



Supplementary Environmental Information - Indicative Grid Connection Corridor (IGCC) Assessment

**West Springfield Solar & Battery Energy Storage System
(BESS)**

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SLR Project No.: 428.013383.00001

30 June 2026

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BPM	Best Practicable Means
EclA	Ecological Impact Assessment
ECU	Energy Consents Unit
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
DNO	Distribution Network Operator
DWPA	Drinking Water Protected Area
IGCC	Indicative Grid Connection Corridor
GCP	Grid Connection Point
GPP	Guidance for Pollution Prevention
GSP	Grid Supply Point
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LGV	Light Goods Vehicle
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
NPF4	National Planning Framework 4
OHL	Overhead Line
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEI	Supplementary Environmental Information
SEPA	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPEN	Scottish Power Energy Networks
UGC	Underground Cabling



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

TRIO West Springfield Solar LLP ('the Applicant') applied to the Scottish Ministers in June 2025 for Section 36 consent and deemed planning permission, under the terms of the Electricity Act 1989, for permission to construct and operate the West Springfield Solar and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)¹ (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development'), located on the Rankeilour Estate approximately 2.7 km south west of Cupar, within the Fife Council administrative area.

The application was supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report as required by the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 ('the EIA Regulations'). The EIA Report was prepared to assess the environmental impacts of the Proposed Development and accompanied the Section 36 application submitted in June 2025 (Energy Consents Unit (ECU) Reference: ECU00006134).

1.2 Requirement for Further Information

The Proposed Development will require a grid connection from the onsite substation to the Grid Supply Point (GSP), which will comprise an underground cable (UGC).

The grid connection does not form part of the Proposed Development for which consent is currently being sought by TRIO West Springfield Solar LLP ('the Applicant'). However, to comply with the EIA Regulations², and in response to a request from the ECU (refer to **Appendix B**), this Supplementary Environmental Information (SEI) Report provides an overview of an Indicative Grid Connection Corridor (IGCC) route identified by the Applicant, through which the UGC could be routed, and the likelihood of any significant environmental effects based on the information available to date. This assessment is based solely on information available to the Applicant at the time of completing the assessment. **Figure 1** provides an overview of the UGC route.

It is noted that the final UGC route will be fixed at a later date and will be required to comply with SPEN's statutory environmental duties as Distribution Network Operator (DNO) under the Electricity Act 1989.

1.3 Indicative Grid Connection Corridor (IGCC)

The final grid connection solution for the Proposed Development has not yet been confirmed with SPEN. However, in accordance with recent case law, most notably the *Raeshaw Farms Ltd v Scottish Ministers* [2026] CSIH 10 decision³, and consistent with current Planning and EIA practice, it is necessary to demonstrate that a feasible and environmentally assessable grid connection is available at this stage of the Section 36 application process via Energy Consents Unit (ECU) for the Proposed Development.

¹ Battery Energy Storage System

² The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017

³ *Raeshaw Farms Limited v Scottish Ministers* [2026] CSIH 10 (Inner House, Court of Session, 17 February 2026). Available at: <https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/media/t4eds4lr/2026csih10-raeshaw-farms-limited-against-scottish-ministers-and-another.pdf>



UK case law makes clear that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) must address only those environmental effects that are both likely and have a sufficiently certain causal connection to the proposed development. The Supreme Court in *R (Finch) v Surrey County Council* [2024] UKSC 20⁴ emphasised that effects which are uncertain, remote, or speculative fall outside the scope of what the EIA Regulations require to be addressed. The Court held that only effects that can be demonstrated to arise as a real and identifiable consequence of the development must be assessed, rejecting any approach that rests on “*speculation or conjecture*.”

It should be noted that SPEN operate within a statutory and licenced framework under the Electricity Act 1989 that places a duty upon them to develop and maintain an efficient, coordinated and economical system of electricity transmission in addition to having regard to environmental impacts and the mitigation of effects of their assets. In this sense, SPEN are dutybound to weight the network efficiency and economics of connections alongside the environmental factors.

Information is not available to the Applicant at this time to inform of the network efficiency and economic factors of the indicative grid route. Instead, an IGCC has been identified which is considered to represent a reasonably likely grid route for assessment purposes at this stage. The Applicant considers this approach to comply with Regulation 4(2) of the EIA Regulations which requires the EIA to “*identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in light of the circumstances relating to the proposed development, the direct and indirect significant effects of the proposed development*” (emphasis added).

The indicative IGCC in this report assumes the grid connection would be a UGC rather than an overhead line in order to avoid, for example, overly adverse landscape and visual impacts. It also takes account of the current understanding of landownership between the Proposed Development site and the likely GSP.

1.4 The Applicant

As set out in Section 1.3 of the EIA Report, BLC Energy was set up in 2022 to develop solar and BESS projects in the UK. The three partners have over 60 years’ experience in developing renewable energy projects and have so far secured planning consent for three solar projects in Scotland.

In 2023, BLC Energy entered into a development services agreement with Octopus Energy Generation (via Octopus Renewable Infrastructure Trust (ORIT)) on an exclusive basis. TRIO West Springfield Solar LLP was set up as the development company and is wholly owned by ORIT and managed by BLC Energy. BLC Energy are developing the Site on behalf of the Applicant, TRIO West Springfield Solar LLP.

ORIT is an Impact Fund with a core objective to accelerate the transition to net zero through its investments, building and operating a diversified portfolio of Renewable Energy Assets. ORIT is managed by Octopus Energy Generation.

Octopus Energy Generation are one of Europe’s largest investors in renewables, operating around £4 billion of green energy generation across seven countries. Octopus Energy Generation operate solar and wind projects across the UK.

⁴ *R (Finch) v Surrey County Council and others* [2024] UKSC 20 (UK Supreme Court, 20 June 2024). Available at: <https://supremecourt.uk/cases/press-summary/uksc-2022-0064>



1.5 Assessment Team

The assessment was undertaken by SLR's environmental teams supported by external consultants and is largely similar to the team that prepared the EIA Report. For further information on the assessment team, please refer to Section 1.6 of the EIA Report.

1.6 Availability of the SEI Report

In accordance with Regulation 20 of the EIA Regulations, copies of the SEI Report will be available for inspection by the public, notice of which will be published on the application website, in the Edinburgh Gazette, and in The Courier, a local newspaper circulating within the locality of the Proposed Development as agreed with the ECU.

Hard copies of the full SEI submission documents can be made available at a charge of £50 per copy. Alternatively, a USB copy can be made available on request at a charge of £20. Requests for hard copies or USB copies should be made to SLR Consulting Limited at the address and/or telephone number below, or by submitting a request via the Enquiry function on the project website: <https://www.blcenergy.com/projects/west-springfield/>.

SLR Consulting Limited,
The Tun,
4 Jackson's Entry,
Edinburgh,
EH8 8PJ.
Phone: 0330 088 6631

A printed copy of the SEI Report will be available to view during opening hours at the following location:

Cupar Library,
33-35 Crossgate,
Cupar,
KY15 5AS.

Electronic copies of the SEI Report, including all figures, appendices and accompanying documents are available to view on the project website:
<https://www.blcenergy.com/projects/west-springfield/>



1.7 Representations to the Application

Any representations to the application should be made directly to the Scottish Government at:

Energy Consents Unit,,
5 Atlantic Quay,
150 Broomielaw,
Glasgow,
G2 8LU.

Online: <http://www.energyconsents.scot/> using the relevant Project Name (West Springfield Solar) or ECU reference number (ECU00006134).

2.0 Description of Connection

It is anticipated that the grid connection will be a 33kV underground cable (UGC). This will be confirmed at a later date and will be dependent on factors including the DNO's design standards, topography, environmental constraints and conductor loading.

3.0 Description of Indicative Grid Connection Corridor (IGCC)

As set out in **Figure 1**, the IGCC, identified by the Applicant, extends north from the substation within the Proposed Development site through agricultural land within the wider Rankeilour Estate. At Main Street, Springfield, the route proceeds in proximity to Core Path R159 Springfield to Stratheden via Springfield Wood (woodland plantation) before adjoining an unnamed country road (along Stratheden Park) in a northeasterly direction to connect with Cupar Substation. The length of the UGC within the IGCC would be approximately 3.8 km⁵.

The indicative UGC would intersect the road Main Street of Springfield at approximately 20 m north of the nearest property.

At the approximate midpoint between the Proposed Development and Cupar Substation, the UGC would meet the unnamed country road in proximity of Stratheden Hospital and pass a number of residential properties before reaching the Substation just off Westfield Road.

There are a number of agricultural buildings along the indicative UGC route, and a factory less than 0.5 km from the indicative UGC route at its nearest point, indicating the presence of established commercial and industrial land uses in the surrounding landscape. This landscape supports the incorporation of the UGC into a previously developed area.

It is anticipated that the footprint of the works required to construct the grid connection would be carefully managed within a defined corridor, therefore disturbance of sensitive features would be avoided or minimised as far as possible. This assessment considers a corridor of 100 m on either side of the proposed underground cable. Appropriate setbacks from woodland and core path routes would be maintained.

⁵ The Cupar Substation is located 3.3 km directly northeast of the on-site substation; but the indicative UGC route is slightly longer as it deviates northwest following the Stratheden Park road before continuing northeast to avoid key constraints.



A network of existing overhead lines (OHLs) with associated steel lattice towers and poles are located near the indicative UGC route and IGCC, associated with Cupar Substation, including:

- A 132kV transmission OHL and towers routing south;
- Several 33kV minor transmission power lines radiating in all aspects from the Grid Connection Point (GCP);
- An 11kV OHL supported by wooden poles occupying the area south west of the GCP; and
- Ferrymuir 50MW BESS immediately south west of the GCP.

This reflects a baseline environment that already contains electrical infrastructure within the rural landscape (see **Figure 2**).

4.0 Potential Cumulative Schemes

The cumulative scheme that is considered potentially relevant to this assessment is detailed in **Table 1**. This scheme is discussed within the landscape and visual section of this report, but is not relevant to the assessment of other technical disciplines (in keeping with the EIA Report for the Proposed Development).

Table 1: Potential Cumulative Schemes

Name	Proximity	Description	Status
Over-Rankeilour Solar Farm,	2.8 km north east of the Proposed Development, west of Cuper.	Construction and operation of 29.9 MegaWatt (MW) solar array and associated infrastructure on agricultural land, within Over Rankeilour Farm, by Cupar	Approved (24/02459/PAN)

5.0 Assessment of Likelihood of Significant Environmental Effects

This assessment sets out the pertinent environmental considerations insofar as they can be identified at this stage.

For the purposes of this assessment, it is acknowledged that the grid connection will need to be delivered in accordance with the statutory environmental duties of the electricity licence holder (e.g. the DNO) under the Electricity Act 1989. Schedule 9 of the Act requires licence holders to have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, conserving flora, fauna and features of special interest, and protecting cultural heritage. It also requires them to take all reasonable steps to mitigate any adverse environmental effects arising from their proposals. These duties apply to both the design and execution of works including the installation of underground electric lines and all associated infrastructure. In practice, this is reflected through established Schedule 9 compliance processes and the integration of environmental mitigation measures directly into project design and construction ("embedded mitigation"). On this basis, it is reasonable to assume that installation of the grid connection would be subject to recognised best-practice construction methods and would incorporate appropriate environmental safeguards throughout the delivery of the grid connection.



It is further assumed that all construction activities would comply with SEPA's Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP), including:

- **GPP1:** Understanding your environmental responsibilities – good environmental practices.
- **GPP5:** Works and maintenance in or near water
- **GPP6:** Working at construction and demolition sites

For decommissioning, all effects are expected to be significantly less than those arising during construction. It is assumed that all cables would be safe and left in-situ, resulting in very limited disturbance during decommissioning. Decommissioning is therefore not considered further in this assessment.

5.1 Landscape and Visual

5.1.1 Introduction

This section considers the potential impacts and effects of the indicative UGC route on landscape and visual resources during the construction and operational phases.

The appraisal has been undertaken in line with the relevant legislation and best practice guidance and draws on the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute (LI), the associated Notes and Clarifications on aspects of the 3rd Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), 2013).

The Study Area, offset by 500 m from the indicative UGC route, and related baseline data for the appraisal are shown in **Figure 1**.

5.1.2 Baseline

5.1.2.1 Landscape Baseline

Designated Landscapes

There are no designated landscapes within the Study Area.

The indicative UGC route is adjacent to Ancient Woodland for approximately 900 m, to the north of Springfield (see **Figure 3 – Environmental Constraints**).

Although there is no legislation specifically protecting ancient woodland, ancient semi-natural woodland is an irreplaceable resource and, along with other woodlands, hedgerows and individual trees, especially veteran trees of high nature conservation and landscape value, should be protected from adverse impacts resulting from development, in line with NPF4.

Landscape character

Scotland has a digital map-based national Landscape Character Assessment (published in 2019 by SNH). This shows Landscape Character Types (LCTs) – i.e. areas of consistent and recognisable landscape character.

The IGCC falls within the Lowland Hills and Valleys LCT, as shown on **Figure 4.1.1**. Also, the access tracks to the proposed Solar Farm from the Main Street of Springfield, alongside the settlement, fall within this LCT.

The key characteristics of the Lowland Hills and Valleys LCT are:



- generally dominated by open, regular farmland patterns of medium scale fields of arable and grasslands.
- variable pattern of post and wire fences and mostly tall hedges with hedgerow trees.
- extensive areas of forestry, shelter planting, roadside planting and policies linked to large estates.
- regular, often linear, pattern of the distribution of steadings and larger settlements and towns, all of which are generally well related to the landscape.
- network of roads often well related to landform.

Visual Receptors

Visual receptors are “*the different groups of people who may experience views of the development*” (GLVIA3, para 6.3). Whilst it is the people living, working, passing through or enjoying recreational activities in the area who actually see the view and enjoy the visual amenity, it is the places they may occupy that are mapped and described as the ‘receptors’ of the views. In order to identify those receptors which may be affected, a baseline desk study, and field-based observations have been carried out.

The key visual receptors of the proposed UGC works are assessed under the following categories:

- Residential receptors: residents within settlements and scattered individual properties;
- Recreational routes: people using the countryside for outdoor recreation; and
- Road users: people travelling through the area on major and minor roads.

The proposed UGC route intersects the Main Street of Springfield at approximately 170 m north of the nearest property at the northern end of Springfield. On Main Street, Springfield, the route proceeds in the proximity of the Core Path⁶ R159 Springfield to Stratheden via Springfield Wood (woodland plantation) before adjoining Stratheden Road (C31), which overlaps the Core Path P157/01 along Stratheden Hospital in a north-easterly direction to connect with Cupar Substation. To the north east of the hospital, the UGC passes a number of residential properties before reaching the Substation just off Westfield Road.

Core Path R159 intersects with the Core Path R160 on the western boundary of the Hospital.

Based on the above description, the effects attributable to the UGC works are considered in relation to the following visual receptors:

- Residential receptors: Western edge of Springfield village, Stratheden properties and Western edge of Cupar;
- Recreational routes: Core Path R159 and Core Path R157/ Cycle Way;
- Road users: Main Street, Springfield, Stratheden Road (C31).

5.1.3 Embedded Measures and Mitigation

The embedded mitigation measures are considered as standard industry practice for this type of development and have been accounted for in the assessment as follows:

⁶ [Core Path Network](#)



- The 33 kV cables would be completely buried underground for the entire length.
- No OHL will be installed as part of the IGCC.
- Connection will be provided to the existing Cupar Substation.
- Reinstatement of land or road surface following trenching works.
- Vegetation would be reinstated.
- All woodland and individual trees will be safeguarded by an offset of at least 15-30 m incorporated into the design.
- The proposed UGC would be sited to avoid all constraints (see **Figure 3**), including planting/ woodland along the core path. The UGC would be trenched either within the adjacent field boundaries or in an accessible/unconstrained verge of the core path.
- The works required to construct the grid connection would be carefully managed within a defined corridor, therefore disturbance of sensitive landscape features, including stone walls, would be avoided or minimised as far as possible.

5.1.4 Assessment of Likelihood of Construction / Installation Effects

Landscape Effects

The Lowland Hills and Valleys LCT accommodate the settlement of Springfield, Stratheden hospital complex, and the Pepsico Quaker Oats plant, alongside the main transport corridors, Cupar Substation and OHL within this area, indicating the presence of established commercial and industrial land uses in the landscape and consequently of lower susceptibility to the type of development proposed. The landscape has local value, and its overall sensitivity to the type of development proposed is considered Low within the Study Area.

The western end of the IGCC overlaps with the new access track of the proposed Solar Farm. This is also a transitional edge where the Lowland Hills and Valleys LCT changes to Lowland River Basins LCT to the west. The indicative UGC route follows the field boundaries and the local roads before connecting to Cupar Substation.

During the construction phase, the movement of machinery related to construction activities would be the most visible element of the works. The residual effects arising as a result of the construction are assessed as being temporary, only occurring during the length of the construction phase, and differing in nature from the operational effects, mainly due to the influence of the various construction machinery, earthworks, and any temporary construction compound, that will not be present, or result in effects, during the operational phase.

The magnitude of change to the landscape character is considered Low, due to the limited extent of the development and screening or backdrop provided by existing stone walls, hedgerows and woodland, within the IGCC.

On completion, the UGC would be attributable to a Negligible magnitude of change, resulting in Negligible and not significant landscape effects.

Visual Effects

This visual receptor group includes both local residents and users of the Core Paths/ Cycle Way between the northern end of the Springfield settlement and the western end of the settlement of Cupar.



The sensitivity of visual receptors (people) from/on settlements and recreational routes has been considered as high.

Residential receptors

The construction phase for the UGC will include installing temporary fencing along the route to protect trees and ensure public safety.

Western edge of Springfield village

The northern edge of the settlement faces towards the indicative UGC route at a distance of 150 m. The boundary of the village is marked by a high stone wall extending to the west and east of the Main Street of Springfield. A few cottage-type properties face towards the wall. Due to the wall and the distance, the construction works would not be obvious, or even visible.

It is therefore considered that there would be no obvious effects upon these properties if the UGC route was in this location.

Stratheden properties

A row of properties immediately to the north east of the Stratheden hospital area are located next to the road, facing the road over their front gardens to the south east. The road is lined with pedestrian walkways on same side as the properties. The other side is lined by a low stone wall and trees.

Most of the houses are attached cottages, and therefore approximately 56 households would experience construction activities.

Due to the immediate proximity, the magnitude of change is considered high, resulting in major and significant adverse short-term / temporary effects.

Western edge of Cupar

The closest properties to the existing Cupar Substation, where the proposed UGC would connect, are at a distance of at least 50m and are buffered by the intervening vegetation alongside Westfield Road and Drum Road.

It is therefore considered that there would be no obvious effects upon these properties.

Stratheden Hospital

The area of the Hospital site next to the road, is surrounded by a stone wall and several are also located next to its perimeter. The buildings are set back from the perimeter of the site, and therefore, there are no visual effects attributable to the proposed UGC works expected upon the Hospital visitors.

The area of the Hospital site next to the road is surrounded by a stone wall and several mature trees are also located next to its perimeter. The buildings are set back from the perimeter of the Hospital site, and therefore, there are no visual effects attributable to the proposed UGC works expected upon the Hospital occupants and visitors.

Recreational Routes

The sensitivity of recreational routes has been considered as high.

Core Path R159

It can be expected that Core Path R159 would have views of the construction works in the immediate vicinity within a 990m section extending between High Street of Springfield and Stratheden Road.



The works may take up to 12-15 weeks. However, the works would not directly affect the Core Path, which will remain open.

In views from the path, the related tree protection/ security fencing would be visibly discordant within the surrounding landscape. The construction activities would be disruptive to path users within a 990 m section between the woodland and an agricultural field. Therefore, users of the Core Path would experience High magnitude of change within this section, resulting in major adverse and significant effects, although being short-term and temporary.

Core Path R157/ Cycle Way

It can be expected that users of Core Path R157, which is also a Cycle Way and overlaps with Stratheden Road (C31), would have views of the construction works in the immediate vicinity within a 2 km section extending between the western perimeter of the Stratheden Hospital and Cupar Substation.

Therefore, users of the Core Path would experience high magnitude of change within this section, resulting in major adverse and significant effects, however short-term and temporary.

Transport Routes

The sensitivity of visual receptors (people) from the main transport routes, including local roads has been considered as Medium.

There are a few transport routes within the Study Area (including Main Street of Springfield and Stratheden Road (C31)), where users may have visibility of construction activities.

As the indicative UGC route would cross the High Street, a temporary closure and traffic diversion is expected for a short time.

Stratheden Road (C31) users may experience traffic regulation measures and slower movement during construction works.

Therefore, users of these roads would experience high magnitude of change within certain sections, resulting in major adverse and significant effects, however short-term and temporary.

5.1.5 Assessment of Likelihood of Operational Effects

Landscape and Visual Effects

Once operational, the UGC will be hidden underground with only inspection covers visible at the link boxes. The existing habitats and features affected by the construction of the UGC will be reinstated following completion with no significant landscape and visual effects likely to persist post-construction. Therefore, operational impacts attributable to the UGC have been scoped out. Accordingly, the Lowland Hills and Valleys LCT and visual receptors would not be affected during the operational stage.

5.1.6 Assessment of Differences from Conclusions of the EIA Report / In-Combination Effects

The combined effects of the construction / installation of the UGC with the effects reported in Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the EIA Report in respect of the construction of the Proposed Development are not likely to give rise to the potential for significant effects.



Since the submission of the West Springfield Solar and BESS Section 36 application, the solar development Over-Rankeilour Solar Farm at Cupar was approved by Fife North East Planning committee (24/02459/PAN).

The LVIA for West Springfield concluded that the low-lying nature of both solar developments and the distance between them would not allow for the developments to be seen in combined visibility. Neither would there be opportunity for a sequential perception of the developments from the A91 due to their separation within the low-lying and slightly rolling, well-vegetated terrain.

As Over Rankeilour was at Planning stage, it was therefore considered that a cumulative assessment was not required for the West Springfield LVIA.

Construction / installation, with associated movement of plant and personnel, would be temporary in nature, restricted in extent and confined to small areas, moving along the IGCC as works advance.

It is assumed that the grid connection works for the approved Over-Rankeilour Solar development would see temporary construction works, however routing and typology of those works are not known at the time of writing.

Similarly, cumulative effects with other unknown development projects at the time of installation are unlikely since associated mitigation measures should be readily available if required, albeit it is impossible at this stage to predict what potential cumulative schemes might be relevant by the time the grid connection is being installed.

Once all installation works are complete and the grid route is operational, no in-combination or cumulative effects would occur.

5.2 Ecology

5.2.1 Baseline

Baseline information for the IGCC focussed on the important ecological features (IEFs) identified for the Proposed Development as well as woodland habitats (as shown on **Figures 4.2.1 – 4.2.2**). With the exception of woodland habitats, the reasoning for scoping ecological features out of impact assessment for the Proposed Development are considered valid for this assessment.

Baseline ecological information was obtained for the IGCC plus the appropriate species-specific buffers:

- 30m: bat roosting;
- 100m: bat habitats (e.g., foraging, commuting), badger *Meles meles*, pine marten *Martes martes*, red squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*, freshwater fish; and
- 200m: sensitive habitats, otter *Lutra lutra*;

The following sources were used to describe baseline conditions for the IGCC:

- Inspection of aerial imagery for habitats or features that may support protected species and to describe broad habitat types.
- Records of protected and notable species from 2015 – 2025 within a 1 km buffer of the Proposed Development purchased from the Fife Nature Records Centre (FNRC) in March 2025 to inform the EclA for the Proposed Development. The search area for the FNRC data request covered the IGCC as far east as Stratheden Hospital.



- The assessment found that the IGCC has potential to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats; badgers; red squirrels and pine marten. No minor or major watercourses are present within a 200 m buffer of the IGCC, and therefore otters and freshwater fish are not expected to be present (**Table 4-1**).

Table 4-1: Ecology - Summary of baseline assessment of IGCC

Proposed Development IEF	Baseline Assessment of IGCC	Potential to support IEF
Badger	Woodlands within the IGCC plus a 100 m buffer provide habitat for sett building (Figure 4.2.2). Field margins, particularly adjacent to woodland edges, provide foraging and commuting habitat. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	High
Otter	No major or minor watercourses were present within the IGCC plus a 200 m buffer. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] The FNRC returned no records of otter within 500 m of the IGCC, however otters were recorded in the wider FNRC search area.	Negligible
Freshwater fish	No watercourses likely to be perennial were present within the IGCC plus a 100 m buffer (Figure 4.2.2). One field drain was present but it did not appear to be connected to major or minor watercourses and therefore is considered unlikely to support fish populations or individual fish.	Negligible
Red squirrel, pine marten	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] The FNRC returned records of red squirrels within 500 m of the IGCC as well as within the wider FNRC search area.	Moderate

5.2.2 Assessment of Likelihood of Construction/Installation Effects

This assessment considers the potential for impacts of construction of the grid connection. However, it is acknowledged that the necessary consents will be obtained for the grid connection works at a later date and, potentially, an updated impact assessment will be undertaken, which may come to different conclusions than those in this assessment.

For this assessment, it was assumed that there is a potential for active construction activities to be undertaken within the full IGCC (i.e., the grid connection route plus a 100m buffer).

This assessment considered the following IEFs, which were considered to have more than negligible potential to be present within the IGCC:

- AWI woodlands as a designated site;
- woodlands as a sensitive habitat;
- bats (roosting, foraging, commuting);



- badger;
- red squirrel; and
- pine marten.

Potential construction impacts to IEFs include:

- temporary habitat loss and/or fragmentation;
- permanent loss of habitat (including woodland habitat and resting places for protected species);
- injury and/or mortality during construction;
- habitat degradation due to pollution impacts; and
- disturbance to protected species.

It is assumed that the embedded and targeted mitigation measures outlined in the EclA for the Proposed Development (i.e. minimising woodland habitat loss, implementing pollution prevention measures, undertaking pre-construction surveying to identify any protected resting places, appointing an ecological clerk of works, working during the day, avoidance of lighting, maximum speed limits strictly enforced) will also be applied to the UGC works. Through correct application of these measures, it is likely that there will be no significant effects on protected species.

The indicative UGC route runs adjacent to woodlands and individual trees in some places, and the loss of any woodlands or trees would be a permanent impact. Woodlands provide supporting habitat for protected species, and AWI woodlands are considered an irreplaceable habitat type. It is assumed that the final design of the grid connection route and the construction practices would avoid any loss of AWI woodlands and minimise any other tree loss along the final route. Through these design measures, it is likely that there will be no significant effects on woodland habitats, including AWI woodlands.

5.2.3 Assessment of Likelihood of Operational Effects

No operational impacts to IEFs are anticipated, as it is assumed that sensitive habitats (i.e., woodlands) would be avoided and all disturbed habitats would be restored following construction of the underground cable.

5.2.4 Assessment of Differences from Conclusions of the EIA Report / In-Combination Effects

No new impacts to protected species were assessed / anticipated for the IGCC compared to the Proposed Development, and both assessments concluded that there would be no significant residual effects on protected species, through correct application of embedded and targeted mitigation measures.

Woodland habitats and AWI woodlands were scoped out of impact assessment for the Proposed Development as no impacts were identified. However, embedded mitigation measures for the Proposed Development included a minimum 15 m buffer (and ideally 30 m) from woodlands and trees. It is assumed that embedded mitigation measures for the UGC works would completely avoid any loss of AWI woodlands and minimise individual tree loss, and therefore it is also concluded that the UGC works would not result in significant effects on AWI woodlands or woodland habitats.



5.3 Ornithology

5.3.1 Baseline

Baseline information for the IGCC focussed on the IEFs identified for the Proposed Development (see **Figure 4.3.1**), as the reasoning for scoping ornithological features out of impact assessment for the Proposed Development are considered valid for this assessment.

Baseline ornithological information was obtained for the IGCC plus the appropriate species-specific buffers:

- 100 m: barn owl *Tyto alba* roosting/nesting;
- 500 m: breeding and nesting birds;
- 1 km: barn owl foraging; and
- 20 km: wintering geese.

The following sources were used to describe baseline conditions for the IGCC:

- Inspection of aerial imagery for habitats or features that may support protected species and to describe broad habitat types.
- Records of protected and notable species from 2015 – 2025 within a 1 km buffer of the Proposed Development purchased from the Fife Nature Records Centre (FNRC) in March 2025 to inform the EclA for the Proposed Development. The search area for the FNRC data request covered the IGCC as far east as Stratheden Hospital.
- Field survey results from the 2025 Ecological Impact Assessment, where survey buffers overlapped with the IGCC.
- A search for designated sites within a 20 km buffer of the IGCC for ornithological receptors.

No targeted field surveys within the IGCC were undertaken to inform this assessment.

The assessment found that the IGCC has the potential to support breeding birds, wintering geese and swans, barn owl and goose species that are qualifying interests of the Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SPA and Ramsar sites, Firth of Forth SPA and Ramsar sites, Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex SPA, Cameron Reservoir SPA and Ramsar sites and Loch Leven SPA and Ramsar sites (**Table 4-2**).

Table 4-2: Ornithology - Summary of baseline assessment of the IGCC

Proposed Development IEF	Baseline Assessment of the IGCC	Potential to support IEF
Designated Sites (ornithology)	The following statutory designates sites with ornithological interests were present within a 20 km buffer of the IGCC (Figure 4.3.1): • Cameron Reservoir SPA and Ramsar site (10.7 km east); • Firth of Forth SPA and Ramsar site (11.8 km south); • Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SPA and Ramsar site (7.3 km east); • Loch Leven SPA and Ramsar site (19.3 km west); and	High for wintering goose species and lapwing; Negligible for other species



Proposed Development IEF	Baseline Assessment of the IGCC	Potential to support IEF
	Outer Firth of Forth and St. Andrews Bay Complex SPA (12.1 km south). The coastal sites (Firth of Forth SPA and Ramsar site, Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SPA and Ramsar site, Outer Firth of Forth and St. Andrews Bay SPA) were mainly designated for coastal birds and seabirds, as well as goose species and lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> (Firth of Forth SPA only). Cameron Reservoir SPA and Ramsar site is designated for pink-footed goose and Loch Leven SPA and Ramsar site is designed for waterbirds, pink-footed goose and whooper swan <i>Cygnus cygnus</i>.	
Breeding and nesting birds	The habitats within the IGCC plus a 500 m buffer include urban/residential, woodland, scrub, hedgerow, arable and grassland, with a potential for long tussocky grassland at field margins. These habitats provide suitable nesting locations for a variety of breeding bird species. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] As the habitats within the IGCC were similar to the Proposed Development, it is likely that the breeding bird assemblage will be similar to what was recorded in the EclA for the Proposed Development. The FNRC data returned no records of any species listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA within 500 m of the IGCC.	High
Barn owl	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] The FNRC data reported no records of barn owl.	Moderate
Wintering geese and swans	The IGCC plus a 500 m buffer provided suitable habitat for foraging geese and swans due to the high coverage of agricultural fields. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Multiple Special Protection Areas (SPAs) were present within a 20 km buffer of the IGCC for which greylag goose, pink-footed goose, or both, is a qualifying feature. The FNRC data did not report any goose or swan species within a 500 m of the IGCC, however barnacle goose <i>Branta leucopsis</i>, Canada goose <i>Branta canadensis</i>, Greenland white-fronted goose <i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>, greylag goose, mute swan	High



Proposed Development IEF	Baseline Assessment of the IGCC	Potential to support IEF
	<i>Cygnus olor</i> , pink-footed goose, tundra bean goose <i>Anser serrirostris</i> , white-fronted goose <i>Anser albifrons</i> and whooper swan were present within the wider FNRC search area.	

5.3.2 Assessment of Likelihood of Construction/Installation Effects

This appraisal considers the potential for impacts of construction of the grid connection. However, it is acknowledged that the necessary consents will be obtained for the grid connection works in due course and potentially an updated impact assessment will be undertaken, which may come to different conclusions than those in this appraisal.

For this appraisal, it was assumed that there is a potential for active construction activities to be undertaken within the full IGCC (i.e., the grid connection route plus a 100 m buffer).

This appraisal considered the following IEFs, which were considered to have more than negligible potential to be present within the IGCC:

- Wintering geese and swans, including pink-footed goose and greylag goose from SPA populations;
- lapwing;
- nesting/breeding birds; and
- barn owl.

Potential construction impacts to IEFs include:

- temporary habitat loss and/or fragmentation;
- permanent loss of habitat;
- injury and/or mortality;
- habitat degradation due to pollution impacts; and
- displacement/disturbance due to noise, lighting or the presence of site personnel.

The footprint of the grid connection will be minimised and it is assumed that the route will avoid AWI woodlands, minimise other tree loss and that habitats will be reinstated after construction. It is assumed that the embedded and targeted mitigation measures outlined in the EclA for the Proposed Development (i.e. pre-construction surveying to identify any barn owl roosts, implementing pollution prevention measures, appointing an ecological clerk of works, pre-works checks for nesting birds for all work during the breeding bird season, avoidance of lighting, maximum speed limits strictly enforced) will also be applied to the IGCC. Through correct application of these measures, it is concluded likely that there will be no significant effects on nesting/breeding birds, lapwing, wintering geese and swans or barn owl.

5.3.3 Assessment of Likelihood of Operational Effects

No operational impacts to IEFs are anticipated, as it is assumed that sensitive habitats (i.e., woodlands) will be avoided and all disturbed habitats will be restored following construction of the underground cable.



5.3.4 Assessment of Differences from Conclusions of the EIA Report / In-Combination Effects

No new impacts to ornithological receptors were assessed for the IGCC compared to the Proposed Development, and both assessments concluded that there would be no significant residual effects on ornithological receptors, through correct application of embedded and targeted mitigation measures.

5.4 Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Peat

5.4.1 Baseline

The majority of the IGCC is located within the wider River Eden catchment (**Figure 4.4.1**). A small area of the IGCC to the north east is located within Foodieash Burn surface water catchment, and a small area of the IGCC to the south west is located within the Fernie Burn surface water catchment. None of the catchments are designated as a Drinking Water Protected Area (DWPA) and no water dependent or geological designated sites are noted within 500 m of the indicative UGC route.

The indicative UGC route is not noted to cross any Ordnance Survey mapped watercourses, however there is potential that unmapped drainage ditches and smaller watercourses may be present along the route. SEPA flood mapping indicates that the indicative UGC route would not intersect any large or continuous areas of fluvial or surface water flooding.

An initial desk-based review of Scottish Water mapping indicates that much of the IGCC is supplied by mains water, however it is acknowledged that private water supply sources could be present within the IGCC. No information has been requested to date of private water supplies along the IGCC from Fife Council, however in accordance with good practice this would likely be obtained and assessed as part of the consenting process for the grid connection in due course.

The IGCC is wholly underlain by sandstones of the Glenvale Sandstone Formation. The bedrock is overlain by superficial deposits of glacial till. The bedrock has been classified as a highly productive aquifer. The superficial deposits are not considered to be a significant aquifer. Priority peatland mapping indicates that the IGCC is located within Class 0 (Mineral Soils), which is not considered to be representative of peatland habitats.

5.4.2 Assessment of Likelihood of Construction/Installation Effects

Without mitigation, during construction there is potential for an adverse effect on downstream surface water and groundwater receptors from pollution from fuel, oil or other hazardous substances and increased sediment load to nearby water environment.

Works would be undertaken in accordance with industry standard mitigation measures, including GPPs, to ensure that best practice construction techniques and procedures are implemented to minimise potential effects. In accordance with this guidance, the UGC would be installed progressively to minimise the area of excavation and reduce the amount of stockpiled material at one time. Arisings from the UGC trench during construction would be temporarily stored so that potential for erosion and sedimentation is limited. This would include storing any material away from watercourses and implementing mitigation measures, such as silt fences, where required. Water would be prevented as far as possible from entering excavations and an emergency spill management plan would be developed for the proposed works. Additional site-specific mitigation and monitoring would be implemented where sensitive receptors are identified along the route.

It is noted that the UGC route and IGCC are approximate and consent is not sought for the grid connection at this stage. The final IGCC route would be subject to further studies, and if



required, a private water supply and water users survey in accordance with SEPA guidance. Following the further studies, any additional site-specific mitigation would be identified and implemented if any sensitive receptors (such as private water supplies) are confirmed along the route.

The application of industry standard practice as set out above would reduce effects to ensure that no significant geological, hydrological, hydrogeological and peat effects would occur as a result of the UGC installation works.

5.4.3 Assessment of Likelihood of Operational Effects

The soils disturbed during construction would be placed in the UGC trench following installation of the cable. No change to ground conditions or surface topography would occur, and therefore no change to geology, peat, hydrogeology and hydrology as a result of the cable during operation.

5.4.4 Assessment of Differences from Conclusions of the EIA Report / In-Combination Effects

The combined effects of the UGC works with the construction of West Springfield Solar and BESS (the Proposed Development), are not likely to give rise to significant in-combination effects on geology, peat, hydrology and hydrogeology.

Similarly, cumulative effects with other development projects are not likely to give rise to the potential for significant effects subject to standard mitigation measures being implemented.

5.5 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

5.5.1 Baseline

As shown on **Figure 4.5.1**, within the IGCC there is one designated heritage asset, comprising the Category C Listed Former Fife and Kinross District Asylum (LB52503)⁷, located on the south of Stratheden Park road, leading to Cupar. The former Asylum is currently known as Stratheden Hospital. There are no World Heritage Sites, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, Inventory Battlefields, or Inventory Gardens and Designed Landscapes within the IGCC (see **Figure 4.5.1** Heritage Constraints)

There are eight Trove records located within the IGCC, and three assets recorded within the Fife Historic Environment Record (HER).

The findspot of a likely prehistoric carved stone ball (31605) is recorded in the centre of the IGCC, within the grounds of Springfield Hospital. A possible cairn was recorded within the Fife HER (MFF7777), to the southeast of the IGCC. A field visit in 1985 recorded it as a glacial mound and as such the asset is natural and not prehistoric and would not be considered a cultural heritage constraint. The grid reference gives a general area for the asset, some of which is within the IGCC. However, based on a review of aerial photography the location of the asset is likely outwith the IGCC. Due to the extensive construction associated with the hospital surrounding the findspot of the carved stone ball and the lack of prehistoric assets within the surrounding landscape, the potential for further prehistoric finds is very low.

⁷ Full title: Former Fife and Kinross District Asylum - main block, north lodge and gatepiers, former workshop outbuilding to north, and convalescent ward to northwest - excluding all interiors and all post 1914 additions and all other buildings on the site, Stratheden Hospital, Springfield, Cupar



Three records dating to the post-medieval period are associated with Stratheden Hospital (LB52503). Stratheden Hospital was designed by architects Peddie & Kinnear and opened in 1866. The Trove records relating to the asylum comprise the asylum itself (170914), the superintendent's house (260722), and a nurse's home (259590).

A further post-medieval asset is located at the eastern extent of the IGCC, a house with the name Trynlaw (224420). It is assumed that this house is related to the Category B Listed Ferrymuir House (LB2675) and the adjacent farmstead (LB2626), which are located outwith the IGCC, to the east. However, there is no information about the asset on any publicly available record.

Two post-medieval assets are recorded within the Fife HER, both at the western end of the IGCC, one relating to a Category B Listed Building (LB15491), the extent of which is outwith the IGCC. The recorded grid reference gives a general area for the assets some of which is within the IGCC. However, based on a review of aerial photography and the listing description, both assets are located outwith the IGCC. The Category B Listed east lodge and gatepiers for Rankeilour House (LB15491, MFF5395) are located to the north of the IGCC and Springfield farm and stables (MFF7960) are recorded to the south of the IGCC.

The earliest available historic maps that clearly show the area where the IGCC will pass through, are Blaeu's map from 1654⁸ and Adair's Map from 1684⁹. They show the area as Cowper-Muir or Couper Muir, presumably noting an area of moorland. No development or settlement is noted within this area. Roy's Map¹⁰ does not note any notable settlements within the centre of the IGCC but does show the eastern extent of the IGCC within the grounds of Rankeilour Estate.

First Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) Mapping from 1855¹¹ shows the western extent of the IGCC as being within the eastern extent of the grounds of Rankeilour Mains. The UGC and associated IGCC runs along the bottom of Springfield Wood and Balbirnie Wood, before passing through fields, separated by field boundaries and small areas of woodland. The IGCC crosses through a settlement named Northfield, within its central portion, shown as a small number of buildings. The eastern extent of the IGCC passes through the gardens of a house named Beechgrove, located to the north of the IGCC, and part of the grounds of a house named Ferrybank, presumably the Category B Listed Ferrymuir (LB2675), located to the southeast of the IGCC.

Later historic mapping¹² shows the development of the Stratheden Hospital in the centre of the IGCC, as well as the expansion of Northfield in its centre and the expansion of Cupar to its east. The landscape outwith these settlements is comprised of agricultural fields and intermittent woodland plantations. No further heritage assets are noted.

There are three modern records within the IGCC, all of which are cottages along the north of Stratheden Park Road (260714, 260715, 260716). These were constructed as attendants' cottages in relation to Stratheden Hospital, sometime in the early 1900s.

⁸ Blaeu, J. (1654) Fifae Vicecomitatus, The Sherifdome of Fyfe. Available at: <https://maps.nls.uk/atlas/blaeu/browse/92>

⁹ Adair, J (1684) The East Part of Fife. Available at: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/1009>

¹⁰ Roy's Military Survey of Scotland (1747-55) Strip 18/2e and 18/1b. Available at: <https://maps.nls.uk/geo/roy/#zoom=13.7&lat=56.32775&lon=-3.03167&layers=0>

¹¹ Ordnance Survey (1855) Fife, Sheet 10. Available at: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/228777577>; Ordnance Survey (1866) Fife, Sheet 11. Available at: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/228777580>

¹² Ordnance Survey (1896) Fife and Kinross Sheet XIII.NE. Available at: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/75531031>



There is one record of a heritage desk-based assessment relating to the replacement of the 132/33kV transformer at Cupar Substation (369155), which concluded that there was a low probability of encountering unrecorded archaeology during associated construction works.

5.5.2 Appraisal of Likelihood of Construction/Installation Effects

Within the IGCC, there is one designated heritage asset, comprising the Category C Listed Former Fife and Kinross District Asylum (LB52503)¹³. This asset is considered to be of medium cultural heritage significance, and any impact upon its fabric would be an adverse impact. Depending on the extent of these impacts, they could be considered significant in EIA terms. Listed Buildings are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, and any change to their fabric would require Listed Building Consent. If the construction footprint is designed to avoid any fabric of the Listed Building, then a significant impact on LB52503 would be avoided.

There is the potential for adverse construction impacts on the non-designated heritage assets outlined within Section 5.5.1 of this appraisal, likely in the form of removal of upstanding walls or structures. These assets, mostly ancillary buildings of the Category C Listed Hospital, are considered to be of low to medium cultural heritage significance. Depending on the extent of the impacts, they could be considered to be significant in EIA terms. Potential direct effects could potentially be avoided by embedded design mitigation through avoidance, or other construction techniques could be explored.

Avoidance of these heritage assets or minimising impacts by design would likely result in no significant impacts upon non-designated heritage assets.

Throughout the IGCC, there is potential for further subsurface archaeological remains, most likely related to historic, most likely post-medieval, agricultural practices and field division.

Whilst these remains could be subject to an adverse impact as a result of construction works, these impacts are unlikely to be considered significant in EIA terms.

5.5.3 Appraisal of Likelihood of Operational Effects

It is assumed, for the purpose of this appraisal, that the completed proposal would result in no permanent above-ground structures in relation to the underground cable. As such, it is anticipated that there would be no operational effects from the proposal on cultural heritage.

5.5.4 Appraisal of Differences from Conclusions of the EIA Report / In-Combination Effects

The EIA Report chapter for the Proposed Development concluded that there would be no significant effects as a result of the construction or operation of the Proposed Development.

Presuming that the impacts on the Listed Building and the associated non-designated heritage assets within the IGCC are avoided by design, then the construction and operation of the UGC is unlikely to give rise to potentially significant effects on cultural heritage.

As such, the combined effects of the operation of the UGC with the effects reported in the EIA Report chapter for West Springfield Solar are not likely to give rise to the potential for significant effects on cultural heritage.

¹³ Full title: *Former Fife and Kinross District Asylum - main block, north lodge and gatepiers, former workshop outbuilding to north, and convalescent ward to northwest - excluding all interiors and all post 1914 additions and all other buildings on the site, Stratheden Hospital, Springfield, Cupar*



5.6 Access, Traffic and Transport

5.6.1 Baseline

As shown in **Figure 1**, the indicative route of the UGC within the IGCC crosses the C13 Main Street north of Springfield. It would then run alongside Core Path P159/03, which is an off-road path and links the C13 Main Street to the west and the C31 road to the east. The route then runs along the C31 road for around 2 km to Cupar substation through Stratheden. The C31 forms Core Path P157/01.

The C13 Main Street in the vicinity of where the IGCC crosses, is a single carriageway road with one lane in each direction and is subject to a 60 mph speed limit. There is a footway on its western side from around the point where the indicative UGC would cross, southwards into Springfield.

Data in the Transport Statement submitted in support of the Section 36 application for the Proposed Development showed that the average number of weekday vehicle movements on the C13 Main Street during the period 0700 – 1900 was 1,241, of which 163 were HGVs.

The C13 Main Street meets the A91 at a priority junction around 950 m to the north of where the IGCC would cross it. The A91 forms a route between St Andrews and Cupar to the east and the A92 and the M90 at Junction 8 to the west. Traffic data collected on the A91 at the same time as that collected on the C13 Main Street, showed that the average number of weekday vehicle movements was 7,452, of which 1,226 were HGVs.

Core Path P159/03 is an off-road path formed of a compacted unbound surface. **Photo 4-1** shows a view from the C13 Main Street of the western end of Core Path P159/03. There is a footway on the eastern side of the C31 where it meets Core Path P159/03 and this footway forms Core Path P157/01.



Photo 4-1: View of Core Path P159/03 from C13 Main Street



The C31 is a single carriageway road with one lane in each direction. It is subject to a 60 mph speed limit, but a 20 mph speed limit applies for around 600 m through Stratheden. Hangman's Lane, a road around 750 m long, links the C31 with the A91 to the north.

No sections of the National Cycle Network interact with any of the above roads or the route of the IGCC.

5.6.2 Assessment of Likelihood of Construction/Installation Effects

Construction of the UGC would generate vehicle movements on the public road network arising from staff travelling to and from the various work sites, as well as the delivery and removal of plant, components, materials and supplies. These activities would lead to additional cars, vans, Light Good Vehicles (LGVs) and HGVs on the road network.

The construction of the UGC would require temporary access to each installation location along the route. These accesses would aim to use existing field accesses where possible, although there may be a need for improvements to some of these (to widen them or provide a suitable running surface for example) or for new temporary accesses to be formed. Appropriate visibility splays would be provided for any new accesses. Temporary trackway pads would be provided where required to provide a suitable vehicle route between accesses and work sites.

The number of vehicle movements using any one access would vary, but a typical working day would likely see something in the order of five to ten vehicle visits (so 10 to 20 vehicle movements, accounting for arrivals and departures). That number of vehicle movements



would be unlikely to be noticeable to other users of the public road network in the vicinity of the installation works.

Further vehicle movements would likely be generated at the start and end of the works as a temporary construction compound would be established and then removed and items such as storage containers, welfare cabins and site offices are delivered and then removed. There would be further movements throughout construction as items such as plant, materials (such as sand and cables) and consumables (such as fuel for plant) are delivered.

There may be the occasional need for work within the carriageway where the UGC crosses the C13 Main Street, or within the verge or footway where the UGC runs alongside the C31. These works may cause some short-duration delays to other roads users if traffic management measures are required. Any such measures would, however, be subject to appropriate permissions from, and requirements of, Fife Council and would acknowledge the sensitivity of Stratheden hospital, which is on the southern side of the C31.

5.6.3 Appraisal of Likelihood of Operational Effects

During operation there would be only the very occasional maintenance or inspection vehicle movement so no potential significant effects on the transport network would be likely.

5.6.4 Appraisal of Differences from Conclusions of the EIA Report / In-Combination Effects

Vehicle access to the Proposed Development from the public road network would be from the C13 Main Street. The part of the UGC within the Proposed Development would need to be accessed from the C13 Main Street, but the remainder would be accessed from the C31.

For most of the length of the indicative UGC route, therefore, there would not normally be any reason why vehicles involved in the construction of either development would be on same parts of the road network in the immediate vicinity of each. Although vehicles from both may be on the wider road network (such as the A91), they are unlikely to cause a noticeable effect on users of those roads in light of the typical weekday traffic flow on the A91 referred to above. No potential significant effects on the transport network are therefore considered likely from the construction of the UGC in combination with the Proposed Development.

5.7 Noise

5.7.1 Baseline

As the IGCC leaves the Proposed Development site from the onsite substation, it runs through environments that are rural in nature while passing a number of residential properties before connecting with Cupar Substation. The surrounding environment is made up of agricultural land, forestry, country roads and an A class road to the north.

The existing baseline noise environment of the IGCC is characterised by 'natural' sources such as wind and disturbed vegetation, with some contribution from anthropogenic sound such as agricultural or forestry activity, road traffic from nearby roads, as well as some occupational noise from the nearby factory.

It is accepted that grid connection works are linear in geographical extent and of short duration at any one location.



5.7.2 Appraisal of Likelihood of Construction/Installation Effects

There are a number of residential properties within Springfield and Stratheden that face onto the indicative UGC route that would potentially be subject to increased noise as a result of installation of the UGC.

Noise generated during construction will diminish quickly as construction progresses, moving the activity away from any noise sensitive receptor such that the potential for significant effects is not likely, despite the potential for short term impacts.

Works would be controlled by the Control of Pollution Act 1974, The Control of Noise (Codes of Practice for Construction and Open Sites) (Scotland) Order 1985 and would be undertaken on the basis of noise limits set by BS 5228-1¹⁴. The standards generally apply to long-term construction projects where receptors are exposed to construction noise for longer than one month, and that shorter term and higher levels of construction noise are generally acceptable provided such effects are minimised through the adoption of Best Practicable Means (BPM) and the residents are given suitable advance notice of the works. Where noisy construction activities are required in the vicinity of residential properties, the residents would be notified in advance of the works, and, if necessary, working hours adjusted to minimise noise effects. Noise effects would be minimised through the adoption of BPM. Further mitigation is not proposed or anticipated to be required, due to the short duration of potential noise effects.

The combined effects of the installation of the UGC with the effects reported in Volume 4: Noise Technical Appendix of the EIA Report in respect of the construction of the Proposed Development are not likely to give rise to the potential for significant effects on noise. Installation would be temporary in nature, restricted in extent and confined to small areas, shifting steadily along the IGCC as works advance.

5.7.3 Appraisal of Likelihood of Operational Effects

There would be no potential impacts during the operational period. There would also be no potential for combined effects of the operation of the UGC with the effects reported in Volume 4: Noise Technical Appendix of the EIA Report.

Similarly, cumulative effects with other development projects at the time of installation are unlikely since mitigation measure should be readily available if required, albeit it is impossible at this stage to predict what potential cumulative schemes might be relevant by the time the grid connection is being installed.

5.8 Other Issues

5.8.1 Agricultural Land

There will be no loss of prime agricultural land associated with the construction phase of the UGC - it is anticipated that soils would be reinstated on completion of trenching works and in line with relevant best practice guidance. Mitigation measures to manage any temporary excavation works and required offsets from agricultural field boundaries/margins would be set out in method statements and followed by Contractors.

¹⁴ BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014, Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites - Noise



5.8.2 Arboriculture

There would be no loss of woodland or impacts upon trees designated on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) from construction of the UGC. As part of the consenting process for the grid route, the route would be expected to follow the least environmentally constrained path and therefore no felling is anticipated. Where the UGC runs close to areas of AWI and other woodland, it is expected that an ECoW would ensure that an appropriate buffer between the tree root protection zone and the construction areas is maintained.

5.8.3 Existing Transmission and Electrical Infrastructure

Given the relatively rural expanse and predominant OHL infrastructure in proximity to Cupar Substation, the cabling route will be easily accommodated at ground level to the south and south west of Cupar Substation. Recommended exclusion zone buffers would be applied and vehicular access would be maintained to any existing towers and lines in proximity to the substation, and Ferrymuir BESS located on Stratheden Park road.

5.8.4 Recreation – Core Paths

The indicative UGC route is adjacent to two core paths (R159 – Springfield to Stratheden; and at the Hospital via Stratheden Park) to Cupar Substation. Extents of these adjoining core paths may be temporarily impacted during the UGC works. It is expected, however, that the route would follow the least environmentally constrained path. Where corridor margins overlap, or core paths are directly affected – it is anticipated that public access via publicised diversions (i.e. signage, notifications) would be maintained or an Access Management Plan implemented. The core paths would be reinstated, and no permanent impacts are anticipated.

The visual amenity of the core paths would not be permanently impacted given that the entirety of the grid connection cable would be undergrounded.

6.0 Conclusion

This Indicative Grid Connection Corridor Assessment sets out the key environmental considerations relating to a potential underground grid connection route option for the Proposed Development.

While the final connection route and technology would be confirmed in due course, this assessment has considered a realistic route corridor for an underground 33 kV connection to ensure that the potential for significant environmental effects is appropriately considered, proportionate to the information available at this stage.

The parameters used within which to appraise the likelihood of significant environmental effects include:

- UGC connection method;
- a defined IGCC (see **Figure 1**);
- assessment of the construction/installation and operational phases; and
- the potential for in-combination and cumulative effects.

Legal requirements and relevant best-practice guidance would also be applied during construction to minimise environmental effects, including adherence to GPP1, GPP5 and GPP6; preparation of a CTMP under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991; and implementation of Best Practicable Means (BPM) under applicable pollution and noise control legislation.



This assessment identifies areas where significant environmental effects may potentially arise in relation to residential visual amenity, landscape and visual receptors, cultural heritage settings, and cumulative construction traffic impacts along the C13 Main Street, the A91 north of Westfield and the local core path network. However, it also confirms that through careful route refinement, and adherence to established best-practice construction and environmental management measures, any potential impacts can be effectively avoided or reduced.

It is noted that the findings of this assessment could be subject to change depending on the fixed and final grid connection route which would be subject to SPEN's statutory environmental duties as DNO under the Electricity Act 1989. Further detailed assessment will be undertaken at that time, supported by more advanced design information, to ensure that the final grid connection solution is environmentally responsible, technically robust and in alignment with relevant planning and regulatory requirements.



Appendix A Figures



Appendix B ECU Correspondence



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 June 2026 12:57
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Additional Information - Housekeeping Email - Section 36 - West Springfield Solar
Attachments: Application - 000 Consultation Tracker - West Springfield Solar & BESS.xlsx;
Additional Information - Section 36 West springfield Solar- Template notice to be served on consultees by Applicant.docx

Hi [REDACTED]

I have now considered the information you have provided in relation to the associated grid connection for the West Springfield Solar application and can confirm that the information is considered to be Environmental Information with regard to Regulation 19 of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

I have therefore provided details below in relation to the submission of the Additional Information and the associated requirements.

1. Additional Information documentation

Please advise what the Additional Information will cover i.e. what chapters of the EIA and the anticipated volume of Additional Information.

2. Uploading Additional Information electronically to the ECU website

Please note that the Additional Information should be uploaded to the ECU website using the same reference as the application (ECU00006134). You should advise when you intend to start uploading the Additional Information to enable me to revert the case to “draft” on the ECU website.

The uploaded information should use an appropriate naming convention, for example, **“Additional Information – subject”**. Abbreviations, no matter how obvious they may be, should not be used. Individual file sizes cannot exceed 10MB and **all uploaded documents should be redacted** (for example signatures or personal information should be redacted).

Please also note that uploading of Additional Information documentation will have to be completed and reviewed **prior to the date on which the first advert is being published**. Please confirm when you intend to upload the documentation to ensure the case status is amended to permit this. If possible, this should be least 2 weeks prior to publication. You should also ensure that the Additional Information is uploaded to your dedicated West Springfield Solar website **prior to the date on which the first advert is being published**.

Some consultees may require hard copies, particularly of visualisations. I suggest you contact the Planning Authority, NatureScot, HES and SEPA directly to enquire how they wish to be served the Additional Information.

Please note that Scottish Ministers require 2 hard copies of the Additional Information for review.

Confidential Annexes

Please confirm if there will be any confidential annexes. If so, you will need to contact the Planning Authority, NatureScot and RSPB Scotland for the contact details of who should receive any confidential annex/es and where they should be sent.

Please also ensure that you forward an electronic version of the confidential annexes to the ECU case officer direct for our records.

In addition, you should also provide redacted versions of the confidential annexes so that any non-confidential information contained within them can be published on the ECU website and a redacted hard copy version placed in the viewing venues. **Any sensitive information which could be used to persecute protected species should be redacted, including information relating to nest, roosting or holt/set locations, as it could substantially prejudice protection of the environment.**

Please ensure that the unredacted confidential annexes are not sent to any consultee other than the Planning Authority, NatureScot or RSPB Scotland and are not published on your application website.

3. Public viewing and public notice requirements

You are required to arrange for the Additional Information and EIA Report to be made available for public viewing in a venue or venues in the locality of the proposed West Springfield Solar **from the date the first advert is published.**

When Additional Information is submitted public notices (adverts) will be required.

The advert will have to be published on one occasion in the Edinburgh Gazette and in a publication(s) circulating in the locality of the proposed West Springfield Solar. Please note that there is no requirement for an advert to be published in a national publication.

You should also ensure that the advert is uploaded to your dedicated West Springfield Solar website **prior to the date on which the first advert is being published.**

A template advert can be found on the ECU website at [Energy consents: application procedure and publicity requirements - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/energy-consents-application-procedure-and-publicity-requirements-2017/pages/1-introduction.aspx). When you have completed your draft please send it to me **prior to publication** so that it can be reviewed. Please note that the advert defines the Application, EIAR and Additional Information together as “the information” and then advises that a hard copy of the information can be obtained at a cost. As written, that cost should reflect the cost of the EIAR and any Additional Information submitted, not just the Additional Information.

Please let me know the name and intended date(s) of publication.

4. Consultation

Regulation 20 of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 requires that those previously consulted will be notified of the Additional Information submitted.

Regulation 20(3)(f) of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 allows for representations to be made for a period of 30 days, at least, and it will run from the publication date of the **last** advert published.

5. Consultee list

Attached is a list of those consultees previously consulted in the application consultation. **Please confirm if you agree to this and if any further amendments are required to this list.**

Please note that, during this review process, it has become apparent that Scottish Forestry was omitted from the consultation undertaken on 11 June 2025. As a result, a consultation email will be issued to Scottish Forestry to provide them with the opportunity to comment on the original information and Scottish Forestry will then be included at the additional information consultation.

I would be grateful if you could confirm if the e-mail addresses for the Community Councils remain accurate.

6. Serving the Additional Information on the planning authority and other parties

Regulation 20, paragraph 4 of The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 states that the Developer must serve a copy of the Additional Information and a copy of the advert/notice on the planning authority and on “any other person” to whom a copy of the EIA report was previously served (i.e. all those parties consulted previously). I have attached a draft e-mail which can be amended and sent to the planning authority and all consultees providing the required information.

Your email should also include a weblink to where the Additional Information can be viewed on the ECU website **along with advice that the ECU will be in contact.** Your email should include a question to consultees asking that they confirm to you that they can access the Additional Information.

7. Other

Please provide a GIS shape file for West Springfield Solar. This is to enable consultation via informedDecision with NatureScot.

If you have any questions regarding this process please let me know.

Many thanks

[Redacted Signature]

Energy Consents Unit (ECU), Onshore Electricity, Strategy and Consents
Directorate for Energy and Climate Change | Scottish Government | 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw,
Glasgow G2 8LU

Email: [Redacted Email Address]



To view our current casework please visit <https://www.energyconsents.scot>

To read the Energy Consents Unit's privacy notice on how personal information is used, please visit <https://www.energyconsents.scot/Documentation.aspx>

If you are dissatisfied with our service, please tell us. We will work with you to resolve it. Please see <https://www.gov.scot/about/contact-information/make-a-complaint/>

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