

FBV868 – 11kV Overhead Line Mast Connection at Meall Buidhe, Glen Kinglass.

Environmental Desk Study – March 2026

Cnoclee Limited has been requested to complete a desk-based assessment / appraisal of the likely ecological, archaeological, and general environmental constraints for the above Mast Connection as shown on the plan below.

The connection consists of approximately 772m 11kV overhead line extending from Pole 272, followed by approx. 30m of underground service cable - Grid Ref for tee off pole: NN 1673 3807 – note that the new line runs in proximity to a number of watercourses and crosses the River Kinglass.



Below are presented the findings of this review along with an assessment of the further works required to clarify and mitigate any constraints identified:

Historic Environment

A high-level desk-based appraisal of the historic environment was undertaken to assess whether any constraints were likely to be present on or near to the route. The appraisal also identified whether further assessment, survey and/or on-site mitigation would be required to ensure potential impacts on the historic environment are avoided, minimised or offset.

A rapid review of known sites was undertaken. This included readily available online information held within Historic Environment Scotland's database of designated sites, the National Record of the Historic Environment, the local Historic Environment Record, and historical map evidence. The results of this review are summarised below and within the Table 1.

No previously recorded historic environment sites were noted on the route of the new OHL. The closest site are buildings related to the 19th century Glenkinglass shooting lodge at the western end of the OHL. A group of buildings is annotated shooting lodge here on the first edition Ordnance Survey 6 inch to the mile map surveyed in 1870 (Argyllshire, sheet LXXV). Some shielings (NRHE ID: 153479, WoSAS Pin: 44219) have been recorded over 500m to the north-east of the OHL.

Given the absence of evidence for prehistoric or medieval activity in the area, the relatively isolated location of the route and the level of ground disturbance required for the OHL will not be extensive, the potential for buried archaeology to be present and uncovered during construction is considered to be low.

Table 1: Summary of the potential impacts on the Historic Environment

Category	Constraints	Potential significance of impact from proposed works	Recommendations for further work	Likely on-site Mitigation (subject to recommendations for further work being carried out)
Designated Sites (statutory & non-statutory): Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, World Heritage Sites, Gardens & Designed Landscapes, Historic Battlefields	None	n/a	None	n/a

Category	Constraints	Potential significance of impact from proposed works	Recommendations for further work	Likely on-site Mitigation (subject to recommendations for further work being carried out)
Non-designated Sites: other historic environment assets	None	n/a	Rapid walkover survey to check for previously unrecorded historic environment assets. Consultation with local authority archaeologist may be required subject to walkover survey.	None
Buried Archaeological Remains	Low potential for buried archaeological remains to be present and uncovered	Unknown	None	None

Based on the above it is recommended that the following further works are required:

Activity	Yes / No
More detailed archaeological desk-based assessment	No
Site Walkover	Yes
Consultation with Local Authority Archaeologist	Yes
Written Scheme of Investigation	No
Metal Detection	No
Watching Brief	No
Trial Trench evaluation	No
Excavation of archaeological remains	No

Ecology

A high-level desk based ecological constraints assessment was requested to assess potential constraints to the proposed development and inform the need for further dedicated surveying (where required) or requirements for prescribed methods of working and mitigation.

This report contains the results of the constraints assessment and provides recommendations for targeted field surveys to facilitate the proposed development.

Relevant data obtained has been developed into an Environmental Risk Register. An initial risk rating of 'none,' 'low,' 'moderate' or 'high' was assigned to identify potential constraints following criteria.

Risk Rating Definition

Risk Rating	Details
None	No risk anticipated.
Low	Potential risk could be removed/reduced through standard mitigation, such as: precautionary approach; micro-siting of proposed development; Species Protection Plan (SPP); and prescribed method of working.
Moderate	Further information will need to be obtained (i.e. through additional survey/consultation) to identify sensitive receptors which could be impacted and require targeted mitigation.
High	Further information will need to be obtained (i.e. through additional survey/consultation) and proposed development will require significant mitigation, licensing, and/or on-Site support (e.g. Ecological Clerk of Works {ECoW}); or sensitive receptors are already known and require such mitigation.

Designated Sites

The Site is located within the Glen Etive and Glen Fyne Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for breeding golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). There are no other sites within 5km.

There are no areas of ancient woodland located within proximity to the Site with the nearest located c. 250m southeast.

Initial Risk Rating: High

Monitoring / Mitigation Recommendations

Consultation with NatureScot has already been undertaken and has confirmed that there are potential golden eagle nests located within disturbance buffers of access routes. Works in general should not be undertaken during the breeding season (February - August inclusive). Consultation with the local raptor study group should be undertaken to confirm location and status of any nest site. Should helicopters be used on the project then a helicopter management plan will need to be developed.

Residual Risk Rating: Low (depending on requirements and proximity to potential nest sites).

Ornithology

Surveys to map breeding bird territories of all bird species and birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); and all red and amber listed birds of conservation concern¹. Contact RSPB and Raptor Study Group for background records relating to Schedule 1 species.

Ornithology - Monitoring / Mitigation Requirements

The following monitoring and mitigation efforts should also be employed:

- If carried out through the breeding season (March to August inclusive) nesting bird checks should be carried out in advance of all works and applicable mitigation put in place and monitored in accordance with SSE SPP;
- Breeding bird protection during construction and felling to ensure compliance with Wildlife and Countryside Act (all active nests and contents protected).

Initial Risk Rating – Moderate

Monitoring / Mitigation Recommendations

For nesting birds: if works take place during nesting bird season, then pre-works check of vegetation required. In the event a nest is discovered (or suspected owing to bird behaviour) it will be necessary to enforce an exclusion buffer around the nest, within which no works can take place (the size of the exclusion buffer will be determined by the species of bird). This exclusion must remain in place until such time that the nest has become inactive (i.e. eggs have hatched, and chicks fledged the nest, or

¹ Stanbury, A., Eaton, M., Aebischer, N., Balmer, D., Brown, A., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch, N., Noble, D., and Win I. 2021. The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain. British Birds 114: 723-747. Available online at <https://britishbirds.co.uk/content/status-our-bird-populations>.

the nest attempt fails). Only then (and at the discretion of a Suitably Qualified Ecologist) can the buffer be removed and works recommence.

For all birds:

- Time works to fall out-with the nesting bird season mid-March to August inclusive).
- Carry out a targeted walkover survey across suitable habitat (in line with relevant guidance). If Target Species lek/nest/communal roost site identified, microsite works where possible, enforce exclusion zones, and/or undertake works out-with sensitive breeding period and/or to NatureScot - approved Method Statement.
- If not possible to enforce appropriate mitigation, works will cease until nest naturally becomes inactive (e.g. chicks fledge) and/or communal roost is naturally no longer in use.
- Provision of bespoke bird's toolbox talk and Method Statement in advance of works.

Potential additional ornithological surveys required in connection with the SPA and golden eagles which will be determined following data consultation and details on requirements for helicopters.

Residual Risk Rating – Negligible

Ecology

Otter and Water Vole

There are no historical records of otter or water vole in the land within 1km of the Site. Based on mapping the route crosses drains and burns and therefore potential otter and water vole habitat.

Initial Risk Rating – Moderate

Monitoring / Mitigation Recommendations

Pre-construction surveys to confirm presence / absence of otter and water vole within the Site and up to 30m beyond (200m for potential otter natal sites) in line with NatureScot guidance.

Any potential otter shelters should be investigated further using camera traps under a NatureScot otter survey license. Any shelters within the disturbance zones detailed above should be risk assessed by the ecologist, with the need for a disturbance license discussed with the Environmental manager and/or SSE ecologist and with NatureScot.

Should confirmed presence of water vole be identified, the works should be micrositied a minimum 10m from the habitat. Where this is not possible, a licence issued by NatureScot to translocate the population may be required

If a Protected Species License is required, a Species Protection Plan will be required which details the status of the otter shelters / water vole population and the mitigation and monitoring required to avoid the disturbance of sheltering otters and the related offence being committed.

Residual Risk Rating (following survey and any licensing) – Negligible

Bats

A search for historical data on bats in the area along the route returned no historical records of bats. There are areas of trees located adjacent the route which could support bat roost potential.

Initial Risk Rating – Low

Bat - Monitoring / Mitigation Requirements

Pre-construction surveys for features with the potential to support roosting bats within 30m of the works should be carried out to assess the roost potential. If Potential Roost Features are located, further survey will be required.

If it is considered that there is potential for a roost to be affected by construction works, then surveys will be required to comply with relevant Bat Conservation Trust guidance and undertaken under a derogation licence in agreement with NatureScot.

Trees to be retained where possible. Microsite proposed development as far as possible from trees identified with potential to support roosting bats.

Residual Risk Rating (following survey and any licensing) – Negligible

Badger

A search for historical data on badger in the area along the route showed no records of badger within 1km of the route.

Initial Risk Rating – Moderate

Monitoring / Mitigation Recommendations

Pre-construction surveys within the Site and any access points within 30m of the construction works for signs of badger. Should a badger sett be identified within the survey area mitigation may be required, such as the micro-siting of infrastructure or the implementation of disturbance protection zones. Where required, disturbance protection zones around badger setts would usually be 30m, although this may be extended to 100m if rock pecking or other noisy / high vibration works are required. If it is not feasible to avoid impacts on badger setts, then advice will be sought from NatureScot and works carried out under NatureScot licence. A license is not likely to be obtained during the breeding season, which runs from 1 December to 30 June inclusive.

Any open excavations will have a means of escape for badgers through mammal ramps, and other general mitigation such as toolbox talks for all mammals followed.

Residual Risk Rating (following survey and any licensing) – Negligible

Reptiles

The desk study indicated that there are no records of reptiles within 1km of the Site. Based on aerial imagery the habitats appear to present as potentially suitable to support reptile species.

Initial and Residual Risk Rating – Moderate

Monitoring / Mitigation Recommendations

Ground truth the habitats within the work zone for suitability for reptiles. Where habitat is considered suitable, maintain a watching brief for the presence of common reptile (adder *Vipera berus*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and slow worm *Anguis fragilis*) species during works. If reptiles are present, to safeguard them relocate them away from works, taking care with adder, which is a venomous species, which should only be handled by trained individuals.

Residual Risk Rating – Negligible

Habitats

Bog, flush and GWDTE

A Phase 1 survey was not available for the assessment. Aerial imagery suggests that the cable routes are located within upland habitats and potentially may support habitats of high importance (i.e. bog, flush and GWDTE), although this is on the margin of more improved habitats and therefore the risk is deemed low.

Initial Risk Rating – Provisionally Low

Peat and Blanket Bog - Monitoring / Mitigation Recommendations

Targeted walkover to confirm status as not supporting peat and blanket bog habitats. Works to be completed under Peat Management Plan (PMP) where peat is identified and on-site presence of ECoW where required.

Residual Risk Rating – Provisionally Low

Ground Water Dependent Terrestrial Environments (GWDTE)

Examination of aerial photographs suggests that Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Environments (GWDTE) are potential present within the Site and adjacent although the risk appears low.

Initial Risk Rating – Provisionally Low

GWDTE - Monitoring / Mitigation Recommendations

Targeted walkover to identify GWDTE and where possible microsite cable route out with areas of GWDTE. Where this is not possible works to be completed under Method Statement for working in GWDTE (agreed with SEPA if appropriate) with ECoW presence to provide advice as required.

Residual Risk Rating – Provisionally None (assuming no GWDTE)

Recommendations

Targeted field surveys (NVC and peat probing) are recommended following the initial walkover where potentially sensitive receptors on Site have been identified and inform specific mitigation, where this have been identified during the initial walkover. This will ultimately ensure the proposed development progresses in line with nature conservation legislation and environmental risks are reduced to an acceptable level.

The Environmental Risk Register identifies requirements for dedicated survey effort and/or mitigation to reduce the risk rating. Assuming further survey effort/mitigation is adopted, the secondary risk rating denotes the residual risk.

Ecological and Environmental Risk Register

Constraint	Present	Risk Rating	Further Works Required
	Yes / No	None / Low / Moderate / High	Yes / No
Designated Sites	Yes	High	Yes
Ornithology	Yes	Moderate	Yes
Ecology	Yes	Generally Low	Yes
Habitats	Yes	Low	No

Recommended additional works – should be completed 2-6 months prior to construction phase

Work Scope

Element	Requirements	Seasonality	Required (Yes / No)
Habitats Regulations Appraisal	Information to provide the competent authority with information to inform an Appropriate Assessment to determine whether works could result in Likely Significant Effect on the Integrity of any Natura 2000 sites (SPAs, SACs, or Ramsar sites).	N.A.	Potentially
Breeding Birds	Nesting bird checks during the breeding season to ensure all active nests are left in situ until any dependent young have fledged or the nest is deemed to have failed. Procurement of existing data relating to Schedule 1 listed species from the Raptor Study Group and RSPB. Surveys for Schedule 1 listed species within suitable habitat within 1km of the route.	Timing mid-March to August.	Yes
Phase 1 Habitat and NVC Survey	Botanical survey to record the presence of important habitats, such as blanket bog and GWDTE.	May - September	Yes
Protected Mammal Survey	Protected mammal survey to search for evidence of protected mammal species. Species specific survey area ranging up to 200m.	Timing: Year round	Yes

General Environmental Input	A review of construction working methods, programme, and constraints to inform more detailed environmental recommendations and ensure that appropriate approvals and authorisations are in place (e.g. pollution prevention measures etc).	Ongoing	Yes

The results of above recommended surveys will inform the need for any specific mitigation, authorisation, agreements, or licensing requirements.

Additionally, results will inform recommendations for the presence of an Environmental Clerk of Works (ECoW) to be present during construction of the proposed development.

If required, the ECoW will provide an on- site ecological/environmental presence, advising on matters in response to work activities and ensure compliance with best practice methods, any protected species licensing and relevant legislation.

Where possible, walkover survey elements will be combined in order to increase efficiency/reduce costs. The above table has been provided on the assumption that general environmental management (e.g. general construction environmental management, adherence to SEPA GBRs, etc.) will be managed proactively and effectively.

Further to the above, it is assumed that work will take place out-with the bird nesting season (recognised as mid-March to August inclusive). In the event this is not possible, it will be necessary for an ECoW/SQE to undertake a pre-works check of vegetation and habitats across the route to check for the presence of nesting birds in line with the Environmental Risk Register. This is in addition to the above recommended bird surveys.

Watercourses

Where the cable route crosses watercourses there will be a requirement for appropriate levels of EASR authorisations.

Watercourses - Monitoring / Mitigation Recommendations

Confirm method of watercourse crossings (open cut, HDD etc) and survey watercourse crossing locations to determine the size of the crossing and the need for and the appropriate level of authorisation under the Environmental Authorisation (Scotland) Regulations (EASR) 2018.

Obtain CAR authorisations as required followed by proactive management with regards adherence to authorisations.

Currently the route does not cross any watercourses but there are numerous ones in proximity which will need to be mitigated for access and run off.

Assessment of options needs to be completed as soon as possible to allow appropriate levels of authorisation to be gained as works cannot commence until these are in place to ensure best practice and protection of the water resources.

HDD works do not require authorisation under EASR, but methodologies will need to be formulated and reviewed before submission to SEPA for sign off.

Construction Run Off Permit

Cable routes construction methodology to be reviewed in order to assess requirements for a construction run off permit or compliance with General Binding Rules (GBR 10) under the Environmental Authorisation (Scotland) Regulations (EASR) 2018.

Construction Site Run Off - Recommendations

Confirm method of construction and review requirements under EASR with regards to construction site run off potential and impacts associated.

If required, review and revise methodology to limit potential for impacts through changes to construction.

Obtain construction run off permit or confirm GBR 10 as required followed by proactive management with regards adherence to authorisations (particularly in relation to changes to surface water drainage obligations).

Current proposal detailed above will not require a Construction Run Off Permit so all works should be completed in accordance with GBR 10.

Assessment of options needs to be completed as soon as possible to allow appropriate levels of authorisation to be gained as works cannot commence until these are in place to ensure best practice and protection of the water resources.

General Environmental Requirements

All staff; visitors and contractors have a responsibility to ensure that as part of the works we protect the environment and reduce the impact from activities upon areas in which we are working.

Simple measures for environmental compliance:

Tidy up	Keep sites secure at all times, organised, clean, and clean. Minimise and segregate waste for re-use and recycling. Remove skips from site when full and replace immediately.
Reinstate	Reinstate all areas of work promptly and to a high standard.
Waste	Reuse, minimise use, recycle where at all possible, segregate waste to minimise offsite disposal and maximise recycling.
Reduce Emissions	Vehicle share where possible and switch off items of plant which are not in use.
Storage	Keep fuel and oils banded and away from water courses, ensure storage is kept a minimum of 10m from watercourses and place mitigation to protect
Spills	Spill kits to be available within all fuel storage areas, welfare facilities, and vehicles and when used, disposed of correctly. Plant nappies to be placed below all plant which is not in use.
Water Courses	Clean and silty/contaminated water to be kept separate and treated appropriately and assessed prior to discharge, site drainage to be designed and maintained correctly.
Awareness	Familiarise with environmental factors associated with works and where improvements could be made through reference to the Site Environmental Plan and the environmental manager.
Wildlife	Ensure awareness of local wildlife and adhere to exclusion zones detailed within the Site Environmental Plan.
Assess	Include environmental aspects detailed within the Site Environmental Plan in all risk assessments and use appropriate measures to avoid or reduce risks.
Report	Notify appropriate staff members and complete incident reports for all environmental incidents.
Exceed	Go above requirements where possible.

All persons on the project will adhere to the following Six Environmental Ground Rules:

Keep a tidy site

- Maintain a clean, tidy, and secure site.
- Minimise and segregate waste for re-use and recycling.
- Reinstate works areas promptly.

Prevent silty run-off

- Keep clean and silty water separate.
- Settle all silty water before leaving site.
- Ensure site drainage is properly designed and maintained.

Contain oil and fuel

- Store fuel and oil in bunded containers.
- Ensure spill kits are available.
- Use plant nappies on mobile plant.

Respect wildlife

- Be aware of local wildlife.
- Adhere to exclusion zones.

Assess environmental risks

- Assess the environmental risk of all activities.
- If in doubt, ask.

Report incidents

- Report ALL environmental incidents.
- Pass on learning for future works.

We trust that the above is as required at this time and that we have interpreted your requirements correctly.

Should you wish to discuss this further please feel free to get in touch.

Yours Sincerely



Chris Meeke

Director – Cnoclee Environmental Services