Alan Motion Tree Consulting Ltd
Chartered Forester, Arboricultural Consultant



Woodland Impact Assessment

LOCHLUICHART WIND FARM EXTENSION

For

INFINERGY

11 June 2021

Institute of Chartered Foresters
Registered Consultant

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1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. Alan Motion Tree Consulting Ltd has been instructed to carry out woodland impact assessment on behalf of Infinergy, in relation to the proposed installation of underground and overhead cables at the Lochluichart Wind Farm Extension, Garve, Highland. This report describes the extent and condition of forest cover within and immediately adjacent to the proposed wayleave route and highlights the above and below ground constraints presented by existing forest cover.

2. STANDARD CONDITIONS RELATING TO TREE SURVEYS

2.1. Tree surveys are undertaken from ground level using established visual assessment methodology. This is primarily a survey to assess the general health, condition, value and life expectancy of existing trees as part of the planning and design process. The report should not be read as a detailed tree safety or risk assessment.

2.2. Where obvious defects are noted and further investigation is required, either by climbing or the use of specialised decay detection equipment, this will be identified in the report.

2.3. The findings and recommendations contained within this report are valid for a period of twelve months. Trees are living organisms subject to change. It is strongly recommended that they are inspected at regular intervals for reasons of safety.

2.4. Whilst every effort has been made to detect defects within the trees inspected, no guarantee can be given as to the absolute safety or otherwise of any individual tree. Extreme climatic conditions can cause damage to apparently healthy trees.

2.5. The findings and recommendations contained within this report are based on the current site conditions. The construction of roads, buildings, service wayleaves, removal of shelter, and alterations to established soil moisture conditions can all have a detrimental effect on the health and stability of retained trees. Accordingly, a re-inspection of retained trees is recommended on completion of any development operations.

2.6. This report has been prepared for the sole use of Infinergy and their appointed agents. Any third party referring to this report or relying on information contained within it does

so entirely at their own risk.

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

3.1. The site is located within Corriemoillie Forest, extending from the A832 and Loch Luichart in the south, to the A835 and Loch Glascarnoch in the north.

3.2. Lochluichart Wind Farm occupies land at 350-450m above sea level on open hill land to the west of Corriemoillie Forest. The existing Corriemoillie electricity sub-station is located in the south-east of the survey area, accessed from the A832 around 4km west of Garve.

3.3. Forest cover within the afforested areas is mainly of commercial conifer, with mixtures of Sitka spruce, Lodgepole pine, Scots pine and some hybrid larch.

3.4. Forests immediately surrounding the sub-station are in early-maturity, closed canopy, around 10 – 15 years old and 8-10m height. They are planted at normal forestry densities of around 2500 stems/hectare.

3.5. The large forestry area lying immediately east of the existing wind turbines has been recently restocked. With the exception of a couple of very small blocks of mature trees, the area is comprised of forestry transplants in the establishment phase.

4. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

4.1. The proposed extension of Lochluichart Wind Farm requires the installation of a new electricity cable between the control building/substation in the north of the site, to the Corriemoillie substation in the south.

4.2. The cable installation is proposed in three sections, with the north and south sections being underground, and the main central section overhead.

4.3. The southern underground section follows an existing underground cable route and wayleave though open ground. The northern underground route traverses open ground away from existing forestry plantation.

4.4. For the most part, the central overhead route is over open hill ground and clear of existing forested areas, and follows existing forest edges and fence lines.

4.5. Where the southern underground section reverts to overhead, the route passes through or immediately adjacent to, existing established forest plantations.

4.6. The southern extent of the overhead line passes to the east of a plantation of lodgepole pine, with a mixed edge containing larch and silver birch. There is a variable gap here between the canopy edge and an existing fence of between 4-6m.

4.7. Where the overhead line turns to the west & north-west, it cuts through a small group of maturing Scots pine.

4.8. Where the overhead line turns north from the NW alignment, it passes close to a woodland block comprised of naturalised birch, alder and Scots pine, with a few Norway spruce. There is open ground to the south of tis block.

5. WOODLAND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1. With the exception of the southern extent of the overhead alignment, there is no detrimental impact on any of the existing forestry. The underground sections, and the majority of the overhead route, traverses open ground.

5.2. Where the alignment changes from the southern underground section to overhead and runs north, it passes through a narrow gap between the edge of early-mature lodgepole pine plantation with silver birch and larch on the edge. In this section, and area of around 2000 square metres of forest edge will need to be cleared to provide sufficient clearance between retained tree canopies and the overhead cables. This amounts to potentially to around 500 stems, comprising 80% lodgepole pine, 10% larch, 10% silver birch.

5.3. Where the overhead line west and north-west, it passes through a stand of more-mature Scots pine, growing in a gully across a small watercourse. A group of approximately 20 stems of Scots pine will need to be removed.

5.4. Where the overhead line turns north from the north-west alignment, it passes close to the block of naturalised birch, alder, Scots pine woodland. There is ample open ground

to the south and west of this woodland block to avoid the necessity for any woodland removal.

6. MITIGATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. With careful planning and micro-siting, the proposed cable route can minimise impact on the existing forest areas.

6.2. It is likely that around 0.25 hectares in total of existing forest would need to be removed to provide sufficient clearance for overhead wayleaves.

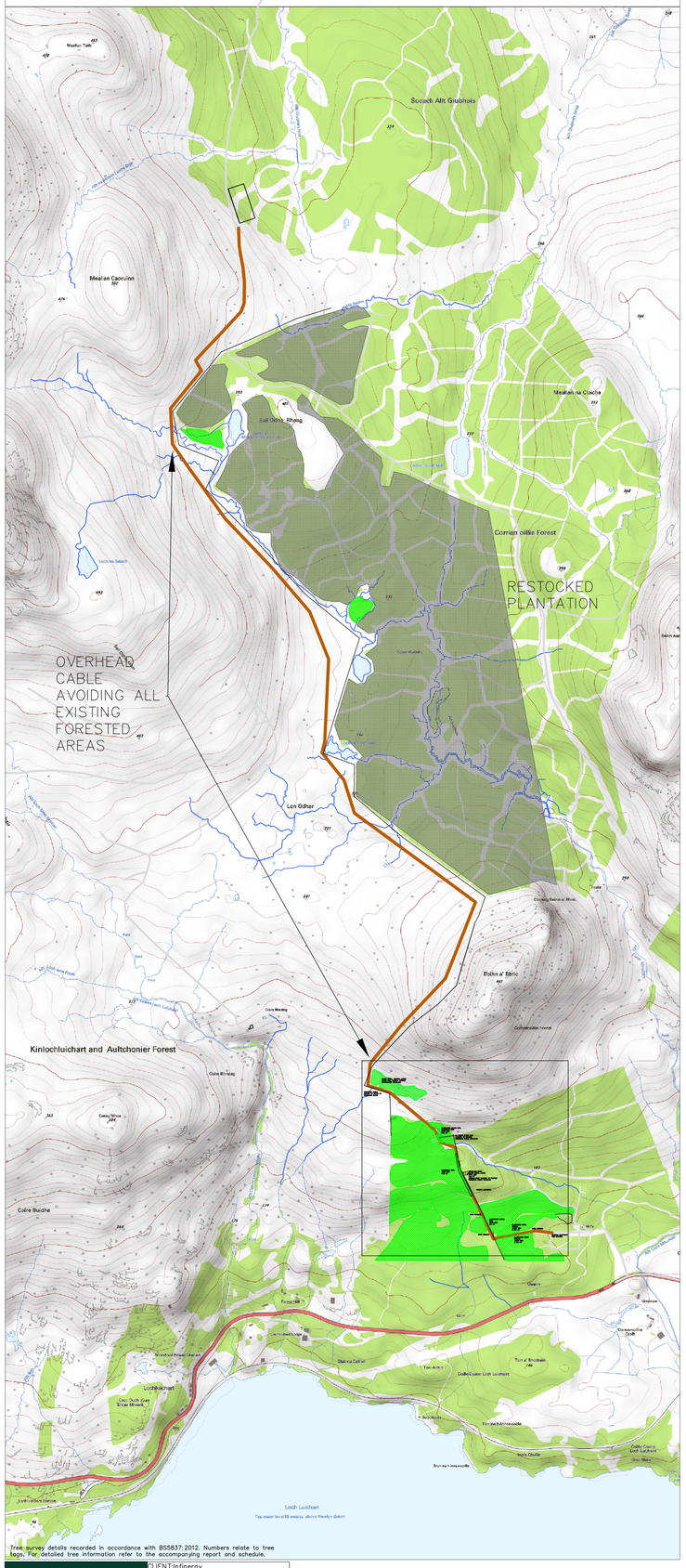
6.3. The main area of removal, along the eastern edge of an existing plantation block of lodgepole pine, will have very limited negative impact on both landscape quality and overall forest integrity. The area of ground immediately to the east of the affected area has recently been clear-felled, and the additional removal of trees needed to accommodate the overhead line between the retained edge and the clearfell site will simply blend with the existing matrix. IN addition, the pine plantation is still relatively young, so it is not anticipated that removal of the plantation edge will exacerbate the risk of wind damage, particularly since this is on the eastern edge and sheltered form prevailing winds.

6.4. The removal of the group of around 20 Scots pine is located in a small gully and very limited in extent. It will not be visible from surrounding areas, and will have negligible impact on landscape quality. The topography and landform mean that the risk of increased damage from wind as a result of tree removal is also very low.

6.5. Mitigation planting can be accommodated in close proximity to the wayleave. There are existing areas of open ground to the west of Corriemoillie substation that would accommodate compensatory planting, in addition to extensive areas of open hill around the existing wind farm and the control building/substation in the north of the site.

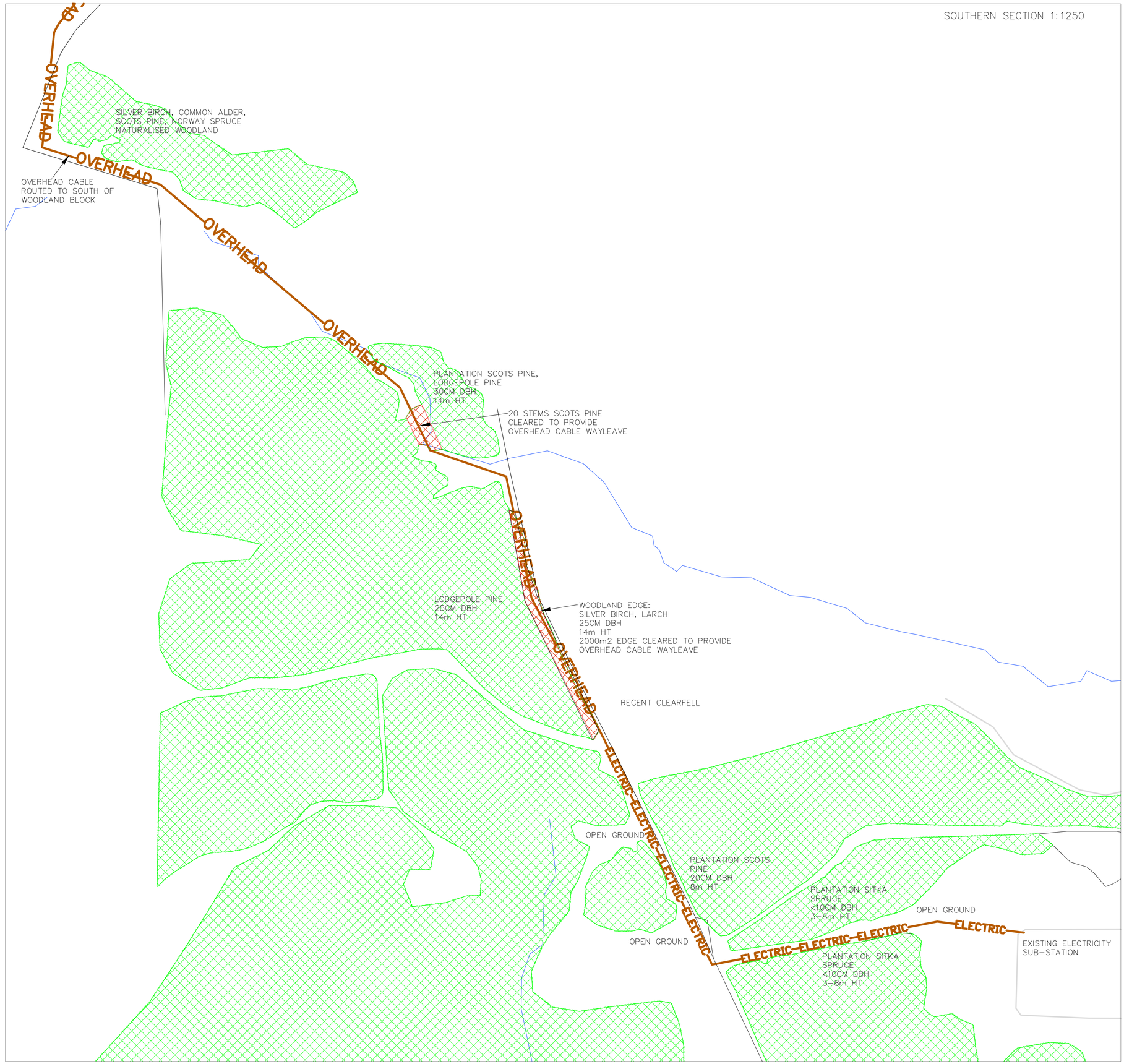
6.6. Suitable replacement planting within the vicinity of the development would meet the requirements of no net loss of woodland cover in accordance with current Scottish Government guidance on control of woodland removal.

SITE PLAN 1:10,000



Tree survey details recorded in accordance with BS5837:2012. Numbers relate to tree tags. For detailed tree information refer to the accompanying report and schedule.

SOUTHERN SECTION 1:1250



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CLIENT:Infinergy

PROJECT: Lochluichart Wind Farm

DRAWING TITLE: Woodland Impact Assessment
DRAWING No: INF_CP_WIA-01
DATE:1-6-21
SCALE:as noted at A0 REV:

WOODLAND

NOTE: hatch colour denotes BS5837 Category:
Cat A – Green
Cat B – Blue
Cat C – Grey
Cat U – Red

OVERHEAD CENTRAL OVERHEAD CABLE WAYLEAVE

ELECTRIC SOUTHERN & NORTHER UNDERGROUND CABLE WAYLEAVE