6.0 Ecology

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6.1. Introduction

6.1.1. This chapter provides baseline information and an assessment of potential effects on non-ornithological ecological features arising from Limekiln Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development') upon ecology during construction and operation.

6.1.2. Impacts and effects on ornithological features are assessed with Chapter 7 – Ornithology.

6.1.3. This chapter (and its associated figures) is intended to be read as part of the wider Environmental Report.

6.1.4. Figures associated with this chapter are:

- Figure 6.1 – Phase I habitat survey results
- Figure 6.2 – Statutory site plan

6.1.5. The objectives of this Ecological Assessment are to:

- Provide baseline information on the current habitats and ecological features both within the Site and in the immediately surrounding area;
- Identify the proximity of any designated sites for nature conservation interest and provide an assessment of any potential effects the Proposed Development may have on these;
- Identify the presence or potential presence of any protected species or habitats and provide an assessment of any potential effects the Proposed Development may have on these; and,
- Provide recommendations for further pre-construction checks and / or mitigation measures, if required as well as providing an outline of proposed habitat enhancements.

6.1.6. The assessment has been informed by desk-based review of relevant ecological information and an extended habitat survey. Reference is made to relevant legislation, planning policy and guidance, as appropriate.

6.1.7. Consideration has been given to the potential presence of rare, protected, or notable habitats and species, and the location of nearby features including designated sites for nature conservation. Mitigation and enhancement measures to achieve an overall biodiversity gain are also proposed.

6.1.8. Throughout this report, common names for species are favoured over scientific names unless there is potential for confusion and in which case scientific names are also presented.

6.2. Site Overview

6.2.1. 'The Site' of the Proposed Development is located within the red line boundary illustrated on **Figure 2.1**.

6.2.2. The Site lies entirely within the existing and operational Limekiln Wind Farm development (Energy Consents Unit reference: ECU00002070 and EC00003303). Access tracks are therefore pre-existing, and areas of bare earth are present which were formerly used as a borrow pit for the construction of the wind farm. An existing Substation is present, and the tracks are bordered by open areas and plantation woodland.

6.2.3. The surrounding wider landscape supports similar plantation woodland and open areas typical of commercial forests in the region.

6.3. Legislative Framework, Planning Policy and Guidance

Legislation

6.3.1. Reference has been made to the following key pieces of legislation, listed in **Table 6.1 and Table 6.2.**

Table 6.1: Key legislation - International.

International
• Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat 1971 (hereafter referred to as the 'the Ramsar Convention'); • Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats 1979 (hereafter referred to as the 'the Bern Convention'; • UNESCO convention on the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972); • Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds); and, • Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora).

Table 6.2: Key legislation - National.

National
• The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) (collectively 'the Habitats Regulations'); • The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017; • The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004; • The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended in Scotland); • The Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003; • The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019; • The Electricity Act 1989 (Schedule 9); • The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended in Scotland); and, • The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011.

Policy and Guidance

6.3.2. Reference has been made to the following key pieces of policy and guidance, listed in **Table 6.3**.

Table 6.3: Policy.

National and Local
• The National Planning Framework 4 (Scottish Government, 2023); specifically 'Policy 3 – Biodiversity', 'Policy 4 – Natural Places' and 'Policy 5 – Soils'. • Scottish Government (2022) The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045; • NatureScot (2023a) Advising on peatland, carbon-rich soils and priority peatland habitats in development management; • NatureScot (2020) The Scottish Biodiversity List; • CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland. Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine; • NatureScot (2023b) Developing with Nature guidance; • NatureScot (2024a) Planning and development: enhancing biodiversity; • NatureScot (2024b) Standing Advice for Planning Consultation – Protected Species. • Highland-wide Local Development Plan (The Highland Council, 2012). • Highland Nature: Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2026 (Highland Environment Forum, 2021). • Highland Statutorily Protected Species Supplementary Guidance (The Highland Council, 2013a).

6.3.3. This report is provided in accordance with the provisions of British Standard 42020:2013 Biodiversity: Code of Practice for Planning and Development.

6.4. Methodology

Desk Study

6.4.1. A desk study was undertaken to identify existing information on the presence of designated sites for nature conservation, protected and notable species and habitats within proximity to the Site as follows:

- Statutory designated sites for nature conservation related to ecology, within 5 km of the Site, extending to 10 km for internationally protected sites with mobile qualifying species. Statutory sites are presented in **Figure 6.2**.
- Non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation within 2 km of the Site;
- Existing records of priority habitats, protected and notable faunal species, within 2 km of the Site, extended to 5 km for bat roosts and annex 1 / schedule 1 raptors; and
- Existing records of ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees, within 2 km of the Site.

6.4.2. The following key sources were consulted:

- NatureScot[1] and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) websites[2];
- The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website[3];
- Ancient Woodland Inventory (NatureScot's OpenData website[4]); and
- Highland Biological Recording Group (HBRG[5]).

6.4.3. Reference was also made to Ordnance Survey (OS) maps of the wider area and online aerial images (www.google.co.uk/maps) in order to determine any features of nature conservation interest in the wider area, including potential ponds and watercourses.

6.4.4. Documents produced for the operational Limekiln Windfarm Extension and Limekiln Windfarm Section 36c (S36c) Application (together, Limekiln Wind Farm) were also

[1] https://sitelink.nature.scot/home
[2] http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/
[3] https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx
[4] https://opendata.nature.scot/datasets/ancient-woodland-inventory/explore?location=57.009453%2C-2.298541%2C12.97
[5] https://www.hbrg.org.uk/

referenced to review potential presence of protected species and habitats on Site. These include the following:

- Limekiln Windfarm Extension Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA-R) Chapter 11. Ecology[6], including:
    - Appendix 11.B Badger survey
    - Appendix 11.C Otter Survey
    - Appendix 11.D Water Vole Survey
    - Appendix 11.E Pine Marten Survey
    - Appendix 11.F Fish Survey
    - Appendix 11.G Bat Survey
    - Appendix 11.H Aquatic Invertebrate Survey
    - Appendix 11.I Habitat and Vegetation Survey of Additional Land; and,
    - Appendix 11.J Outline Habitat Management Plan
- Limekiln Windfarm S36c Application EIA-R Chapter 11 – Ecology[7], including:
    - Appendix 11.A NVC Survey Report
    - Appendix 11.B – Protected Species Report;
    - Appendix 11.C 2012 Limekiln Wind Farm Bat Survey Report
    - Appendix 11.D 2019 Bat Survey (Limekiln Wind Farm Extension)
    - Appendix 11.F – Species Protection Plan;
    - Appendix 11.G – Habitat Management Plan;

Field Surveys

6.4.5. An extended Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken on 29th May 2025 by E. Richens who is a suitably experienced and qualified field ecologist. The survey followed UK industry

[6] Infinergy (2020) *Limekiln Wind Farm Extension EIA Report. Chapter 11. Ecology.* Available at: https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00002070
[7] Infinergy (2021) *Limekiln Wind Farm Section 36C Variation EIA Report. Chapter 11. Ecology.* Available at: https://www.limekilnwindfarm.co.uk/downloads/

standard JNCC Phase 1 Habitat Methodology (JNCC, 2010) and with reference to Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidance (2017[8]).

6.4.6. The survey covered the Site, as presented in **Figure 2.1**.

6.4.7. Habitats were mapped and described through the use of target notes. The survey was extended to include the additional recording of specific features indicating the presence, or likely presence, of protected species, invasive species and other species of potential conservation value.

Limitations

6.4.8. An extended Phase 1 habitat survey does not constitute a detailed botanical survey or faunal species list or provide a full protected species survey but, enables competent ecologists to ascertain an understanding of the ecology of the site in order to:

- Broadly identify the nature conservation value of a site and assess the significance of any potential impacts on habitat/species recorded; and/or,
- Confirm the need and extent of any additional specific ecological surveys that are required to identify the true nature conservation value of a site (if any).

6.4.9. The extended Phase 1 habitat survey visit was undertaken in May 2025 with no access restrictions and therefore within the optimal period for botanical surveys (approximately April to September) which means that there are no constraints associated with the timing of the survey.

6.5. Baseline and Assessment

6.5.1. This section seeks to identify the potential for effects to occur on habitats and protected and notable species which could be considered as reasonably likely to occur as a result of the Proposed Development. The Site's proximity to statutory and non-statutory designated sites and potential effects on their qualifying interests is discussed. Measures are proposed for the protection of sensitive habitats and species, and recommendations are made for further pre-construction surveys and mitigation, if required.

6.5.2. The Proposed Development has been designed to minimise the potential for effects on sensitive ecological features; thereby ensuring existing wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity are maintained and enhanced. Significant biodiversity gain will also be provided,

[8] CIEEM. (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

as noted in section 1.5, and will be implemented by a Habitat Enhancement and Management Plan (HEMP).

Designated Sites for Nature Conservation

Statutory Designated Sites

6.5.3. Statutory designated sites identified within the appropriate search radius (as specified in Section 1.4.1) and of biodiversity interest are presented in **Table 1.4**, alongside their qualifying interests. The location of each designated site in relation to the Proposed Development is shown on **Figure 6.2:** Statutory Designated Sites.

6.5.4. Sites designated only for ornithology features are discussed within Chapter 7 – Ornithology.

Table 6.4. Statutory Designated Sites with Ecological Interest

(SAC: Special area of Conservation, Ramsar: Ramsar Convention Wetland of International Importance, SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest)

Statutory Site Name	Approx distance and direction from the Site	Qualifying Features
Sandside Bay SSSI	35 m north of the access track part of the Site	• Sand dunes
Red Point Coast SSSI	1.18 km north of the access track part of the Site.	One terrestrial habitat and one biological feature: • Terrestrial Habitat: Maritime Cliff • Biological Feature: Scottish primrose *Primula scotica.*

Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SAC and Ramsar	2.03 km south west	Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of the site: • Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the *Littorelletea uniflorae* and/or the *Isoëto-Nanojuncetea* • Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds Acid peat-stained lakes and ponds • Blanket bog Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of the site: Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* • Transition mires and quaking bogs • Depressions on peat substrates of the *Rhynchosporion* Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: • Otter *Lutra lutra* • Marsh saxifrage *Saxifraga hirculus*
East Halladale SSSI	2.5 km south west	• Blanket Bog
Broubster Leans SAC and SSSI	4.41 km east	Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of the site: • Transition Mires • quaking bogs.

6.5.5. Sandside Bay SSSI is located 35 m north of the Site boundary and is designated for the habitat feature sand dunes. Due to the close proximity of the SSSI to the Proposed Development, there is potential for indirect impacts to features for which the SSSI was designated; however the nearest part of the Site to the SSSI is the existing access track and no construction operations are required in this location.

6.5.6. All works will be confined to the Site boundary and as such no direct impacts are anticipated. While located in relatively close proximity to the Site, the only works proposed nearby to Sandside SSSI are use of an existing access route. The BESS compound and Substation Extension are located over 2 km from the Sandside Bay SSSI and as such no impacts are anticipated from these elements of works during either construction or operation.

6.5.7. All vehicles entering or leaving the Site will be required to follow good practice pollution control and prevention measures, including dust suppression management, pollution prevention and runoff control measures. The adoption of such measures will ensure there are no indirect effects during the construction phase. Such measures can be detailed within a CEMP for the Proposed Development, which would be controlled by a suitably worded planning condition.

6.5.8. No discernible impacts are anticipated to occur on any other statutory designated site for nature conservation given the spatial separation distances, nature of the development and absence of available habitat for qualifying interest features.

Non-statutory Designated Sites

6.5.9. Data received from HBRG confirmed that the Site is not located within any non-statutory designated site for nature conservation, and there were no non-statutory designated sites within a 2 km radius of the Site**.** Given there are no non-statutory designated sites located in proximity to the Proposed Development, no impacts are anticipated.

Priority Habitats and Peatland

Existing Information

6.5.10. Information gathered in support of the operational Limekiln Wind Farm identified wet heath habitat within woodland rides. This is a habitat listed on the SBL, however it was stated that wet heath communities are likely due to drying of former bog habitat resulting from forestry operations.

6.5.11. During the extended Phase 1 habitat survey wet heath was identified. This is described 'Habitats' below.

6.5.12. A peat assessment has been undertaken in support of the Proposed Development (see Chapter 9 Geology and Peat) and has concluded that the BESS, underground cable routing and existing road infrastructure are situated on non-peaty soils, however the Substation Extension is located on soils which *'represent a mixed peat spoil from past land-use on the site'* and that *'peat impacts… are therefore considered minimal due to the already disrupted and mixed nature of organic soils present*.'

Ancient and Irreplaceable Habitats

6.5.13. No ancient and irreplaceable habitats have been recorded within the Site. As such, no impacts are anticipated on ancient and irreplaceable habitats.

Habitats

Existing Information

6.5.14. Baseline information collected in support of the Limekiln Wind Farm Extension (Limekiln Windfarm Extension EIA-R 2020, Chapter 11. Ecology[9]) indicated that land within the Site consisted predominantly conifer plantation with areas of wet modified bog habitat (NVC: M25a) and dry modified bog habitats (NVC: M15b/ M25a mosaic) located at woodland edges and adjoining access routes. Small areas of acid flush (M6c/M25a mosaic) and wet dwarf-shrub heath (M15b) were also present.

6.5.15. Limekiln Windfarm has created additional access roads and upgraded existing access routes. Under the Limekiln Windfarm Habitat Management Plan areas of forestry within the Site are largely due to be re-stocked, other than where permanent infrastructure is now located. No specific proposals are made to habitats bounding access routes and forestry.

Extended Habitat Survey

6.5.16. Habitats within the Site comprise predominantly J4 bare ground, in the form of the existing access track and working areas associated with the operational Limekiln Wind farm. Other habitats recorded within or immediately adjacent to the Site include wet heath (D2), coniferous woodland (A1.2.2), recently felled woodland (A4.2) and neutral grassland (B2.1).

6.5.17. Plantation coniferous woodland (including felled woodland) for the purposes of forestry is typically of low ecological value, however adjacent habitats are of greater ecological value locally. As mentioned above, the presence of areas of wet heath are considered likely to result from drying of bog habitats associated with forestry operations. Such habitats are restricted to the edges of plantation blocks, rides and land adjoining access tracks.

6.5.18. A summary of phase 1 habitats recorded in the study area is provided in **Table 1.5** and are shown in **Figure 6.1**.

Table 6.5 Habitats recorded during the extended phase 1 habitat survey.

Phase 1 Habitat	Notes
J4 Bare Ground	An existing access track forms the majority of the Site, along with compound and work areas. The latter area comprises a complex mix of mineral soils, peat soils and rock fragments.

[9] Infinergy (2020) *Limekiln Wind Farm Extension EIA Report. Chapter 11. Ecology.* Available at: https://www.energyconsents.scot/ApplicationDetails.aspx?cr=ECU00002070

A1.2.2 Coniferous plantation woodland	The southern area surrounding the Site is largely made up of densely planted sitka spruce, Scots pine and occasional larch species, around 15-20 m in height. Understorey is very limited, some lanky moss and glittering woodmoss but mainly dead needles.
A4.2 Recently felled coniferous woodland	Recently felled woodland is found on both sides of the access track in marginal areas roughly 15 m-50 m wide. Largely brash and bare earth. Likely felled sitka spruce.
B2.1 unimproved neutral grassland	Adjacent to the main track, this habitat largely constitutes unimproved grassland. Species noted included; cocksfoot, Yorkshire fog, meadow foxtail, crested dog's tail, meadow fescue, sweet vernal grass. Amongst these are also herbs including sorrel, creeping thistle, white clover and Persian speedwell. At the immediate track margin, some local enrichment has occurred resulting in more common daisy, white clover, common mouse-ear chickweed and a few examples of white campion. A drainage ditch runs alongside part of the access track, within this habitat, and contains common cotton grass, small lousewort and early growth of field horsetail.
D2 Wet heath	Bordering the coniferous plantation, this habitat comprises small gorse species, some purple moor-grass, cow-horn bog-moss, some dog lichen in damper areas, as well as young saplings (no taller than 5ft) of sitka spruce. Common heather, cross-leaved heath, marsh hair moss, big shaggy-moss, small lousewort and common milkwort are also present throughout the area.

6.5.19. Habitats outside of the Site are predominantly plantation woodland and similar shrub heath. All works will be confined to the Site boundary and as such there will be no direct impacts to off-Site habitats.

6.5.20. Existing access tracks will be utilised by the Proposed Development, and so no additional impacts are anticipated to occur with regards to these.

6.5.21. The built footprint of the BESS compound will predominantly occur on previously disturbed land which is currently bare ground following wind farm construction. Expansion of the Substation area and the proposed cable route will be located principally in areas of existing plantation woodland and will result in the loss of a small amount of wet dwarf shrub heath (approx. 0.02 ha) which is heavily degraded, and discrete areas of plantation woodland of low ecological value (totalling approx. 2.59 ha). Replanting of coniferous woodland is to take place in 0.71 ha of the Site, with the remaining 1.88 ha (approx.) taken up by proposed infrastructure and easements which must be maintained as open ground.

6.5.22. Wet dwarf shrub heath is common at the locality with most track side areas comprising of it, the loss is considered not significant in the context of the local area, however the requirement

to maintain open ground in areas of felled forestry provides opportunities for habitat enhancement.

Protected and Notable Species

Existing Records

6.5.23. HBRG returned two records of protected or notable species within 2 km of the site, these were pine marten (2021) and pygmy shrew (2019), both recorded 1.62 km west of the Site.

6.5.24. HBRG did not hold any other records of protected or notable species within 2 km of the Site within the last 10 years.

6.5.25. Documentation which supported the operational Limekiln Wind Farm revealed the presence of pine marten, water vole and common lizard in the wider Limekiln wind farm development site.

Extended Habitat Survey

6.5.26. During the extended baseline habitat survey, no evidence was found of any protected or notable faunal species within the Site boundary.

6.5.27. Although not recorded during the extended habitat survey, there is the potential for species of reptile to be present on the edges of the Site.

6.5.28. Habitats surrounding the Site including plantation woodland are suitable for red squirrel. No evidence of red squirrel was noted in the extended Phase 1 habitat survey, no records have been returned in the last 10 years, and they were not considered within the Limekiln Wind Farm application. The species is therefore considered to be absent.

6.5.29. There are no suitable structures or trees that have potential to support roosting bats within the Site, or ponds that could be used by notable amphibians. There is suitable habitat for badger to establish a sett, though no evidence of badger was noted on Site or on the Limekiln Wind Farm and no records of badger were returned. Similarly pine marten may utilise woodland surrounding the Site; however habitats within the Site are considered unlikely to be important for the species.

6.5.30. The Site is considered unsuitable for otter, water vole and fish given the lack of suitable watercourses. Along the access track, there are occasional sections of unvegetated dry ditch but as these did not hold water at the time of survey and were are considered unsuitable for otters, water voles and fish. Use of the watercourses in the surrounding area by these species cannot be discounted (particularly as water vole were identified during baseline data gathering for the Limekiln Wind Farm).

6.5.31. Woodland edge habitats in which the Site is located could be utilised by foraging bats, however relatively small scale tree loss within an area of existing commercial forestry in which regular felling occurs is not considered to negatively impact the local bat population. No features suitable for roosting bats were identified during the extended habitat survey, however a pre-construction check will be undertaken to ensure this remains the case.

6.5.32. Lighting and noise during construction of the Proposed Development will be controlled through the CEMP, including the avoidance of general lighting and use of task specific lighting where it is required, ensuring light spilt to adjacent woodland habitat is avoided and implementation of general good practice measures to control noise such as turning of plant when not in use.

6.5.33. During operation there will be no requirement to be permanently or routinely lit, with lighting only to be used in the event emergency access is required outside of daylight hours. Any permanent lighting would be fitted with suitable cowls or hoods to minimise light spill to adjacent habitats. As such, there are no impacts anticipated to foraging or commuting bats.

6.5.34. There is no evidence that the Site is regularly used by, or is of importance to, any other protected faunal species.

6.5.35. The Proposed Development, and the associated construction works, are of a limited scale, particularly in the context of the operational Limekiln Wind Farm development.

6.5.36. Taking into consideration the small scale of Proposed Development, measures for protection of ecological interests to be included in a CEMP (including pollution prevention, control of lighting and noise measures), it is considered unlikely that protected or notable species will be impacted by the Proposed Development.

6.5.37. Precautionary pre-construction surveys and protection measures implemented via a CEMP would prevent potential breaches of legislation pertaining to protected faunal species (such as reptiles) during construction. Pre-construction surveys will be required for badger, pine marten and roosting bats.

6.5.38. The small areas of removal of habitat on site should be removed under Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) during the construction stage. This will safeguard reptiles and other protected or notable species including amphibians and terrestrial mammals, if present on site. RAMs will include clearing areas of longer vegetation in a two-stage cut; first to a height of 100-150 mm above ground level, then to ground level prior to construction works commencing. This will encourage any reptiles potentially present to move away from the works area to safety. Hand searches of suitable vegetation by a suitably qualified ecologist will also be required to prevent accidental killing or injuring of reptiles if they are present.

6.6. Biodiversity Enhancement

6.6.1. Significant habitat and species enhancement proposals include:

- restoration of the remaining area surrounding the proposed Substation Extension to manage heathland and associated habitats;
- allow heathland to expand into cable route areas;
- restoration and enhancement of plantation woodland edge habitats following felling;
- Allow heathland to expand into open areas around the BESS;
- Hedgerow planting around the BESS compound, to include native fruit bearing species only with an aim of a species rich hedgerow;
- Bird boxes including owl boxes;
- Bat boxes; and
- Refugia piles for reptiles and amphibians.

6.6.2. These proposals will contribute to significant biodiversity enhancements on Site through the enhancement of existing habitats, and the introduction of native habitats not previously noted. It will increase foraging and commuting resources for protected and notable species including bats, birds, reptiles and pine marten.

6.6.3. A Habitat Enhancement and Management Plan (HEMP) will be finalised post consent and prior to the commencement of construction and can be controlled through a suitably worded condition of planning. The HEMP will seek to maximise opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and will incorporate the enhancement measures listed above.

6.7. Assessment summary

6.7.1. Table 6.7 below provides a summary of the findings of the assessment.

Table 6.7: Summary of assessment.

Feature	Summary of Mitigation	Summary Enhancement
Designated Sites	The Site does not form part of any statutory designated site for nature conservation. The closest designated sites are Sandside Bay SSSI (35 m) and Red Point Coast SSSI (both 1.18 km). To prevent impacts to Sandside Bay SSSI, a CEMP will be produced to include implementation of dust suppression measures, pollution prevention and surface water runoff management measures. No impacts on statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation are anticipated. Standard construction practices are recommended to be controlled through the CEMP.	None required.
Habitats	Existing features of biodiversity value will largely be retained and protected throughout the construction and operation phases. Pollution prevention measures will be implemented to prevent pollution and run-off occurring during the construction and specific control measures would be implemented to protect the watercourses/ditches off Site.	Enhancement of on-site heathland habitats, hedgerow creation and allowing expansion of existing heathland will provide biodiversity benefits and enhancements, along with the provision of bird and bat boxes, and refugia, which accords with NPF4. Enhancements will be implemented and monitored in line with an HEMP which will be agreed with Highland Council through a suitably worded planning condition.

Protected and notable species	No evidence of protected species were recorded on the Site during the habitat survey and the potential for the Site to support protected species limited by habitat diversity and previous construction works. Pre-construction surveys will be required for badger, pine marten and roosting bats. As a precautionary measure, construction works will be undertaken under RAMs which will be included in the CEMP.	Enhancement to benefit protected and notable species which may be present on site will include the installation of bat and bird boxes, including barn owl boxes, refugia piles for amphibians and reptiles, and hedgerow planting of fruit bearing native species to provide a foraging resource for a number of species.

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