

14.

Forestry

14. Forestry

14.1 Introduction

- 14.1.1 The potential impact resulting from the construction and operational phases of the Project on forestry are addressed in this EIA Report chapter. Land use was considered in the Scoping report of June 2025. Forestry was scoped into assessment, but other land uses were scoped out, because no sensitive receptors were identified. Forestry in this context considers commercial and non-commercial woodland. Other arboricultural features of groups of trees and individual trees have been scoped out of this assessment.
- 14.1.2 Commercial forests are dynamic and changing through landowner activities and natural events. This would include the changes to, for example, felling programmes and compositional changes that follow from changes to management objectives or response to biotic or abiotic factors.
- 14.1.3 The environmental services provided by woodlands in relation to habitats are recognised within Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual and Chapter 8 Biodiversity of this EIA Report and the topics need to be considered together.
- 14.1.4 The chapter is supported with the following figures, within Volume 2, Figures:
- Figure 14.1 Forestry Study Area
 - Figure 14.2 Forestry Survey Units
 - Figure 14.3 Forestry Felling Areas

14.2 Legislation and Policy

Legislation

- 14.2.2 The Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024¹. The parts of Scottish agricultural policy relevant to forestry are the facilitation of on-farm nature restoration, climate mitigation and adaptation, and enabling rural communities to thrive.
- 14.2.3 The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004² introduced a statutory duty on Scottish public bodies to protect and enhance biodiversity.
- 14.2.4 The Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018³ makes provision about Scottish Ministers' functions in relation to the management of forested land and other land, and for connected purposes. Part 4 of the Act relates to tree felling. A felling permission application may be required by Scottish Forestry to fell more than 5 m³ in any calendar quarter (subject to relevant exceptions including trees less than 100mm diameter at 1.5m from ground level). This exemption does not apply within native broadleaved woodland between 0.1 and 5 hectares inclusive or Caledonian Pinewood inventory sites.

¹ [Agriculture and Rural Communities \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#)

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/6/contents>

³ The Forestry and Land Management (Scotland) Act 2018 (2018), Scottish Government

- 14.2.5 Where more than 0.5 ha of woodland is proposed to be removed from a ‘sensitive area’ or more than 1 ha from a ‘non-sensitive’ area, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) may be required. This must be confirmed in advance with Scottish Forestry.
- 14.2.6 Where trees are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), no works are permitted unless a tree works application has been submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). Full planning consent (where the tree works were identified at the application stage) is an exception to this requirement. Other exceptions such as for tree safety works or to meet legal obligations may also apply.
- 14.2.7 Where trees (with a stem diameter of 75 mm or more (measured at 1.5 m)) are present within Conservation Areas, at least six weeks’ notice must be given to the LPA in advance of any tree works. The LPA can then either take no action and permit the works or make a TPO to secure further protection (whereby any works would require a Tree Works Application to be submitted which typically has a determination period of at least 8 weeks). Tree works identified as necessary as part of a planning application which has full planning consent are exempt from this requirement. Other exceptions such as those which apply to trees subject to TPO may also apply.
- 14.2.8 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) may afford statutory protection to trees (where trees form part of the protected characteristic of the Site). Consent for tree work and forestry operations must be obtained in advance from NatureScot.

National Policy

- 14.2.9 In the UK there is a strong presumption against permanent deforestation unless it addresses other environmental concerns or where it would achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits. In Scotland, such deforestation is dealt with under the Scottish Government’s Control of Woodland Removal Policy (2009)⁴. The purpose of the policy is to provide direction for decisions on woodland removal in Scotland. Implementation guidance was published in 2019⁵ and the policy is addressed and reported in the EIA Report.
- 14.2.10 The Scottish Government adopted the fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) on 13th February 2023 (updated October 2024), which replaces the National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) and the Scottish Planning Policy. The document seeks to ensure that new development is sustainable and underlines the importance of Green Infrastructure, of which trees and soils form an integral part. The Forestry, woodland and trees policy outlines the Government’s intent to protect and expand forests, woodlands and trees and prioritises the protection of existing woodlands and trees and ensure that they are sustainably managed on development sites.
- 14.2.11 Policy 6 Forestry, woodland and trees, included below, details how local planning authorities (LPAs) should consider trees and new development with specific weight given to the protection of ancient woodlands, ancient and veteran trees, native woodlands,

⁴ Scottish Government (2009) https://www.forestry.gov.scot/sites/default/files/pub-documents/PDF_Policy_Felling_Trees_SG_Policy_on_Control_of_Woodland_Removal_022009.pdf

⁵ https://www.forestry.gov.scot/sites/default/files/pub-documents/PDF_Guidance_Scottish_Government%27s_Policy_on_Control_of_Woodland_Removal_Implementation_Guidance_01022019.pdf

hedgerows and individual trees of high biodiversity value, and woodlands identified for protection in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy.

14.2.12 Policy 6 Forestry, woodland and trees

“a) Development proposals that enhance, expand and improve woodland and tree cover will be supported.

b) Development proposals will not be supported where they will result in:

i. Any loss of ancient woodlands, ancient and veteran trees, or adverse impact on their ecological condition;

ii. Adverse impacts on native woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees of high biodiversity value, or identified for protection in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy;

iii. Fragmenting or severing woodland habitats, unless appropriate mitigation measures are identified and implemented in line with the mitigation hierarchy;

iv. Conflict with Restocking Direction, Remedial Notice or Registered Notice to Comply issued by Scottish Forestry.

c) Development proposals involving woodland removal will only be supported where they will achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits in accordance with relevant Scottish Government policy on woodland removal. Where woodland is removed, compensatory planting will most likely be expected to be delivered.

d) Development proposals on sites which include an area of existing woodland or land identified in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy as being suitable for woodland creation will only be supported where the enhancement and improvement of woodlands and the planting of new trees on the site (in accordance with the Forestry and Woodland Strategy) are integrated into the design.”

14.2.13 Ancient Woodland is any area that’s been wooded continuously since at least 1750 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland (mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site, usually arising from natural regeneration) and long-established woodlands of plantation origin.

14.2.14 Ancient woodland is afforded high priority in the planning process. As stated in NPF4, policy 6b *“proposals will not be supported where they will result in any loss of ancient woodlands, ancient and veteran trees, or adverse impact on their ecological condition”*.

14.2.15 Long established woodland of plantation origin is included within the Scottish Ancient Woodland Inventory. It is interpreted using maps from 1750 or 1860 and has been continuously wooded since that time. Such sites may have semi-natural characteristics and may be as rich as Ancient Woodland. These are likely to be of biodiversity and cultural value due to their antiquity.

14.2.16 Native Woodland is defined as woodland in which over 50% of the canopy is made up of species native to the region. Native woodland is mapped on the Scotland’s Environment online mapping. Native woodlands have importance in Scottish planning policy and are likely to be a material consideration for the determination of any planning application.

- 14.2.17 Caledonian Pine Woodland describes Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) woodland and is the UK's only native pine woodland which is generally subject to protection and is likely to be a material consideration in the determination of any planning application.
- 14.2.18 Ancient trees have passed maturity and possess great age for the species, large girth and significant biodiversity and/or cultural value. Veteran trees are mature trees that possess features of ancient trees without having reached a great age for the species.
- 14.2.19 In formulating any relevant proposals for electricity transmission infrastructure, the Applicant is subject to duties under Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act: *“(a) to have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and, (b) to do what [it] reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects.”* In addition, in exercising any relevant functions, the Applicant is under a duty to *“avoid, so far as possible, causing injury to fisheries or to the stock of fish in any waters”*. "

Local Policy

- 14.2.20 North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan⁶ (NLLDP), adopted July 2022, includes policy for protecting Natural Environment and Green Network Assets. North Lanarkshire Council has policies that address the challenge of environmental protection (PROT). PROT A Policy regarding Natural Environment and Green Network Assets commits to protecting natural and resilient sustainable places by safeguarding natural heritage assets. When considering future development affecting the natural environment and the specific Green Network Assets identified in this Policy, the Council will seek guidance where appropriate from NatureScot. North Lanarkshire is one of the eight local authorities whose area was previously covered by the Glasgow and Clyde Valley strategic development plan. The NLLDP cross-references to the Clydeplan Forest and Woodland Strategy⁷ in respect of woodland creation. The Strategy also has been prepared and includes spatial guidance also in relation to farmland.
- 14.2.21 The Forest and Woodland Strategy for Glasgow City Region makes direct reference to the Scottish Government's Control of Woodland policy document⁸ in relation to the felling of trees to facilitate any new development, notably quoting in 4.19 a *“strong presumption in favour of protecting woodland resources and the removal of woodland should only be permitted where significant and well defined additional public benefits would be delivered.”* This is furthered in section 4.20 referencing requirements for compensatory planting, noting that the type, siting and design of new woodlands as compensation may differ from those being removed.
- 14.2.22 Falkirk Council has a Forestry and Woodland Strategy 2015-2055, referenced within the Local Development Plan 2⁹. The strategy provides a long-term vision for the management and expansion of the woodland resource, which will be taken into account in responding

⁶ [North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan.pdf](#)

⁷ [Clydeplan Forestry and Woodland Strategy 2020 NEW COVER.pdf](#)

⁸ https://www.forestry.gov.scot/sites/default/files/pub-documents/PDF_Policy_Felling_Trees_SG_Policy_on_Control_of_Woodland_Removal_022009.pdf

⁹ <https://fcwebsites.blob.core.windows.net/www/media/6f222088-edcb-4906-908d-635bcb0fb757/LDP2.pdf>

to proposals for felling, planting and restocking, and in making planning decisions on woodland removal or creation.

- 14.2.23 Falkirk Council's supplementary planning guide SG10 Trees and Development¹⁰ makes direct reference in policy PE20 to the Scottish Government's Control of Woodland policy document for criteria to determine the acceptability of woodland removal.

14.3 Methodology

Consultation

- 14.3.2 Consultation undertaken with relevant stakeholders is summarised in Table 14.1.

Table 14.1 Consultee Feedback

Stakeholder	Type	Summary of consultee responses relevant to forestry	Outcome
Scottish Forestry	Scottish Forestry is the Scottish Government agency responsible for policy, support and regulation of the forestry sector in Scotland. A written responses was received in July 2025.	The consultation Scottish Forestry advised that: – The development of a Forest Plan for all woodlands is strongly encouraged, especially those undergoing long-term operations like felling and restructuring. – Where woodland is identified for permanent removal, a commitment to undertake compensatory planting is required. An explanation of arrangements for compensatory planting should be provided. A Compensatory Planting Plan (content subject to agreement with Scottish Forestry) should be provided that details the area of permanent deforestation that will result from the development. This plan should clearly articulate how that area has been calculated. – The area of land for which compensatory planting is proposed should be either under developer ownership or managed under a third-party lease agreement of suitable timescale. This land should be capable of supporting woodland growth sufficient to result in the delivery of the required compensatory outcomes.	The outcome of each point is provided: – The existence of current woodland plans will be determined by landowner engagement over forestry felling. Forest planning will be offered as part of compensation agreements – The Applicant is committed to providing compensation for woodland removal. Compensation planting will be addressed separately from the EIA Report but the Applicant undertakes to submit a Compensatory Planting Plan to be agreed with Scottish Forestry. – The land ownership arrangements for compensatory planting will be addressed as part of the Compensatory Planting Plan, to be delivered separately from the EIA Report. – The viability and stability of retained woodlands (subject to partial felling) have been carefully considered for each woodland. This has led to several proposals for extended management felling beyond the extent of the development, to be agreed with landowners.

¹⁰ [SG10 Trees and Development November 2020](#)

– In addition, Scottish Forestry highlighted the need to consider the viability and stability of retained woodlands subject to partial felling works, with partial felling undertaken to windfirm edges; and that forest blocks retained post felling are subject to sustainable forest management practices under the UK Forest Standard.			
North Lanarkshire Council	Opinion was provided across topics in September 2025. The opinion included responses under the sub-heading Land Use Forestry and Agriculture	The council noted that whilst the substation faces an urban area to the north, it is otherwise predominantly surrounded by woodland. This woodland forms part of a wider ecological network, bordering Palacerigg Country Park, Glencryan Woods—designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation—and Forest Wood Nature Reserve, which is managed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust	Whilst the topic is raised in relation to forestry and land use, it is developed in the context of the landscape and biodiversity services provided by woodlands. It requires recognition of the sensitivity of the surrounding environment and demonstration of how potential impacts have been minimised. How the proposals contribute cumulatively on biodiversity and landscape character is addressed within Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual and Chapter 8 Biodiversity.
SEPA	SEPA responded in August 2025	SEPA requested that the site layout should be designed to avoid large scale tree felling. SEPA identified that tree felling can result in substantial amounts of waste material and a peak in release of nutrients which can affect local water quality. SEPA requested that the submission include drawings with the boundaries of where felling will take place and a description of what is proposed for this timber in accordance with its joint guidance (alongside legacy bodies of NatureScot and Scottish Forestry) on the Use of Trees Cleared to Facilitate Development on Afforested Land and SEPA guidance Management of Forestry Waste.	The areas of tree felling are identified and in the context of regional forestry management and timber harvesting are not substantial. Timber stacking and extraction routes are to be identified separately from the EIA Report.
Woodland Trust	The Woodland Trust provided an automated reply in July 2025	Threats to trees and woodland were identified.	The content of the response has been noted.

14.3.3

Scope of Assessment

- 14.3.4 Resilience is the ability of a network to withstand a shock event and then return to its former purpose and quality. In this context, management of vegetation in proximity to the electricity transmission network considers growth and potential failure of trees. The

assessment is based on this principle, recognising that a risk-based approach should be followed.

Study Area

- 14.3.5 The study area is presented in Figure 14.1 and is based on the proposed centre line of the new and uprated Overhead Line, and includes the scoped in Cumbernauld substation site boundary. The buffer exists to consider cumulative effects and where extended management felling represents good forestry practice and to pre-empt the likelihood of windblow. The buffer extended to 500 m for cumulative effects. However, the buffer was investigated, by field survey, only where windblow risk was identified and it was necessary to identify a windfirm edge to proposals for extended management felling.

Assessment Methods

- 14.3.6 A baseline assessment was derived from Scotland's environmental web¹¹ and Scottish Forestry map viewer (Scottish Forestry Map Viewer¹²). These digital mapping tools have enabled identification of land capability for agriculture and woodland areas, within the National Forest Inventory (NFI). Time-sequence aerial imagery and Streetview imagery has been studied using Google Earth Pro¹³.
- 14.3.7 The NFI definition of woodland is a minimum area of 0.5 ha with trees possessing, or with the potential to achieve, tree crown cover of more than 20% of the ground. Within the NFI some woodlands are identified as native woodlands. The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS) provides a baseline survey of all native woodlands (of minimum 0.5 ha), nearly native woodlands and plantations on ancient woodland sites in Scotland. A further subset of these woodlands is contained within the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) of Scotland, which identifies ancient woodland, long established woodland of plantation origin and semi-natural woodlands. However, the AWI is based on woodlands over 2ha. NFI, NWSS and AWI were considerations in deriving field survey data.
- 14.3.8 Within the study area, woodland and forestry was surveyed to identify tree species, tree heights and stem diameters. Forestry units were mapped where combinations of species or tree sizes offered opportunities for the area to be managed as a coherent unit. Fieldwork was conducted 11-19 June 2025. The survey data are presented in Appendix 14.1.
- 14.3.9 The forestry units were further qualitatively considered in terms of their resilience to windthrow, which is expressed as wind-firmness. This approach relies on the professional experience of the surveyors but presents a readily interpreted metric of forestry management requirements. Models of windthrow rating are useful to forestry planning and design but do not translate reliably to the level of individual forest stands, where professional judgement of foresters is necessary. The wind-firmness scoring is included in the survey data in Appendix 14.1.
- 14.3.10 The criteria for expressing the professional assessment of wind-firmness of any given stand within this Forestry chapter are presented in Table 14.2 below.

¹¹ [Map | Scotland's environment web](#)

¹² [Scottish Forestry Map Viewer | Scottish Forestry](#)

¹³ <https://www.google.com/earth/about/versions/#earth-pro>

Table 14.2. Wind-firmness Score and Definition.

Wind-firmness (WF) Score	Definition
WF1	The forest stand is considered windfirm and is likely to maintain normal structural condition following partial removal of the forestry survey unit.
WF2	The forest stand may not be entirely windfirm and has been subject to individual qualitative risk-based consideration based on consequential scale of the requirement for extended management felling. This category may contain small, isolated areas of existing windblow or tree size and stand density which indicate likely reduced stability once the stand is further exposed. The stand may be able to maintain a normal structural condition following partial removal works.
WF3	The stand is not considered windfirm. Windblow is present within the stand and likely to be substantial and/or not isolated. Alternatively, the stand density and tree size is such that this would likely see substantial windthrow from any partial removal.

- 14.3.11 Where the Project passes through forestry, an 80 m wide clearance corridor is considered the minimum requirement. This represents embedded mitigation as an operational corridor of up to 45 m from the centre line may have been proposed for reasons of resilience (and was considered at scoping). Where this dissects forestry units, exposing a new edge, further consideration was given to extending felling to present a windfirm forest edge. Assessment of tree growth stage and condition may lead to proposals to extend vegetation management beyond the existing corridor, and any extended tree felling proposals and subsequent restocking will, subject to landowner agreement, be presented within the EIA Report.

Limitations and Assumptions

- 14.3.12 The absence of UK-wide criteria for receptor sensitivity and effect magnitude are not considered a limitation. The assumptions and application of professional judgement to both sensitivity and magnitude criteria have been developed around forestry assets and activity in the region of the Project and that requirement is one factor explaining the absence of universal guidance.
- 14.3.13 Sensitivity and magnitude criteria have been developed to reflect the intensity of local forestry services and landscape characters within which the development is proposed. In another geographic context, where forestry percentage cover, forest type, and forest management objectives are different alternative criteria may be more appropriate.
- 14.3.14 Access routes within forestry areas, have not been assessed for their impact on woodland structure (and the opportunities created by improved access for woodland operations). The importance of good woodland access and its integral role in forestry management is discussed in paragraph 14.4.23.
- 14.3.15 A full arboricultural survey of individual trees and tree groups was scoped out and impact assessment is restricted to forestry and woodland. No ancient and veteran trees were recorded in the ancient tree inventory (a citizen science database maintained by the Woodland Trust)¹⁴, and none were identified during the field survey for forestry or during habitat surveys for Chapter 8 Biodiversity.

¹⁴ Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory: Available at [Ancient Tree Inventory - Woodland Trust](#)

- 14.3.16 Tree habitat inclusion for forestry purposes has used National Forestry Inventory inclusion criteria for forests/woodlands, which constitutes a minimum area of 0.5ha; a minimum of 20% canopy cover; and a minimum width of 20m. Smaller areas of trees do not constitute woodland or forestry and were scoped out. This does not discount the landscape and ecosystem services that individual trees or small groups of trees may provide. These benefits are captured in Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual and/or Chapter 8 Biodiversity.
- 14.3.17 These criteria have been deviated from where professional judgement has determined appropriateness of inclusion. In Chapter 8: Biodiversity, habitat mapping identifies additional areas as woodland that do not meet these criteria. Therefore, there may be minor discrepancies between chapters assessing woodland cover.

14.4 Assessment of Effects, Mitigation and Residual Effects of the New-build Overhead Line

Baseline and Future Baseline Conditions

- 14.4.2 An initial baseline of forestry receptors was derived from Scotland's environment web and Scottish Forestry map viewer. These digital mapping tools have enabled identification of woodland within the National Forest Inventory (NFI). The NFI definition of woodland is a minimum area of 0.5 ha with trees possessing, or with the potential to achieve, tree crown cover of more than 20% of the ground. Within the NFI, some woodlands are identified as native woodlands. The Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS) provides a baseline survey of all native woodlands (of minimum 0.5 ha), nearly native woodlands and plantations on ancient woodland sites in Scotland. A further subset of these woodlands is contained within the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) of Scotland, which identifies ancient woodland, long established woodland of plantation origin and semi-natural woodlands. However, the AWI is based on woodlands over 2 ha. NFI, NWSS and AWI are identified within the baseline conditions.
- 14.4.3 Within the areas scoped into this Forestry assessment, on the AWI, ten Long Established of Plantation Origin (LEPO) and three of semi natural origin (present on 1860 mapping), designations are identified.
- 14.4.4 Ancient semi-natural woodlands (ASNW) are further considered in Chapter 8 Biodiversity.
- 14.4.5 A walkover forestry survey was undertaken in June 2025. During which, wooded areas within the project boundary were assessed for forestry. The field data is presented in full as Volume 3, Appendix 14.1.
- 14.4.6 The potential future baseline considers a 40-year timeline. Without the Project it is anticipated that there would continue to be a mixture of various forest types (in addition to other land uses/habitats not identified by this chapter) represented by the current baseline. A large proportion of the forest types would likely undergo felling/management works in the period to the future baseline, following standard forestry practice. The potential effect of climate change is likely to increase vulnerability of forest stands to windblow and forest fires. Both these outcomes may lead to a more frequent felling cycle of forest stands. The effect of climate change on the suitability of current species for the sites is not anticipated to change markedly over the 40-year timeline, unless it is through a secondary mechanism of new pests and diseases. .

Embedded Mitigation Measures

- 14.4.7 Mitigation by design has been achieved through limiting the buffer either side of the WB Overhead line's centreline to 40 m, thereby not requiring additional forestry felling for reinforcing existing OHL to 400 kV. A corridor of 45m from the centreline is often proposed to ensure resilience and maintaining the lesser corridor represents embedded mitigation.
- 14.4.8 Environmental safeguards for retained trees and associated ecosystems will be provided in a CEMP, compliant with the UK Forestry Standard.
- 14.4.9 Where any extended management felling is advised, this would be at the discretion of the landowner, but it is proposed within some forest sites, contiguous with the Project Identification and recommendation of extended management felling therefore represents embedded mitigation as it is not essential to delivering the Project. Forestry removal would be undertaken under a separate felling permission and contain specific conditions attached which would ensure in-situ mitigation for forest removal.

Assessment of Effects

14.4.10 Determining Magnitude of Change and Sensitivity of Receptors

- 14.4.11 Descriptions of magnitude of impact, sensitivity of the receptor and significance of effect that are used in this forestry assessment have been developed for the Project.
- 14.4.12 There is no universally accepted guidance to assess forestry receptor sensitivity, in part because trees are dynamic, and the stage of tree growth may influence sensitivity criteria. Professional judgement and familiarity with forestry EIA for the energy sector has been used to develop the receptor sensitivity values in Table 14-2.

Table 14.3. Sensitivity criteria for forestry and trees

Sensitivity value	Sensitivity criteria
High	Woodland Sites of Special Scientific Interest; ancient woodland; ancient and veteran trees.
Medium	Native woodland, long-established woodland of plantation origin; mid-rotation commercial woodland, established parkland trees.
Low	Recently established woodland (yet to reach canopy closure); woodland shrubs, low-stature amenity tree planting, poorly performing /pest-damaged woodland.
Negligible	Commercial woodland at economic rotation (clear-felling) stage; diseased trees or woodland.

- 14.4.13 Any removal of woodland has an impact but there is no absolute guidance on impact magnitude. In part, this is because impacts may be influenced by the scale of the local forestry resources and the effects relative to local forestry management activity. Furthermore, forest impacts of a linear scheme are not experienced at a scheme-wide scale but more locally. This fragmentation of impacts is readily addressed for forestry holdings and named woodlands, which may incorporate distances of multiple tower spans.
- 14.4.14 Forestry impact assessment relates to the proposed infrastructure felling up to 40 m from the proposed centreline (an 80 m corridor in total) and to extended management felling beyond this corridor.

- 14.4.15 Impact magnitude within Table 14.4 has been developed using professional judgement and thresholds relate to individual woodland and forest sites, which are subject to diverse set of management objectives and are at different stages in the dynamic forest cycle. The thresholds are not intended to be considered collectively, for scheme-wide impacts, but relate to individual or contiguous forest units.

Table 14.4. Magnitude criteria for forestry

Magnitude	Magnitude Criteria	Demonstrated outcome
High	Permanent removal of land from forestry >5 ha (to be mitigated ex situ).	Large adverse: removal of healthy and ecologically suitable forestry.
	Premature felling >10 ha (to be restocked in situ).	Large benefit: removal of forestry from peat or inappropriate habitat. Response to plant health notice.
Medium	Permanent removal of land from forestry >1 ha<5 ha (to be mitigated ex situ).	Medium adverse: removal of healthy and ecologically suitable forestry.
	Premature felling of >5 ha<10 ha commercial forestry (to be restocked in situ).	Medium benefit: removal of forestry from peat or inappropriate habitat. Response to plant health notice.
Low	Permanent removal of land from forestry <1 ha (to be mitigated ex situ).	Small adverse: removal of healthy and ecologically suitable forestry.
	Premature felling of >1 ha<5 ha commercial forestry (to be restocked in situ).	Small benefit: removal of forestry from peat or inappropriate habitat. Response to plant health notice.
Negligible	No discernible permanent loss to forest land.	Effects small-scale or short-term.
	Premature felling of <1 ha commercial forestry (to be restocked in situ).	Like-for-like reinstatement generally possible.

14.4.16

- 14.4.17 Table 14.3) and magnitude of impact (Table 14.4) are combined in a classification of the likely significance of effect (Table 14.5); Major and moderate effects are significant: minor and negligible effects are not significant.

Table 14.5. Classification of the likely significance of effect

		Magnitude of Impacts			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Receptor Sensitivity	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible
	Negligible	Minor	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Summary of Significant Effects

- 14.4.18 From Table 14.5, the woodland receptors that have been used to determine the potential forestry impacts of the overhead line are presented in Table 14.6. Woodland felling is illustrated in Figure 14.3 Forestry Felling Areas.

Table 14.6. Schedule of tree feature works and impact assessment

Feature ID	Total Feature Area (ha)	Total Removed Area (ha)	Removed %	Receptor Sensitivity	Effect Magnitude	Effect Significance
W1	8.2	0.8	9.91%	Medium	Low	Minor
W2	56.6	3.9	6.87%	Medium	Medium	Moderate
W4	30.1	1.9	6.20%	Medium	Medium	Moderate
W5	20.8	6.4	30.65%	Medium	High	Moderate
W10	0.3	0.0	0.55%	Medium	Low	Minor
W11	12.5	1.7	13.75%	Medium	Medium	Moderate
W12	1.1	0.9	77.61%	Medium	Low	Minor
W13	1.5	0.1	7.90%	Medium	Medium	Moderate
W14	2.6	0.9	35.07%	Medium	Low	Minor
W16	4.1	0.4	10.46%	Medium	Low	Minor
W17	0.8	0.0	0.04%	Medium	Low	Minor
W28	1.6	0.5	29.79%	Medium	Low	Minor
W30	7.1	0.4	5.56%	Medium	Low	Minor
W33	3.0	0.3	9.19%	Medium	Low	Minor
W34	1.5	0.1	8.63%	Medium	Low	Minor
W44	0.2	0.1	25.80%	Low	Low	Negligible
W45	2.5	0.4	17.10%	Medium	Low	Minor
W48	3.1	0.2	6.49%	Medium	Low	Minor
W50	0.1	0.0	26.08%	Medium	Low	Minor
W51	0.2	0.0	15.23%	Medium	Low	Minor
W52	0.2	0.1	92.97%	Medium	Low	Minor

<i>Feature ID</i>	<i>Total Feature Area (ha)</i>	<i>Total Removed Area (ha)</i>	<i>Removed %</i>	<i>Receptor Sensitivity</i>	<i>Effect Magnitude</i>	<i>Effect Significance</i>
W56	0.4	0.1	16.17%	Medium	Low	Minor
W57	0.3	0.0	13.49%	Medium	Low	Minor
W58	1.1	0.0	1.56%	Medium	Low	Minor
W59	1.2	0.3	22.38%	Medium	Low	Minor
W60	0.4	0.2	48.73%	Medium	Low	Minor
W63	0.6	0.0	0.67%	Medium	Low	Minor
W66	0.5	0.2	47.41%	Medium	Low	Minor
W79	1.5	0.0	2.98%	Medium	Low	Minor
W80	2.1	0.1	5.00%	Medium	Low	Minor
W81	0.8	0.1	9.42%	Medium	Low	Minor
W82	1.7	0.6	36.18%	Low	Low	Negligible
W85	9.1	0.0	0.11%	Medium	Low	Minor
W87	5.3	0.6	11.32	Medium	Low	Minor
W88	0.4	0.4	100.00%	Medium	Low	Minor
W89	0.1	0.1	100.00%	Medium	Low	Minor
W91	0.9	0.5	55.56%	Medium	Low	Minor
W92	0.1	0.1	100.00%	Low	Low	Negligible
W93	1.6	1.2	75.00%	Low	Medium	Minor
W94	2.6	1.6	63.24%	Low	Medium	Minor
W95	2.1	0.3	14.29%	Low	Medium	Minor
W96	3.4	0.7	19.95%	Medium	Low	Minor
W98	0.3	0.1	22.23%	Low	Low	Negligible

<i>Feature ID</i>	<i>Total Feature Area (ha)</i>	<i>Total Removed Area (ha)</i>	<i>Removed %</i>	<i>Receptor Sensitivity</i>	<i>Effect Magnitude</i>	<i>Effect Significance</i>
W100	0.5	0.1	11.20%	Low	Low	Negligible
W102	5.1	0.7	14.64%	Medium	Low	Minor
W103	1.1	0.3	24.17%	Medium	Low	Minor
W104	0.8	0.1	8.93%	Medium	Low	Minor
W106	1.7	0.2	12.68%	Medium	Low	Minor
W107	0.4	0.3	83.61%	Medium	Low	Minor
W110	0.5	0.3	59.93%	Low	Low	Negligible
W111	15.1	1.3	8.56%	Medium	Medium	Moderate
W115	11.1	1.9	16.85%	High	Medium	Moderate
W118	1.7	0.2	13.19%	Medium	Low	Minor
W119	1.6	0.4	22.09%	Medium	Low	Minor
W120	5.7	1.7	29.47%	Medium	Medium	Moderate
W121	0.8	0.6	74.55%	Medium	Low	Minor
W124	0.7	0.4	60.78%	Low	Low	Negligible
W126	1.2	0.4	33.44%	Medium	Low	Minor
W127	0.9	0.6	69.20%	Medium	Low	Minor
W129	3.5	0.1	2.25%	Low	Low	Negligible
W130	0.5	0.3	70.07%	Low	Low	Negligible
W132	3.0	1.7	56.12%	Low	Low	Negligible
W133	13.4	3.2	24.16%	Low	Medium	Minor
W135	3.5	0.2	4.94%	Low	Low	Negligible
W136	1.8	1.0	55.99%	Low	Medium	Minor

<i>Feature ID</i>	<i>Total Feature Area (ha)</i>	<i>Total Removed Area (ha)</i>	<i>Removed %</i>	<i>Receptor Sensitivity</i>	<i>Effect Magnitude</i>	<i>Effect Significance</i>
W141	6.4	0.6	9.99%	Medium	Low	Minor
W143	2.7	1.2	44.41%	Medium	Medium	Moderate
W145	10.1	3.7	36.36%	Medium	Medium	Moderate
W148	21.1	1.5	6.93%	Low	Medium	Minor
W151	1.1	0.1	7.42%	Medium	Low	Minor
Totals	310.6ha	49.4ha	15.90%	-	-	-

14.4.19 Effects to forestry within the AWI are considered to be moderate in significance. These are:

- Permanent removal of 6.4 ha of semi natural woodland classified (in part) as long-established woodland of plantation origin (LEPO) (W5). The forest unit is principally birch, willow and alder, with ash and sycamore concentrated around a stream. Conifers comprise less than 20 per cent. Stems are typically less than 150mm diameter. Site survey did not provide any indication of long-established woodland nor was there differentiation from contiguous woodland not included in the AWI. Sensitivity and magnitude thresholds are equivocal and close to thresholds and so professional judgement has been applied to the significance of woodland removal, identifying a moderate adverse effect (**significant**).
- Permanent removal 1.9 ha of a forest unit which is in part designated as ancient semi natural woodland (ASNW) (W115) between towers WB16 and WB17. From the part identified as ASNW, 0.4 ha is proposed for removal, and this represents a low magnitude effect of high sensitivity woodland. The ASNW is connected to other broadleaf woodland of medium sensitivity and from which there would be medium magnitude removal. Each part of the woodland removal represents a moderate adverse effect. Professional judgement identifies that there is no multiplier effect and in combination this is a moderate adverse effect (**significant**). Clearfelling the wayleave represents the worst-case effect. Mitigation may be possible if the felled trees were allowed to coppice and then maintained within the wayleave. The coppice cycle would be dictated by a maximum tree height and this would be subject to further design considerations and require assessment of the resilience and health and safety implication.

14.4.20 Moderate adverse(**significant**) effects on forestry would also result where medium sensitivity woodland is subject to the medium threshold of removal. These effects identified by woodland reference number and the predominant forest type. The woodlands affected would be W2 (semi-natural), W4 (semi-natural), W11 (commercial conifer), W13 (mixed broadleaved/conifer), W111 (mixed broadleaved/conifer), W120 (semi-natural), W143 (semi-natural) and W145 (semi-natural).

Summary of Effects of Extended Management Felling

- 14.4.21 At each location the requirement for extended management felling of trees beyond the proposed 80 m wide felling corridor for the new OHL has been considered, based on the wind-firmness assessment (as described in Table 14-1). Illustrative photographs of existing windthrow within these woodland plots is provided in Appendix 14.2. New exposed woodland edges would magnify the windthrow risk. In each location, the proposal for extended management felling, beyond the OHL corridor, extends to an individually identified windfirm edge (and does not represent a fixed buffer).
- 14.4.22 Table 14.7 details woodlands considered to require extended management felling because of the risk of windblow. All extended management felling is temporary.

Table 14.7. Extended management felling summary

<i>Feature Reference</i>	<i>WB Overhead Line Felling Area (ha)</i>	<i>Recommended Area of Extended Management Felling (ha)</i>
W34	0.1	0.4
W58	0.02	0.1
W60	0.2	0.2
W80	0.1	0.3
W100	0.1	0.5
W118	0.2	0.8
W119	0.4	1.0
W126	0.4	0.8
Total	-	4.1

Effects of Access and Woodland Protection

- 14.4.23 Access has been identified for the Project. Well-designed forest access is typically recognised as a benefit and adding to asset value. Creation of new access for the Project has an associated forestry benefit of creating opportunities for the extraction of timber. Dedicated access is integral to forest management so that rides and open space are not adopted as timber routes but conserved for their contribution to biodiversity. Neither new or upgraded access is an environmental impact for forestry. Development of access including to existing forestry tracks may involve reprofiling of the ground to create favourable gradients. Upgrades are anticipated to require some vegetation management beside these existing routes, but this is a standard forestry management practice and there are no high-sensitivity receptors affected by access improvements. Upgrading forestry routes would improve accessibility for timber extraction and for access for forestry management operations. The enhanced forest access does not readily translate to the significance matrix within Table 14.5, but benefit is estimated to be minor or negligible and hence not significant.

- 14.4.24 It is not proposed to provide physical protection, with fencing, of retained woodland trees beyond the WB Overhead Line felling corridor.

Proposed Additional Mitigation Measures

- 14.4.25 Good environmental practices within woodland will be secured through provision of the Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP), which will be consistent with the UK Forestry Standard¹⁵.
- 14.4.26 Extended management felling has been considered as good forestry practice to mitigate against an increased likelihood of windblow within the retained woodland. Extended management felling can be re-established in situ to mitigate woodland felling.

Residual Effects

- 14.4.27 Where significant effects have been identified, including AWI sites, the effect on the woodlands is from canopy removal from parts of the surveyed forest units. Other important aspects of sites are conserved, such as woodland soils and land will be conserved as semi-natural, non-woodland habitat. Nonetheless, there is a reduction in canopy cover and woodland connectivity resulting in some moderate adverse residual effects identified in Table 14.5.
- 14.4.28 Moderate adverse (significant) effects to the LEPO site, W5 and ASNW site, W115 will end long-term tree cover on parts of these woodlands for which cannot be mitigated and for which compensatory woodland establishment will deliver fewer ecosystem benefits.
- 14.4.29 No residual effects to the impact on forestry are anticipated, following extended management felling, as full in situ compensatory planting for all forest loss is anticipated.
- 14.4.30 No residual effects (positive or negative) are associated with development of access.

Compensation Tree Planting

- 14.4.31 Felling within the OHL corridor cannot be completely mitigated in-situ. Off-site planting will be required to facilitate compensation for woodland removal. It is proposed that the compensation area would as a minimum match to area to be removed. The final details of the compensation area, including hectareage, will be agreed in consultation with the relevant authorities

Monitoring

- 14.4.32 Conditions for monitoring of new compensatory woodland will be established under the conditions of the compensatory planting requirements.
- 14.4.33 Trees are dynamic, living organisms. Trees establishing within the OHL corridor or growing adjacent to the Project will require periodic monitoring to ensure the continued resilience of the Project. This may lead to future tree and woodland management.
- 14.4.34 Similarly, within the WB Overhead Line wayleave corridor, the future baseline will be monitored through future arboricultural surveys to allow for removal or reduction in stature of individual trees where the possibility of tree failure presents an unacceptable risk to infrastructure. Similarly, woodlands within the wayleave will be managed to provide

¹⁵Gov.uk (2025) The UK Forestry Standards (online) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uk-forestry-standard>
[Accessed: July 2024]

environmental services within this risk framework. Decisions within the wayleave may have consequences for continuous woodland compartments to reduce the risk of windthrow. This reflects standard OHL tree management and is covered by the sector of Utility Arboriculture.

14.5 Assessment of Effects, Mitigation and Residual Effects of the CB Route Removal, Uprating Overhead Line (ZG/XX/XR), AA Route Undergrounding, Newarthill Substation Works and the Distribution Line Diversion Works

- 14.5.1 An assessment of the CB route removal, Overhead line uprating (ZG/XX/XR), AA route undergrounding, Newarthill Substation works and the distribution line diversion works has been scoped out of this Forestry assessment.
- 14.5.2 The removal of the CB route, the uprating overhead lines (ZG/XX/XR), AA route undergrounding and distribution line diversion works including compounds, can be undertaken entirely from within the existing wayleave and therefore avoid impacts to forestry. However, should forestry removal be subsequently proposed, localised assessment would be undertaken as appropriate.
- 14.5.3 Although trees are present within the Newarthill Substation Works area, no forestry receptors are identified beyond those which are interrelated to tree habitats (i.e., landscape and biodiversity).

14.6 Summary and Conclusions

- 14.6.1 A walkover forestry survey was undertaken in June 2025, during which wooded areas within the project boundary were assessed for forestry. The field data is presented in full as Volume 3, Appendix 14-1.
- 14.6.2 A full arboricultural survey had been scoped out. No adverse effects of access routes within forestry areas have been identified and the opportunities created by improved access for woodland operations are not considered a significant positive effect.
- 14.6.3 There is no national guidance relating to receptor sensitivity or impact magnitude, in part because this needs to be presented within the local context of the forest landscape and forestry industry. Sensitivity descriptors and impact thresholds have been developed for these proposals and combined in a sensitivity matrix. The approach considers woodlands as separate receptors rather than cumulatively across the proposals.
- 14.6.4 Forestry impact assessment relates principally to the 40 m wayleave either side from the centre line of the WB Overhead Line (80 m corridor in total).
- 14.6.5 Effects to forestry considered to be moderate in significance are the removal of 6.4 ha of semi-natural woodland classified in part as LEPO (W5), due to the magnitude of woodland removal. Removal of 1.9 ha of a forest compartment which is in part designated as ASNW (W115) also represents a moderate adverse effect, particularly in respect of 0.4 ha from the ASNW.
- 14.6.6 Effects to forestry considered to be moderate in significance because of the magnitude of impact and/or native woodland species assemblage. These woodlands (and the

- predominant forest type) are: W2 (semi-natural), W4 (semi-natural), W11 (commercial conifer), W13 (mixed broadleaved/conifer), W111 (mixed broadleaved/conifer), W120 (semi-natural), W143 (semi-natural) and W145 (semi-natural).
- 14.6.7 At each location consideration was given to the need for extended management felling of trees beyond the proposed 80 m wide felling corridor for the new Overhead Line. This is good forestry practice and represents embedded mitigation. The woodland survey units were each subject to a wind-firmness assessment. Extended management felling is recommended if a newly exposed woodland edge presents a high likelihood of inducing windthrow of trees beyond the wayleave. Eight forest management units are recommended for extended management felling, subject to landowner agreement. Replanting may take place in situ and there is no residual effect. Forestry provides a multiple ecosystem services, including landscape and ecology and water management. Connectivity is relevant to these services (which are addressed separately within the EIA Report and not doubly accounted for in this chapter). However, forestry as a land management choice (the subject of this chapter of the EIA Report) does not lead to intra-project or inter-projects effects. Forestry provides long-term management of trees for which cyclical felling is standard management practice. Discrete areas of woodland removal do not cause a multiplication (or stacking) of effects. As each forest management unit is managed and regulated as an individual unit the combined effect is taken as an aggregate of total area of forest removed. No significant cumulative effects are identified. It is further noted that the cumulative area of forestry impacts is insubstantial relative to the typical scale of forestry management activity within the vicinity of the Project.
- 14.6.8 Off-site planting will be required to facilitate compensation for forest removal. Details of compensatory planting arrangements including a Compensatory Planting Plan are to be developed separately from the EIA Report. The area of land for which compensatory planting is proposed, and the monitoring requirements will be addressed and agreed with the relevant authority.
- 14.6.9 Environmental safeguards for retained trees and associated ecosystems will be provided in a CEMP, compliant with the UK Forestry Standard. Similarly, UK Forestry Standard will be applied to extended management felling and its restocking and to all areas of compensatory planting areas.