

ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEYS



Forestry

Commercial forests are dynamic, constantly changing through both human and natural activity. The forestry assessment will describe the changes to the forest structure resulting from the incorporation of the Proposed Varied Development into the forests, in particular the loss of woodland area. Key to this will be the integration of the Proposed Varied Development into the forest structure to minimise the loss of woodland area and to prevent fragmentation of the remaining woodland.

Ecology and Ornithology

A further Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the Site has recently been completed which classified and mapped natural and semi natural habitats, as well as identified habitat suitable to support protected species and specific surveys have also been carried out for a range of protected species within 250 m of the Site.

NatureScot agreed that the Consented Development was predicted to have no significant effects on ornithology.

The change in design between the Consented Development and the Proposed Varied Development is unlikely to produce a significantly different impact on ecological or ornithological receptors and is in fact likely to result in a reduction of impacts.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

This is intended to identify likely significant effects of the Proposed Varied Development on the cultural significance of heritage assets within the Site through impacts upon their physical fabric. It also identifies likely significant effects on the cultural significance of heritage assets both within the Site and the wider landscape caused through development within their settings which would need detailed consideration in the EIA Report.

Peat

The previous peat survey resulted in 1,293 probes deployed across the study area with substantial areas of no peat and small pockets of peat up to 4 m in depth along the western boundary and in the central part of the southern area of the Site. Further high-density peat depth surveys are being carried out within the Site in areas where the proposed infrastructure has changed from that of the Consented Development.

There are opportunities for peat restoration to be completed incorporating forest-to-bog restoration through ground smoothing or bunding (using excavated peat), extension of felling to remove non windfirm trees to expand the open area, and restoration of eroded or drained areas of peat such as those found in the numerous forestry rides.

Noise

Wind farm noise is assessed based on guidance provided by ETSU-R-97 "The Assessment & Rating of Noise from Wind Farms".

Appropriate noise assessments will ensure that the Proposed Varied Development would comply with the above regulations. As part of the application process, Dumfries and Galloway Council's Environmental Health Officer will continue to be consulted. Cumulative operational wind farm noise predictions will be undertaken, and the potential cumulative impact also assessed.