

WINDBURN WIND FARM TECHNICAL APPENDIX 3.2: FORESTRY

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1.1 Introduction and background

- 1.1.1 Wind 2 Limited intends to submit a Section 36 (of the Electricity Act 1989) application to construct and operate Windburn Wind Farm (further referred to as “the proposed development”), Located within both Clackmannanshire and Perth & Kinross Councils, Scotland. RTS Forestry has been commissioned to produce a Forestry Technical Appendix for the inclusion in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report.
- 1.1.2 This Forestry Technical Appendix describes the existing forestry and woodland baseline, quantifies impact on forestry assets and provides recommendation for the development of forestry impact mitigation.

The assessment has involved review of existing available data bases, site surveys and consideration of all relevant guidelines. It has reviewed the NatureScot published Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) which identifies Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland (ASNW) sites and the Forestry Commission Scotland published Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS) databases for any impact on native and ancient woodlands sites, and identified none are present. It has also considered Scottish Government Policy on the Control of woodland removal 2009 which requires to address the removal of areas of woodland associated with the development and includes the guiding principle that “woodland removal should be conditional on the undertaking of actions to ensure full delivery of the additional public benefits”. This appendix also considers Policy 6 within the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4 forestry, woodland and trees). The policy intent is to protect and expand forests, woodland and trees. It has the policy outcome of woodland and trees on development sites being sustainably managed. It further states that development proposals involving woodland removal will only be supported where they will achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits.
- 1.1.3 This assessment has been carried out by Norman O'Neill MICFor, C Env and Wojciech Dlugolecki Master's Degree in Forestry, both of RTS Forestry.

1.2 Scope of Assessment. Report objectives.

- 1.2.1 This assessment covered a study area defined as proposed development – specified geographically by red line boundary and application maps. Further details of physical construction work areas have been provided to RTS Forestry in GIS format. Figure 1 details the study area.

- 1.2.2 The proposed development is to be located in open moorland approximately 3 km north of the hillfoots village of Alva within the northern Ochil Hills, with access track from A9 and minor Sheriff Muir road, Blackford, Perthshire.
- 1.2.3 It is anticipated that the proposed development would comprise up to 13 wind turbines with blade tip heights of up to 149.9m. In addition to wind turbines there will be ancillary infrastructure including: a network of on-site access tracks and associated watercourse crossings and drainage; crane hardstandings adjacent to each turbine; foundations supporting each turbine location; power cables linking the turbines laid in trenches underground; borrow pits; a substation compound including a control building; up to 35MW of battery storage; and three temporary site construction compounds.
- 1.2.4 It is understood that the proposed development would be decommissioned after 40 years and the site restored in accordance with the decommissioning and restoration plan, unless a subsequent application is made in order to extend the life of the wind farm.
- 1.2.5 Woodland impacted by the proposed development is appraised and shown in Figure 1-3 maps.
- 1.2.6 The objective of this Forestry Technical Appendix is to:
- to comment on proposed development impact in light of the current forestry legislation in Scotland
 - identify direct and indirect impact of the proposed development on commercial forestry, woodland and individual trees.
 - to describe, quantify and map the woodlands and/ or individual trees affected by the proposed development.
 - to comment on significance of the proposed development impact.
 - to comment on any trees or woodland identified within Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) register of Ancient and semi-natural woodlands (ASNW), Native Woodlands Survey of Scotland (NWSS), other relevant interest protection.
 - to recommend for mitigation of the impact of the proposed development - compensatory planting.

1.3 Assessment methodology

- 1.3.1 The report presents a review of the forestry implications of the site access route utilising data collected from the following:
- Data on the proposed development (including Scoping Report) made available by Wind2 Ltd.
 - National data sources available from Scottish Government Spatial Data Infrastructure, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and others.
 - Aerial photographs.
 - Proposed development infrastructure locations in GIS format provided by Wind 2 Limited.
 - Landowner provided forestry database.
 - Site surveys.

1.4 Current Scottish Government forestry policies legislation and guidance

- 1.4.1 Scotland's Forestry Strategy, 2019 – is aimed at prevention of inappropriate woodland loss.
- 1.4.2 Scottish Government's Policy on Control of Woodland Removal (2009) confirms a strong presumption in favour of protecting Scotland's woodland resources and limits forestry to be converted to another type of land use.
- 1.4.3 The fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) recognises the importance of forests and woodlands in delivering the National Outcomes of; Environment, communities, economy. Policy 6 aims to protect and expand forests, woodland and trees. The Climate Change Plan places emphasis on the fact that Scotland's woodlands deliver a wide range of benefits, including inward investment and jobs, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the enhancement of the health and wellbeing of Scotland's communities.

1.5 Baseline forestry conditions and the proposed development impact.

- 1.5.1 Overview of the proposed development 10km vicinity current forestry land use is shown within Figure 1 map. National Forest Inventory 2023 data¹ was used to inform on forestry land use in the 10km buffer vicinity of the proposed development. (Table 1 below).

Table 1 Forestry Land Use in 10km vicinity of the proposed development

Item	Area [ha]	Area [%]
10km buffer area	54827.69	100%
Non Forestry land use	43586.34	79%
Forestry land use	11241.35	21%
Young conifers	6180.91	55%
Open ground	140.35	1%
Broadleaved	2501.62	22%
Conifer	2418.47	22%
Total	11241.35	100%

- 1.5.2 Blackford Estate (which has been assessed as only Estate with forestry impacted by the proposed development) forestry land use has been shown on Figure 2 and is summarised below (Table 2):

Table 2 Forestry Land Use within Blackford Estate

Item	Area [ha]	Area [%]
Blackford Estate	6703.12	100%
Blackford Estate - Forestry	888.65	13%
Species	Area [ha]	[%]
Mixed Conifers	28.96	3%
Broadleaves	156.77	18%
Larch	13.61	2%
Clear fell	95.71	11%
Open Ground	136.18	15%
Scots Pine	84.2	9%
Norway Spruce	69.18	8%
Sitka Spruce	304.04	34%
Total Forestry	888.65	100%

¹ [National Forest Inventory Scotland 2023 - data.gov.uk](https://data.gov.uk)

- 1.5.3 The proposed development impact on existing forestry is shown within Figure 3 map and can be summarised as 1.08 ha of Blackford Estate Carim Forestry Compartment. The proposed development planned 6m wide road construction requires a buffer of 26m width tree clearance through 2018 restocked Carim Woodland. Impacted are 0.91 ha of Sitka Spruce, 0.06 ha of Norway Spruce, 0.05 ha of Broadleaved trees and 0.06 ha of designed Open Ground.
- 1.5.4 The proposed development impact on current forestry land use can be assessed as non-significant as there are no areas of designated woodland within the proposed tree clearance area and because of the scale of impact (1.08ha) within areas relatively well represented in the surrounding landscape (as per Table 1 and Table 2). Further the impact on loss of forest resource will be fully mitigated by compensatory planting to follow the Scottish Government Policy on the control of Woodland Removal.
- 1.5.5 The project has, through using (upgrading) existing roads, and avoiding, where possible, forestry compartments, attempted to minimise the forestry impact.
- 1.5.6 This Technical Appendix considers the indirect impact, of the proposed development, on forestry through assessment of the Ochil Hills general potential for new afforestation. Table 3, below outlines previous New Woodland Creation successfully carried out in the area:

Table 3 Ochil Hills New Woodland Creation in recent years

New Woodland Creation	Approved Year	Total area [ha]	Broadleaf [ha]	Conifer [ha]
Harperstone	2022	169.74	27.94	141.8
Drumbrae	2024	264.86	152.24	112.62
Dumyat	2023	208.66	188.83	19.83
Foswell	2024	148.76	20.86	127.9
Foswell	2022	76.14		76.14
Coulshill	2022	711.78	44.48	667.3
White Creich Hill	2019	67.75	12.59	55.16
Meikle Seggie	2023	60.76		60.76
Meikle Seggie	2023	28.5	18.33	10.17
Ardargie	2025	71.77	25.02	46.75
Glenearn	2019	40.57		40.57
TOTAL		1849.29	490.29	1359

- 1.5.7 The construction and operation of the proposed development does influence the potential for future afforestation within the site area of the proposed development. It is noted that land proposed to be developed for the Windburn Wind Farm is located at relatively high altitudes (a reduced scope for new woodland creation due to poorer growing conditions).
- 1.5.8 The impacted forestry area was checked for its status within ancient and semi-natural woodland (ASNW) and Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS) inventories. None of the forestry impacted areas lie within registered ancient or native woodland inventories.

1.6 Mitigation and control measures on forestry impact.

- 1.6.1 Tree clearance of young forestry areas along the proposed access road results in an area of 1.08 ha being felled. The use of the existing road has provided a level of important mitigation when passing through this woodland by minimising the felling required.
- 1.6.2 Timber resulting from trees clearance is suggested to be reused on site for invertebrate habitat creation – enhancing ecological potential of the site.

- 1.6.3 The commercial woodland block affected, with trees of 1-3 meters height can be described as wind stable. The removal of a 26 meters wide strip of trees, as proposed, is not deemed likely to result in wind damage to the retained trees. As such no additional felling (Management felling) to mitigate for the risk of windblow is necessary.
- 1.6.4 To address future forest management access, crossing points are proposed to be created to facilitate forest machinery passing over infrastructure cabling within the roadside verges.
- 1.6.5 Existing deer fence will require minor changes during construction and operation of the wind farm. This can be addressed by the installation of suitable gates or cattle/deer grids across the road.
- 1.6.6 Compensatory planting of 1.08ha is required to mitigate for the woodland loss resulting from the proposed development. The developer is committed to sourcing an area of suitable compensatory planting within the local area. An appropriate planning condition regarding compensatory planting is considered sufficient to control this.

1.7 Summary and conclusion.

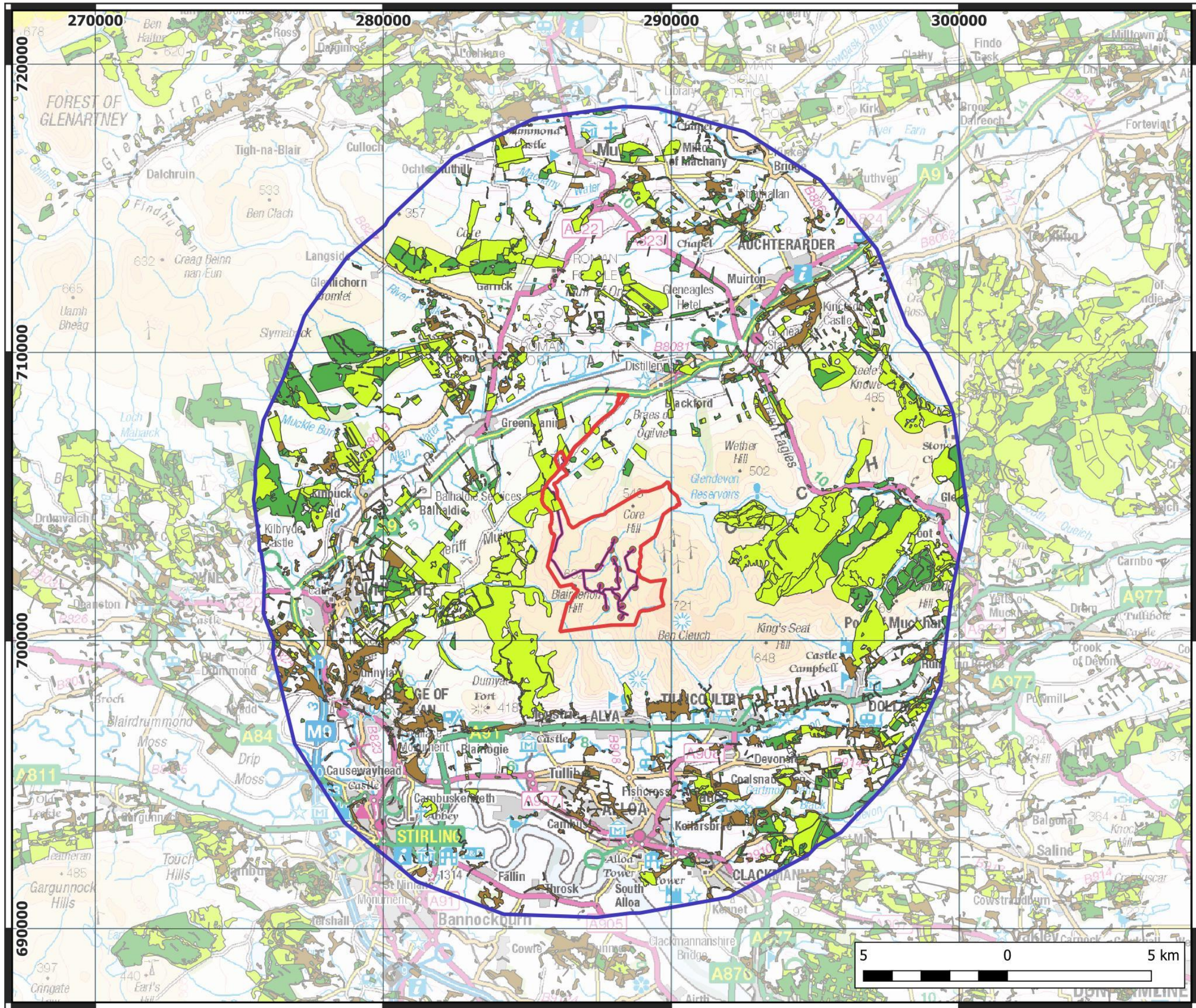
- 1.7.1 During the design of the access track route that forms part of the proposed development, forestry and woodland was considered. The final access track route can be seen to have minimised the impact on areas of woodland as far as practical.
- 1.7.2 The projected tree clearance for the proposed development results in 1.08 ha of 2018 planted, predominately conifer, trees. Compensatory planting of 1.08ha should be undertaken to comply with Scottish Government Policy on the Control of woodland removal.
- 1.7.3 The impact of the proposed development on the loss of forest resource can be assessed as non-significant due to the scale and quality of affected forestry (The site is also not registered in ancient or native trees inventories). Commitment to undertake compensatory planting fully mitigates for forest impact.

1.8 Figures.

Figure 1. Forestry land use in 10km buffer area from the proposed Windburn Wind Farm

Figure 2. Blackford Estate impacted by the proposed development

Figure 3. Carim Forestry Compartment impact by the proposed development



Windburn Wind Farm
Perthshire
Clackmannanshire
A9 road PH4 1AD
NN 882 085

Windburn WF forestry in
10km buffer from proposed
development

Legend

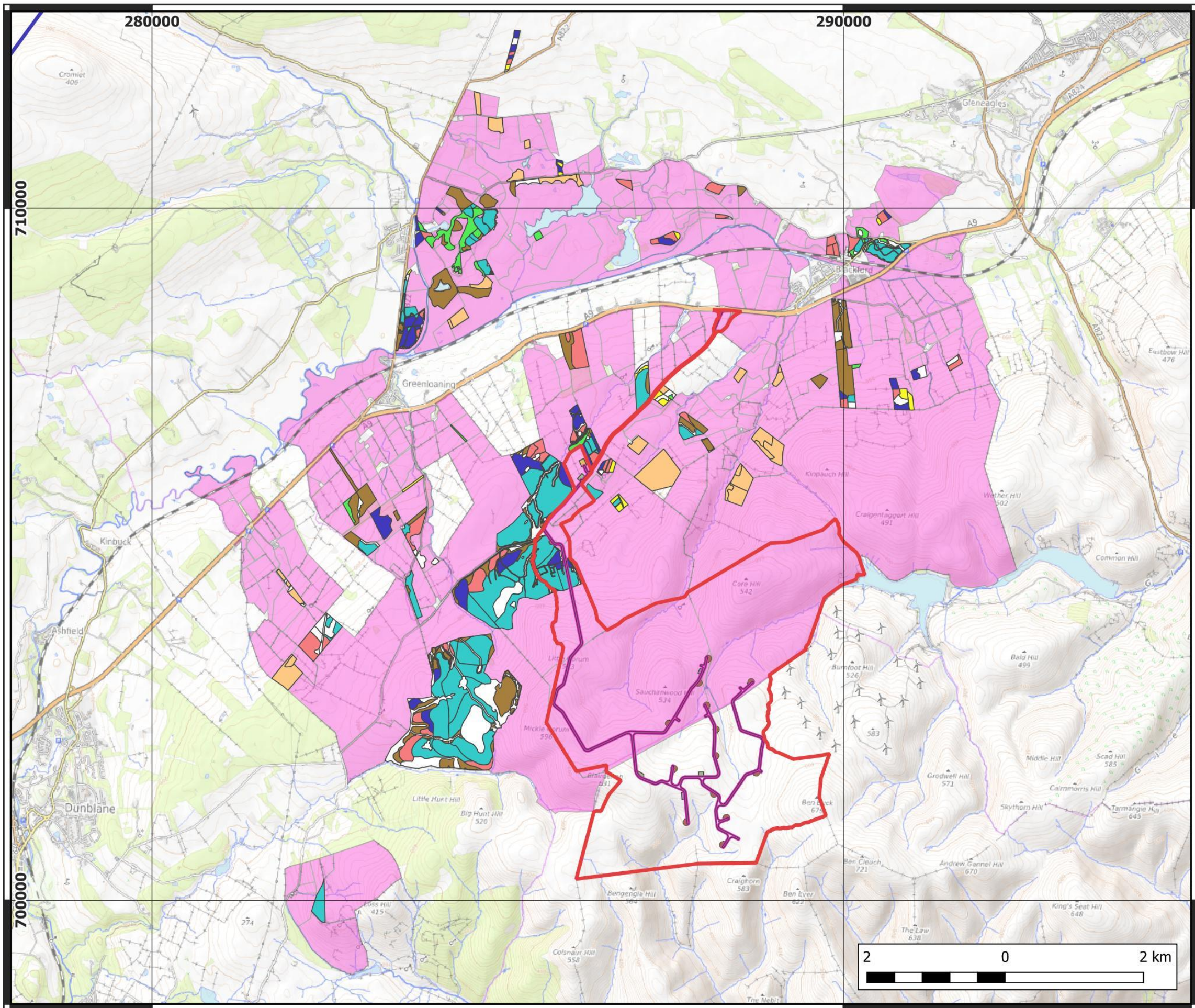
- 10km buffer 54828 ha
- Windburn WF Boundary 1474 ha
- WF Footprint
- NFI_10km_buffer_forestry:
11241 ha
 - Broadleaved 2418 ha (22%)
 - Conifer 2418 ha (22%)
 - Young conifers 6181 ha (55%)
 - Bare area 140ha (1%)

12/05/25

1:120,000



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Blackford Estate
PH4 1QT
NN 857 448

Windburn WF - Blackford
Estate woodlands in context
of the proposed
development

Legend

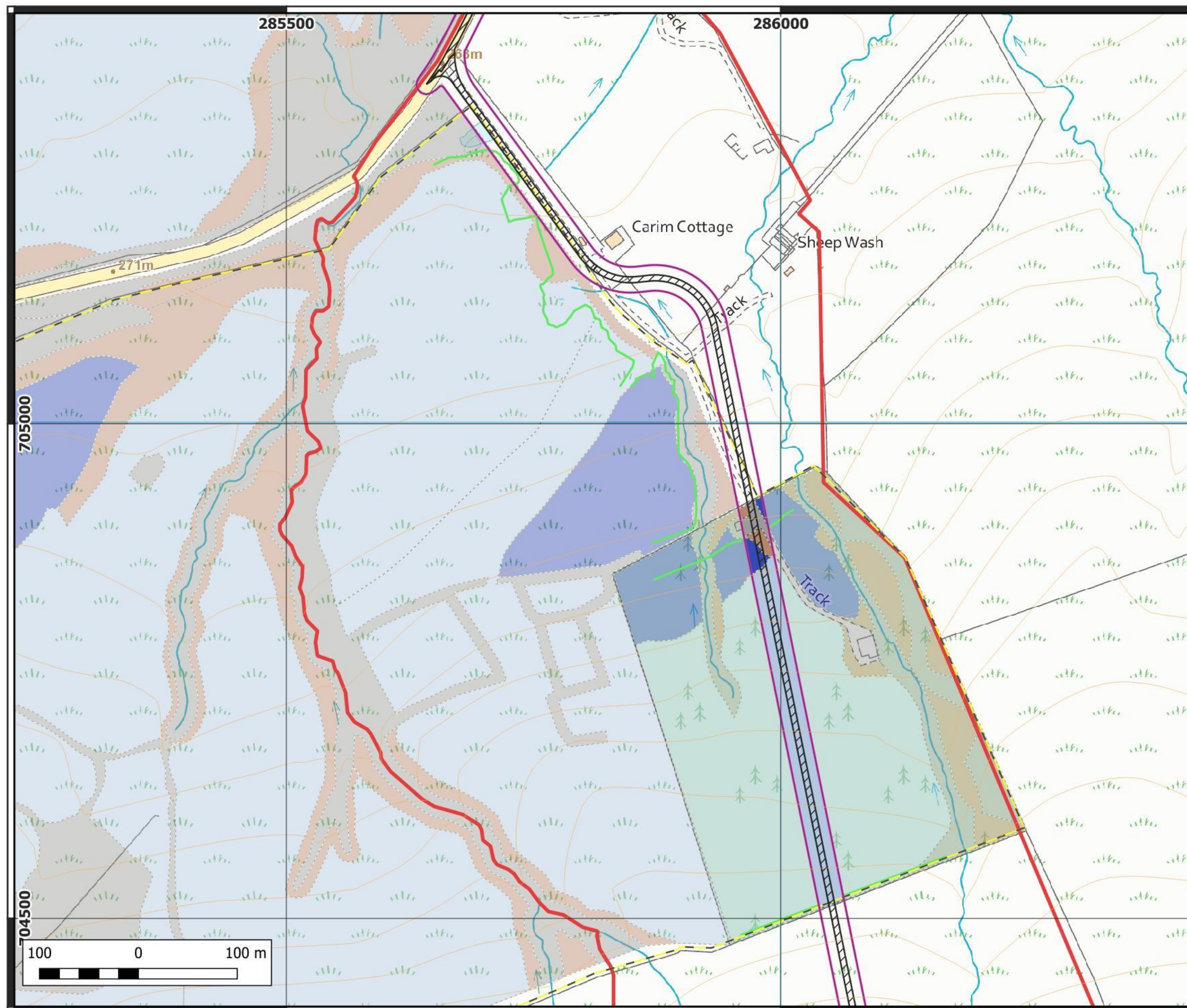
- Windburn WF Boundary 1474 ha
- Construction footprint
- Blackford Estate 6703.12 ha
- Blackford Estate Forestry 888.65 ha
 - Open Ground 136.18 ha (15%)
 - Broadleaves 156.77 ha (18%)
 - Clearfell 95.71 ha (11%)
 - Mixed Conifers 28.96 ha (3%)
 - Larch 13.61 ha (2%)
 - Scots Pine 84.2 ha (9%)
 - Norway Spruce 69.18 ha (8%)
 - Sitka Spruce 304.04 ha (34%)

12/05/25

1:50,000



Open Topo Map background



Blackford Estate
Carim Lodge
PH4 1QT
NN 857 448

Windburn WF -
Carim Woodland impact

Legend

- Proposed Development
- Planned Access Track 6m
- 26m wide footprint
- Deer Fence
- Line of trees

Carim impact:	1.08 ha
Native broadleaves	0.05 ha
Norway spruce	0.06 ha
Open ground	0.06 ha
Sitka spruce	0.91 ha

12/05/25

1:3,500



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