNED: DRAWN January 25 70112533 SL JY DRAWING No: 701112533_WSP_LUD_FNB_DR_LA_0001 P03 © WSP UK Ltd



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		FIGURE 8.11. FANELLAN HUB LANDSCAPE MITIGATION PLAN							
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