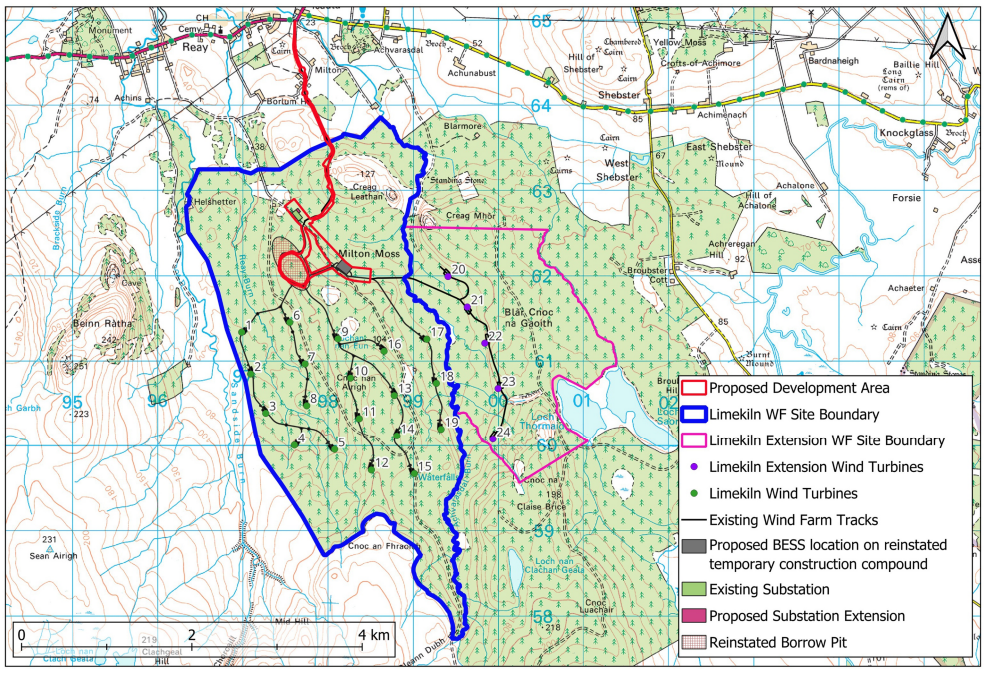
ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEYS



In preparation for the submission of the planning application, we are carrying out environmental surveys to support the design of the Proposed Development site and to minimise its impact on the environment.

The Proposed Development Area has already been heavily assessed as part of both the Limekiln and Limekiln Extension Wind Farm applications. Key topics include:

Noise

At distances over 1 km away from any BESS no significant operational impact is anticipated for a BESS of this scale (up to 70 MW). Given the separation distances between the Proposed Development and the noise sensitive receptors being greater than 1 km, it is recommended that there is no need to assess potential noise impacts from both construction or operation phases.

Construction noise would be managed through the adoption of best practice measures incorporated within a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) which would be prepared prior to the commencement of construction. The separation distances between construction activities and residential properties, coupled with its temporary nature, mean that construction noise would not be expected to result in significant effects.

Ecology and Ornithology

The temporary construction compound (the proposed BESS location) was not identified as a priority habitat so minimal environmental impact is predicted. An Extended Phase 1 Ecology Survey will be undertaken.

Following a walkover survey within 500 m of the Proposed Development, no notable breeding bird species were recorded. Observations included sparrowhawk, willow warbler, grey wagtail, mistle thrush, and siskins. These are typical of birdlife commonly found in commercial forest plantations.

Ornithology surveys are still ongoing. Full results will be included in the upcoming planning application.

Peat

A Phase 1 peat survey will be undertaken to establish the peat depth at the proposed BESS location, Substation extension and underground cable route.

The Proposed Development will need to clearly address a set of key points: how any areas of deep peat have been avoided; how impacts on shallower peat have been minimised; and how disturbed peat will be used in site reinstatement, or in restoration works elsewhere. To outline how any peat will be managed on the Proposed Development site an outline Peat Management Plan (oPMP) will be submitted alongside the planning application.

Forestry

The Proposed Development is on an area of ground within a large commercial conifer plantation. The area used for Limekiln Wind Farm's temporary construction compound was felled during the construction phase, and is due to be replanted under the Limekiln Wind Farm's Long-Term Forestry Plan. If the Proposed Development is consented, an additional area (equal to the Development Area of approximately 2.4 ha) will be replanted as compensatory planting within the landholding.

The area identified for the Substation extension (approximately 0.5 ha) lies within an area that has already been felled as part of the Limekiln Wind Farm construction, however some additional felling required for the fire safety buffer would be minimal.

Some tree felling may be required along the proposed underground cable route, which is approximately 700 m in length between the proposed BESS and Substation location. We have identified the opportunity to utilise the core path to install the underground cables parallel to the core path, which will minimise impact to forestry. The Highland Council is being consulted regarding this option.

Compensatory planting will be required for each of the three areas where there is net forestry loss. It is expected that the total replanting will not exceed 4 ha.

BORALEX