Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm

Onshore Transmission Development Area

Scoping Report - Volume 1

Appendix A: Figures

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Revision History

Rev.	Prepared By	Checked By	Approved By	Date
1	Haskoning	FML	BMcG	21/10/2026

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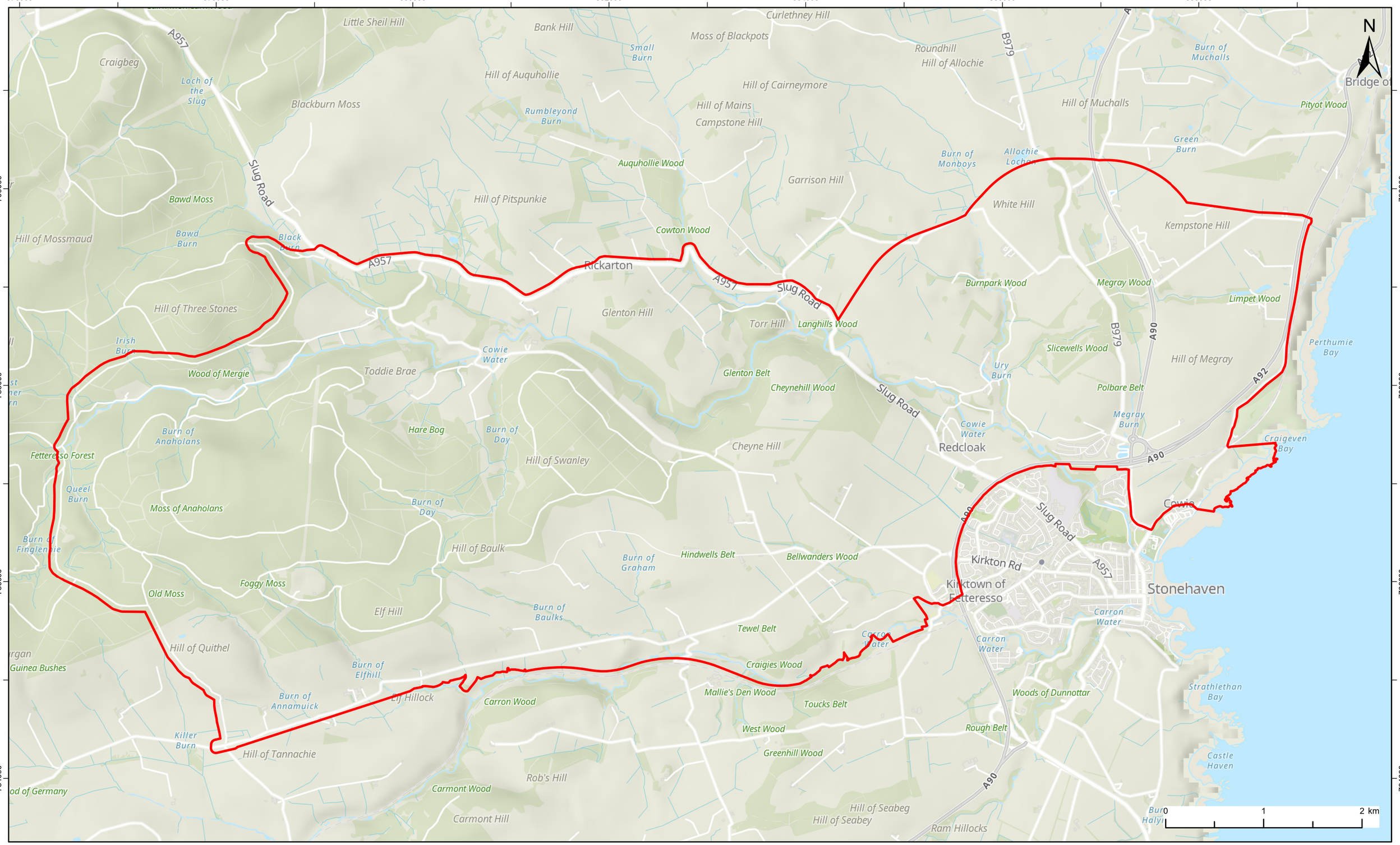
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Legend:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Boundary

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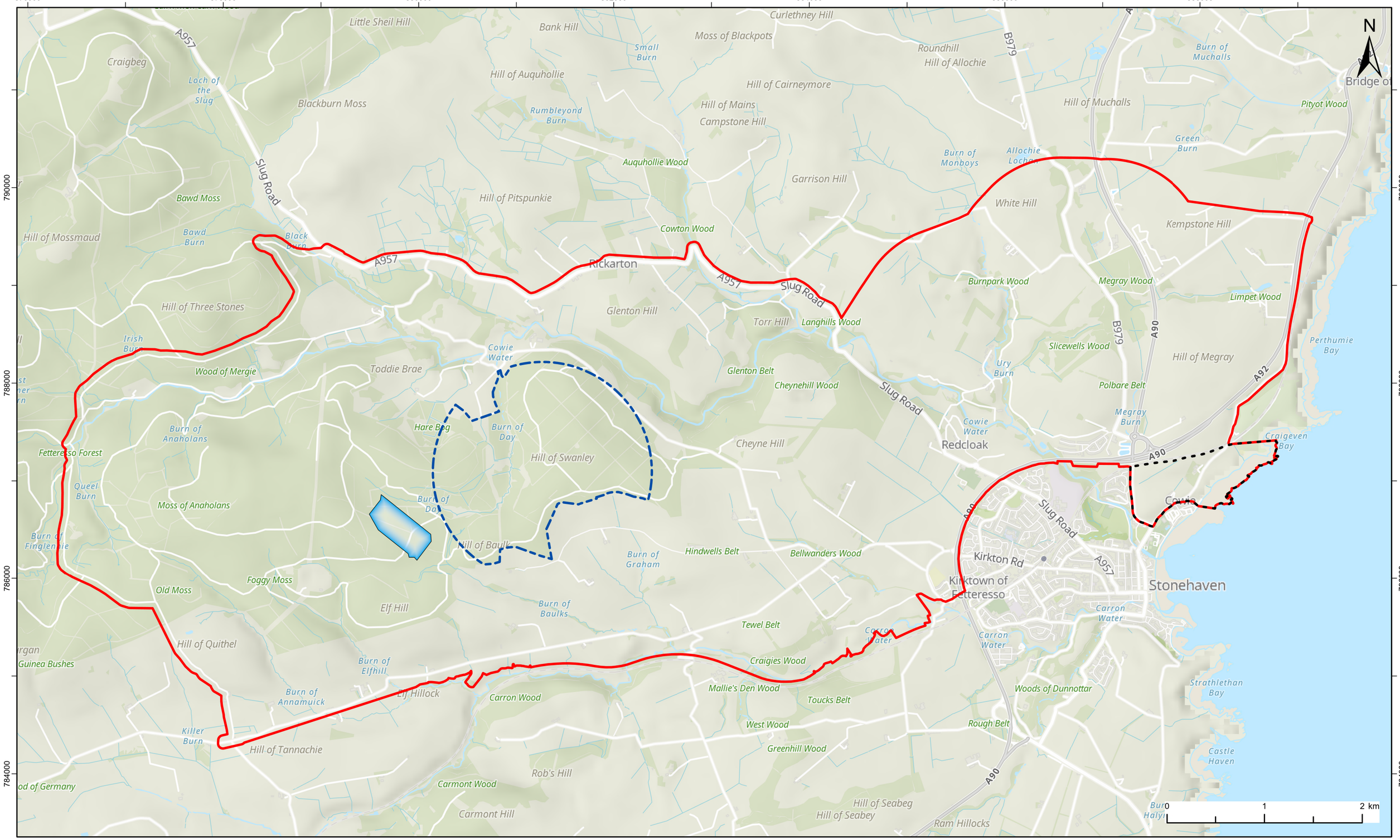
Figure Title:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Boundary

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0004

Figure 1.1



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Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Boundary
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Hurlie Substation Platform

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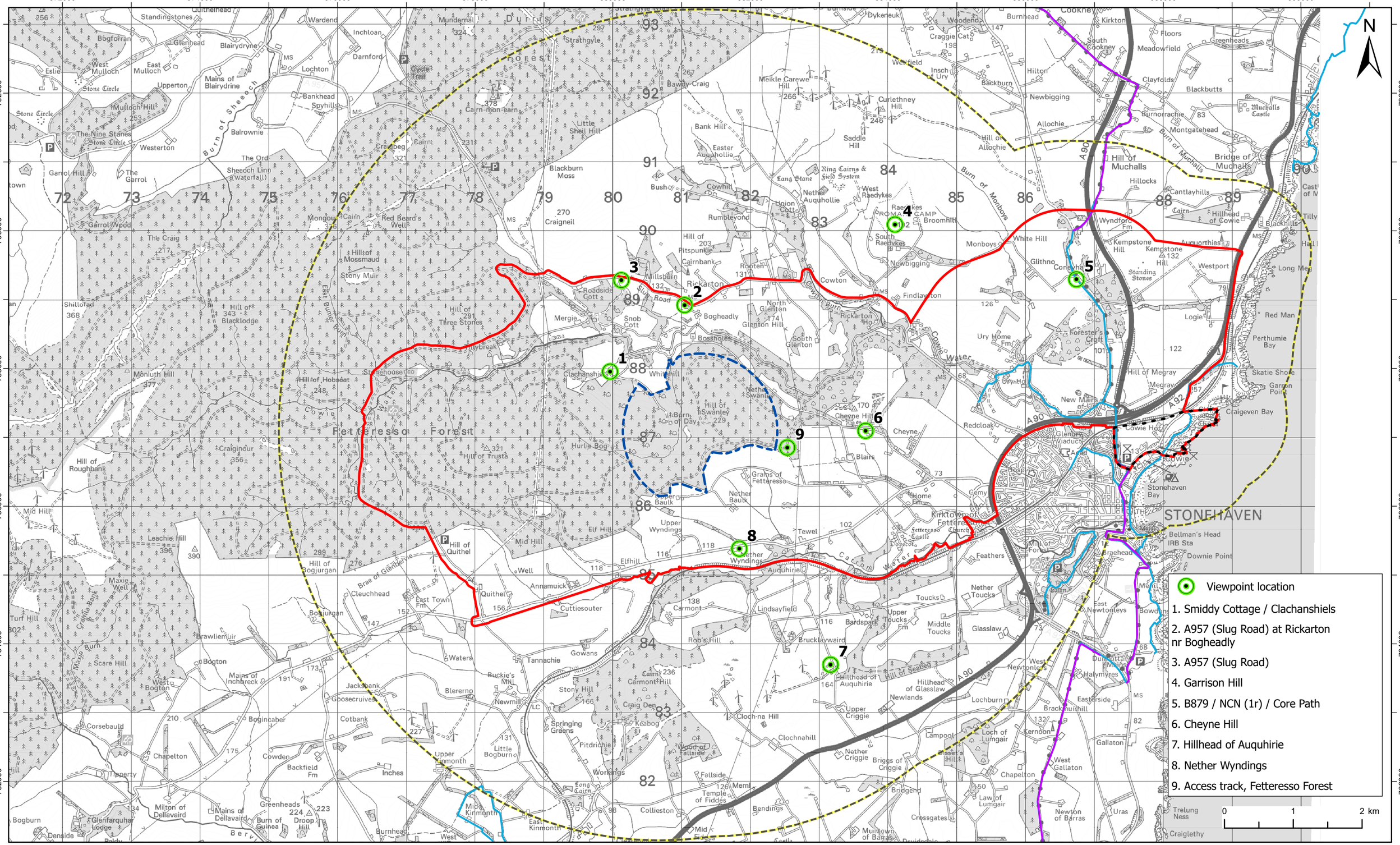
Figure Title:
Preferred Landfall Area of Search and Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

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Figure 1.2



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Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Boundary
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- LVIA Study Area
- National Cycle Route
- Core Path

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Scoping Boundary shapefile: PC3637-RHD-ON-ZZ-M2-GS-0315_OnTDA_ScopingBoundary.

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Figure Title:
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Study Area, Visual Receptors and Viewpoint Locations

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0008

Figure 5.1

372000 374000 376000 378000 380000 382000 384000 386000 388000 390000

792000 790000 788000 786000 784000 782000

N

31. Broad Wooded and Farmed Valley

29. Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire

27. Farmed Moorland Edge - Aberdeenshire

11. Fragmented Rocky Coast

24. Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire

STONEHAVEN

Landscape Character Type

- 11: Fragmented Rocky Coast
- 24: Coastal Farmed Ridges and Hills - Aberdeenshire
- 27: Farmed Moorland Edge - Aberdeenshire
- 29: Summits and Plateaux - Aberdeenshire
- 31: Broad Wooded and Farmed Valley

0 1 2 km

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Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Boundary
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- LVIA Study Area
- Southeast Aberdeenshire Coast Special Landscape Area

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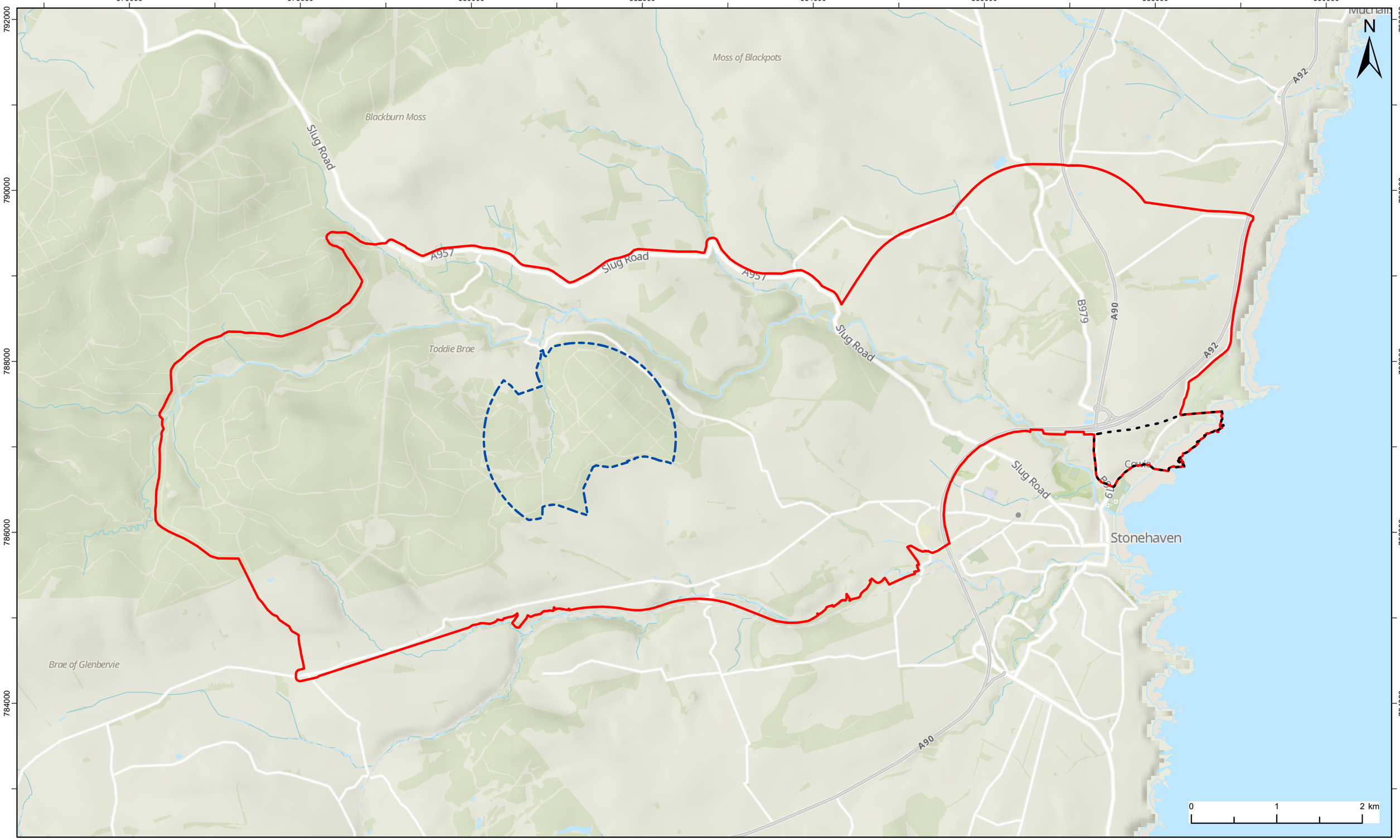
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Study Area, Landscape Designations and Landscape Character Types

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

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Figure 5.2



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Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search

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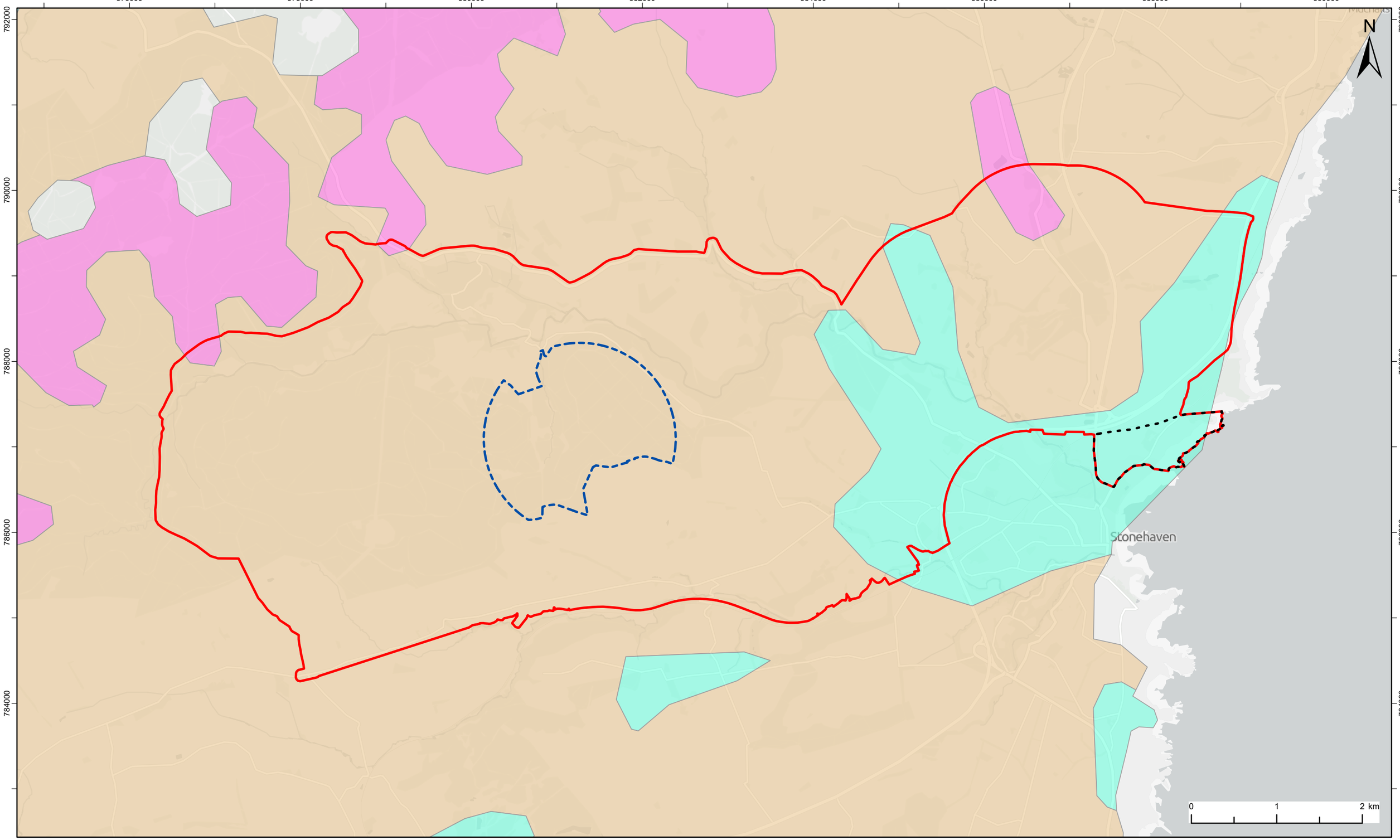
Figure Title:
Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area

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Report:
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Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0010

Figure 6.1



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Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search

BGS Superficial Geology

- Glacigenic Deposits - Diamicton (Clay, Sand And Gravel)
- Glaciofluvial Deposits - Sand And Gravel
- Organic Deposits - Peat

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Figure Title:

Superficial Geology within the Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area

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Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0011

Figure 6.2

376000 378000 380000 382000 384000 386000 388000 390000

792000 790000 788000 786000 784000

N

Stonehaven

0 1 2 km

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Bellrock

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh

Legend:

Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area

Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search

Preferred Landfall Area of Search

Faults

Fault at rockhead

BGS Bedrock Geology

Devonian

Silurian To Devonian

Silurian

Ordovician To Silurian

Cambrian To Ordovician

Tonian To Ediacaran

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Figure Title:

Bedrock Geology within the Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area

Project:

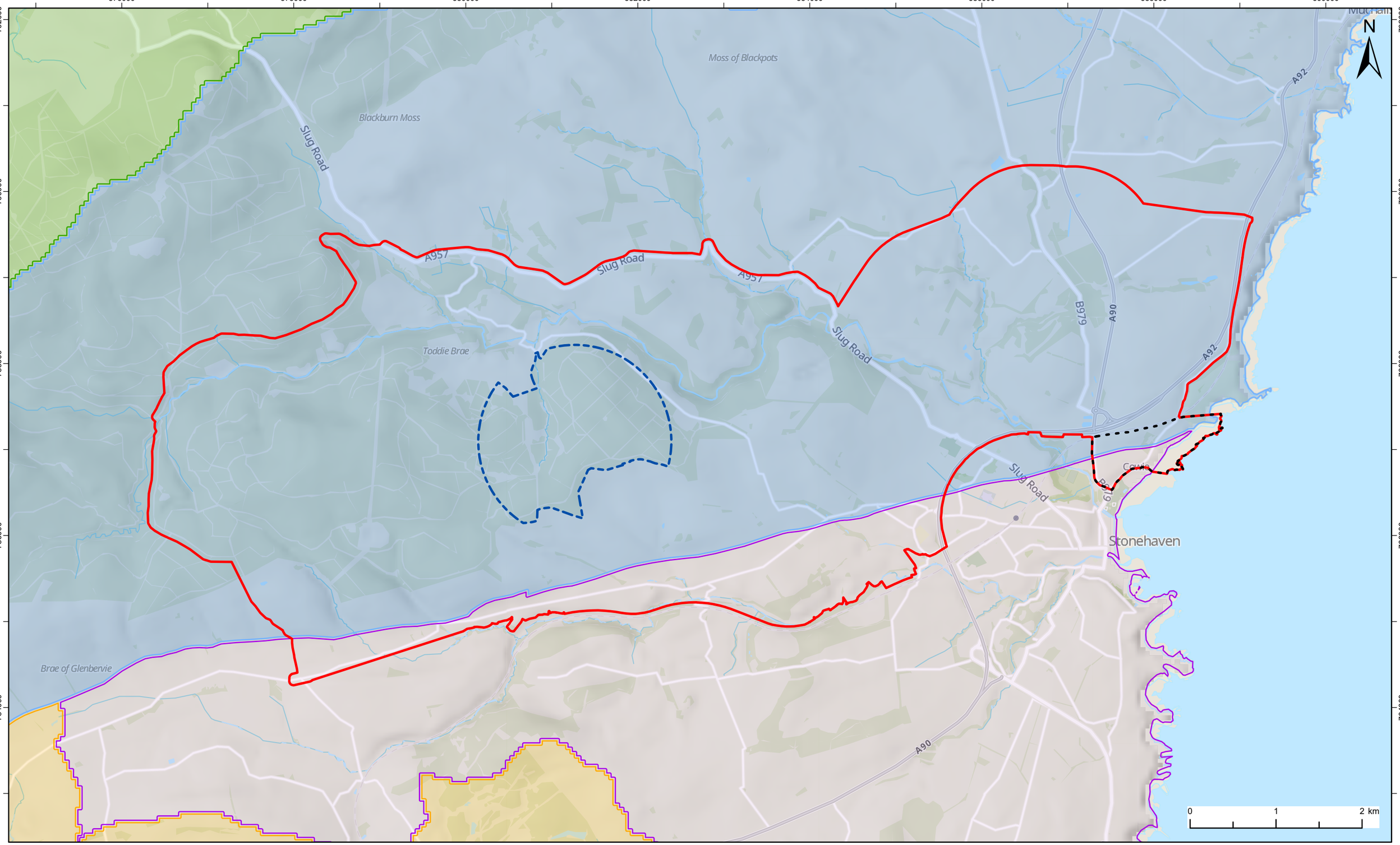
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:

Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0012

Figure 6.3



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Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search

Drinking Water Protected Areas (Groundwater)

- Drumlithie
- Peterculter
- Portlethen
- Stonehaven

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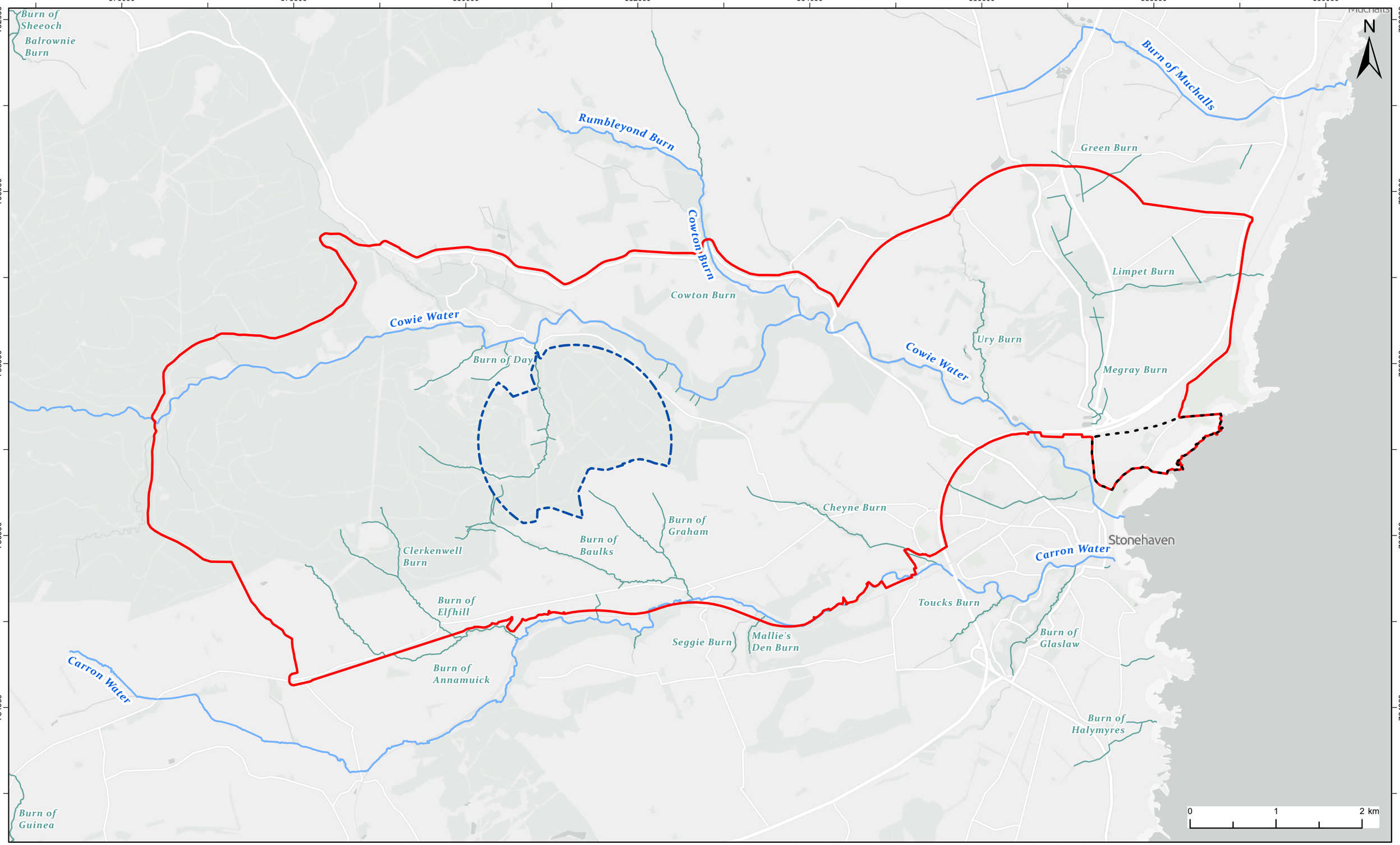
Figure Title:
Drinking Water Protection Areas within the Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area

Project:
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Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0013

Figure 6.4



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Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Rivers
- Minor Waterways

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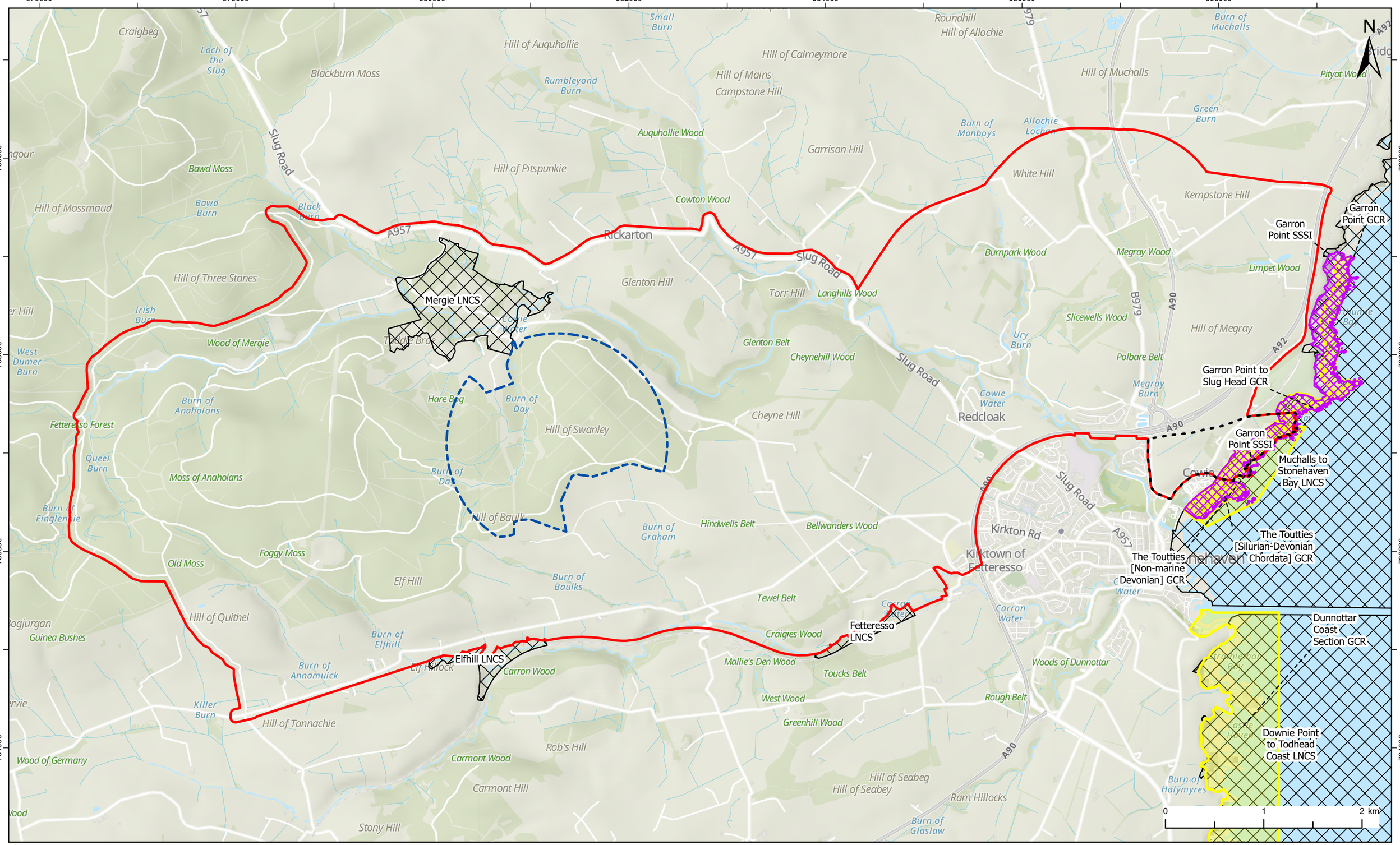
Figure Title:
Hydrology within the Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0250

Figure 6.5



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Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Geological Conservation Review (GCR) Sites
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS)

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Figure Title:
Designated Sites within the Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0014

Figure 6.6

370000 380000 390000 400000

790000 780000

granite at North Mains, Findon

granite at Blackhills of Cairnrobin

Kirkton of Maryculter
Drumoak
Inchmarlo
Crathes
Banchory
Woodlands
Findon
Portlethen
Portlethen Village
Downies
Cammachmore
Netherley
Newtonhill
Strachan
Muchalls
Stonehaven
Drumlithie
Auchenblae
Catterline
Roadside of Kinneff
Fordoun
Arbuthnott

A980 A956 A90 A92 A957

N

0 5 10 km

SCOTLAND
Edinburgh

Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Minerals - Safeguarding Areas
- Minerals - Areas of Search

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Figure Title:
Mineral Safeguarding Areas within the Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0015

Figure 6.7

376000 378000 380000 382000 384000 386000 388000 390000

792000 790000 788000 786000 784000

N

Moss of Blackpots
Blackburn Moss
Toddie Brae
Brae of Glenbervie
Mucham
Cowie
Stonehaven

Slug Road
A957
A90
A92
B979

KEMPSTONE HILL WIND ENERGY LIMITED

Cairnross Ltd

Bruce Plant Ltd

BOGENRAITH FARM AND ESTATES LIMITED

EAST COAST VINERS GRAN LIMITED

LOVE TO GARDEN

0 1 2 km

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Edinburgh

Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Registered Landfill Sites (Polygon)
- Waste Capacity Exempt Sites

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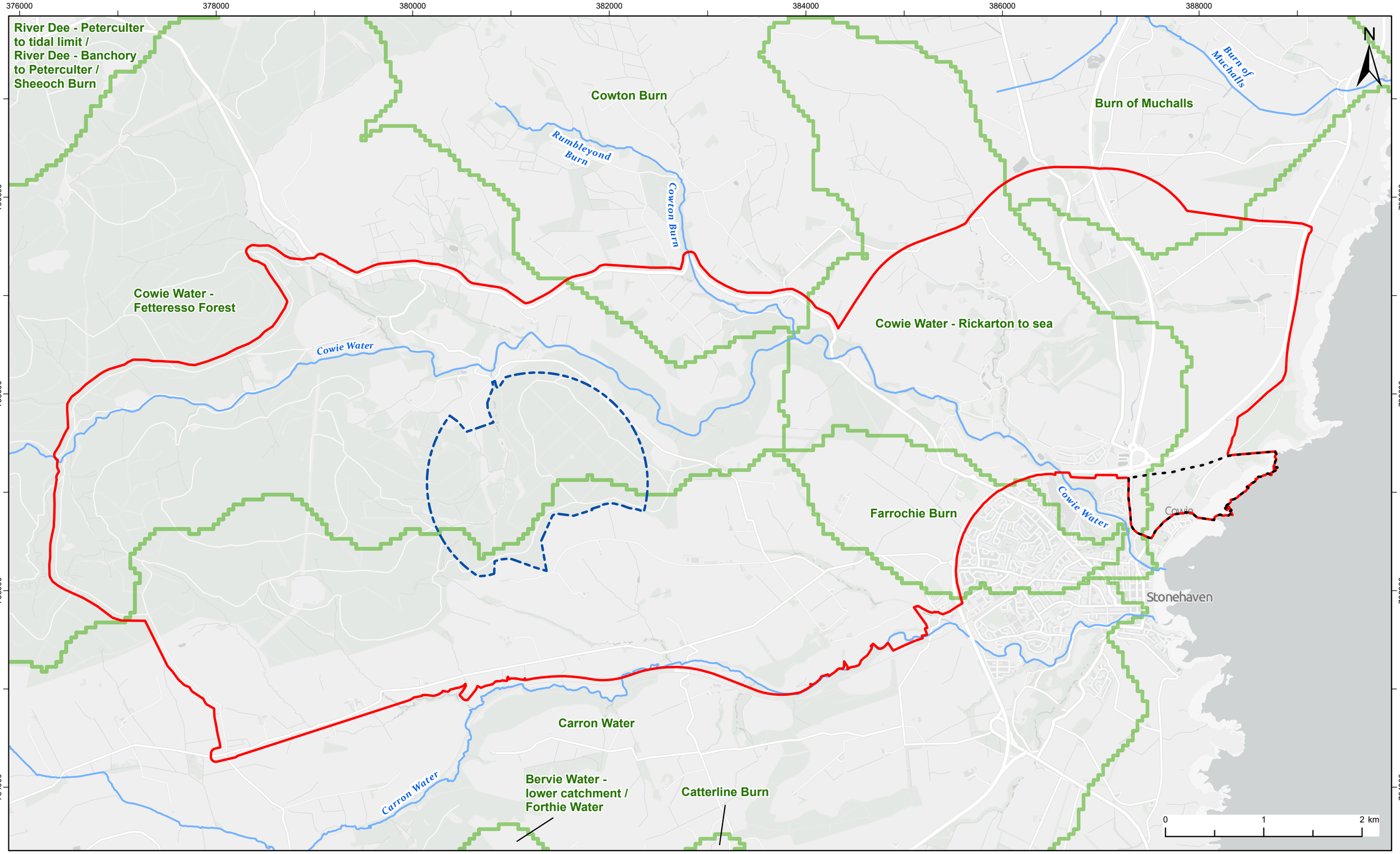
Figure Title:
Landfill and Waste Capacity Exemption Sites within the Geology and Ground Conditions Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0016

Figure 6.8



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Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- River Water Body Catchments
- Rivers

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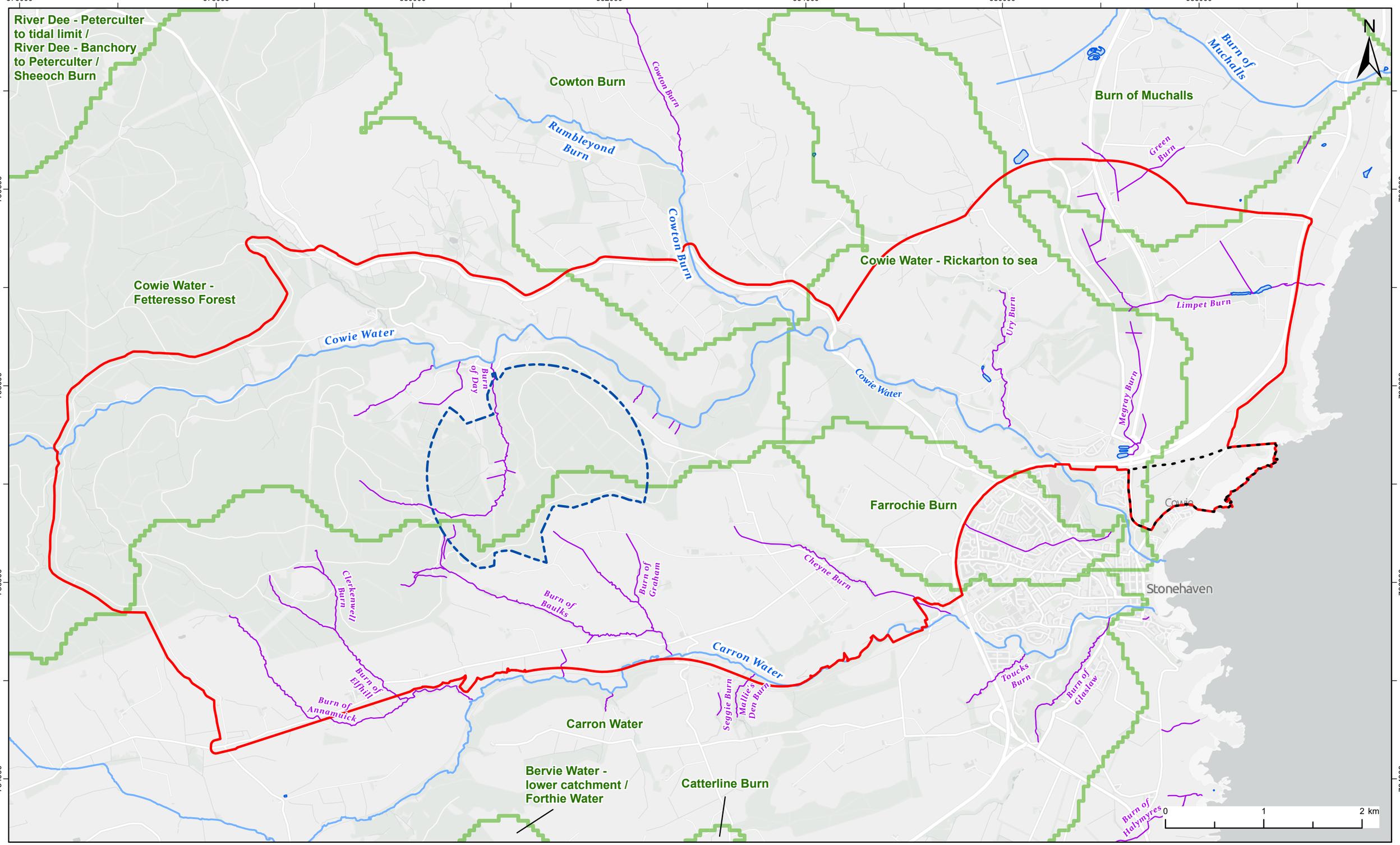
Figure Title:
Hydrological Catchments within the Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0017

Figure 7.1



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Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- River Water Body Catchments
- Open Water
- Rivers
- Minor Waterways

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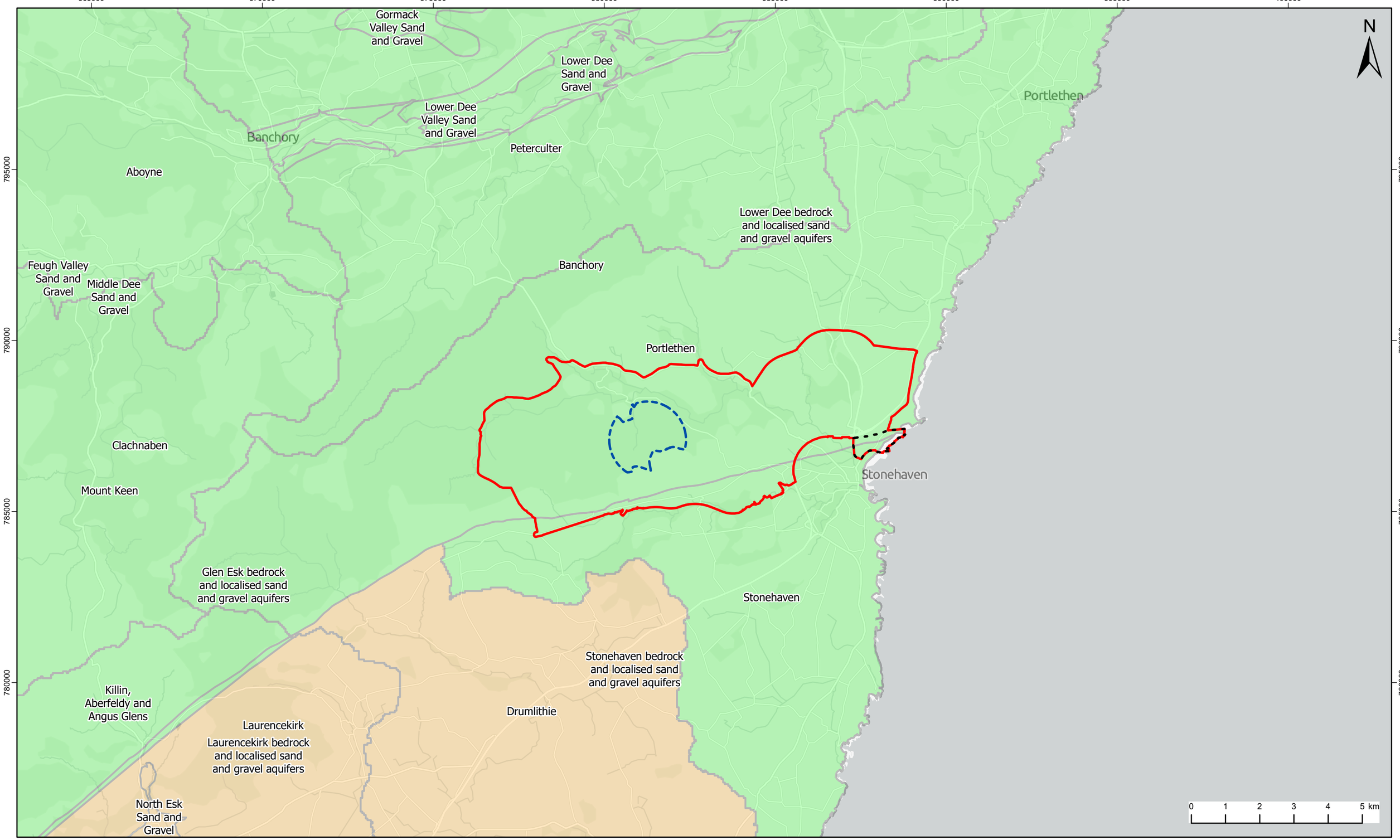
Figure Title:
Hydrological Subcatchments within the Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0018

Figure 7.2



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Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search

SEPA Groundwater Body Classification/Drinking Water Protected Area

- Good
- Poor

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Scale @ A3
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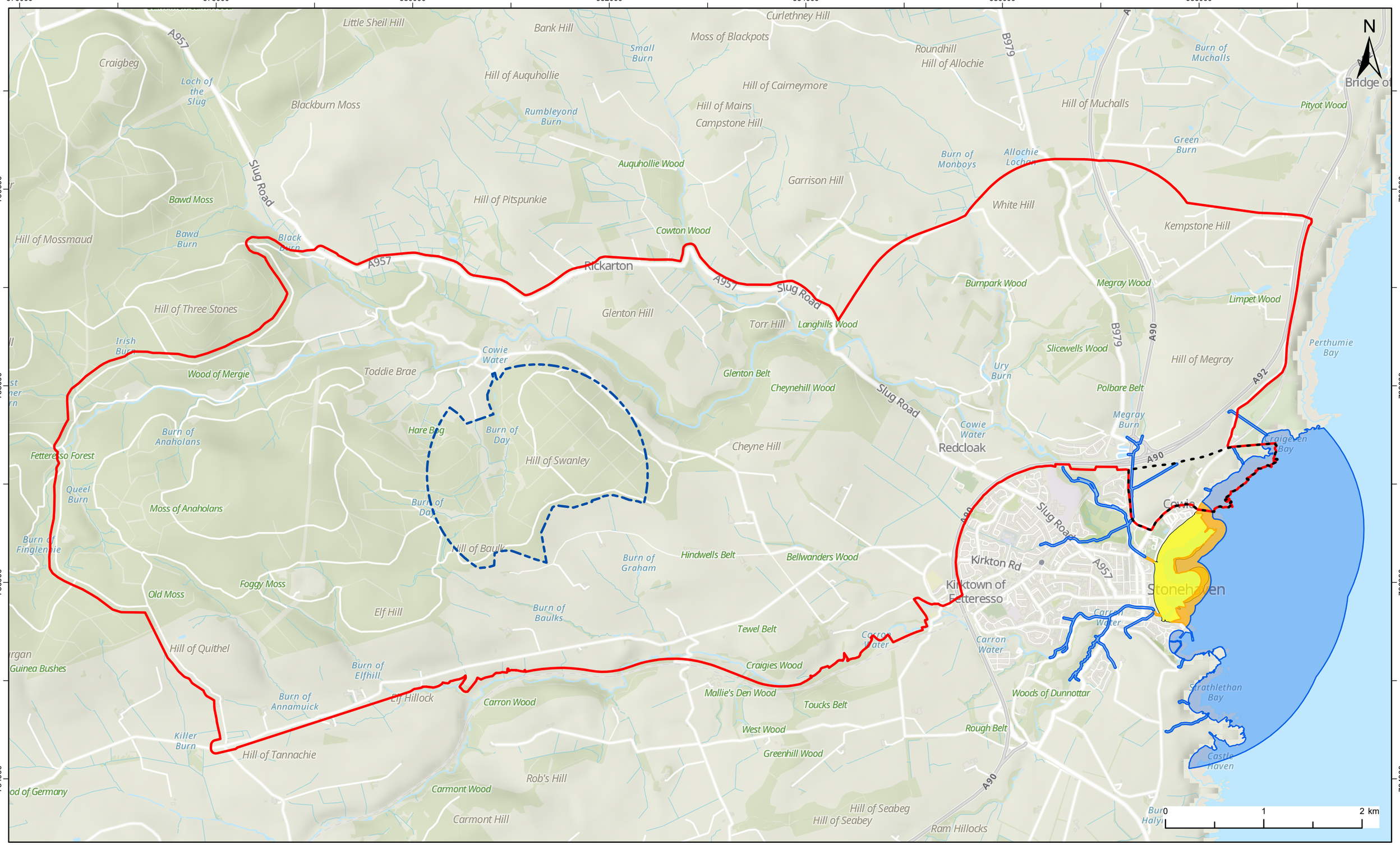
Figure Title:
Groundwater within the Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0019

Figure 7.3



Haskoning
Enhancing Society Together
Bellrock



Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Stonehaven Bathing Water

Bathing Water Control Zones
- Inner Zone
- Outer Zone

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

Coordinate System: British National Grid

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Scale @ A3
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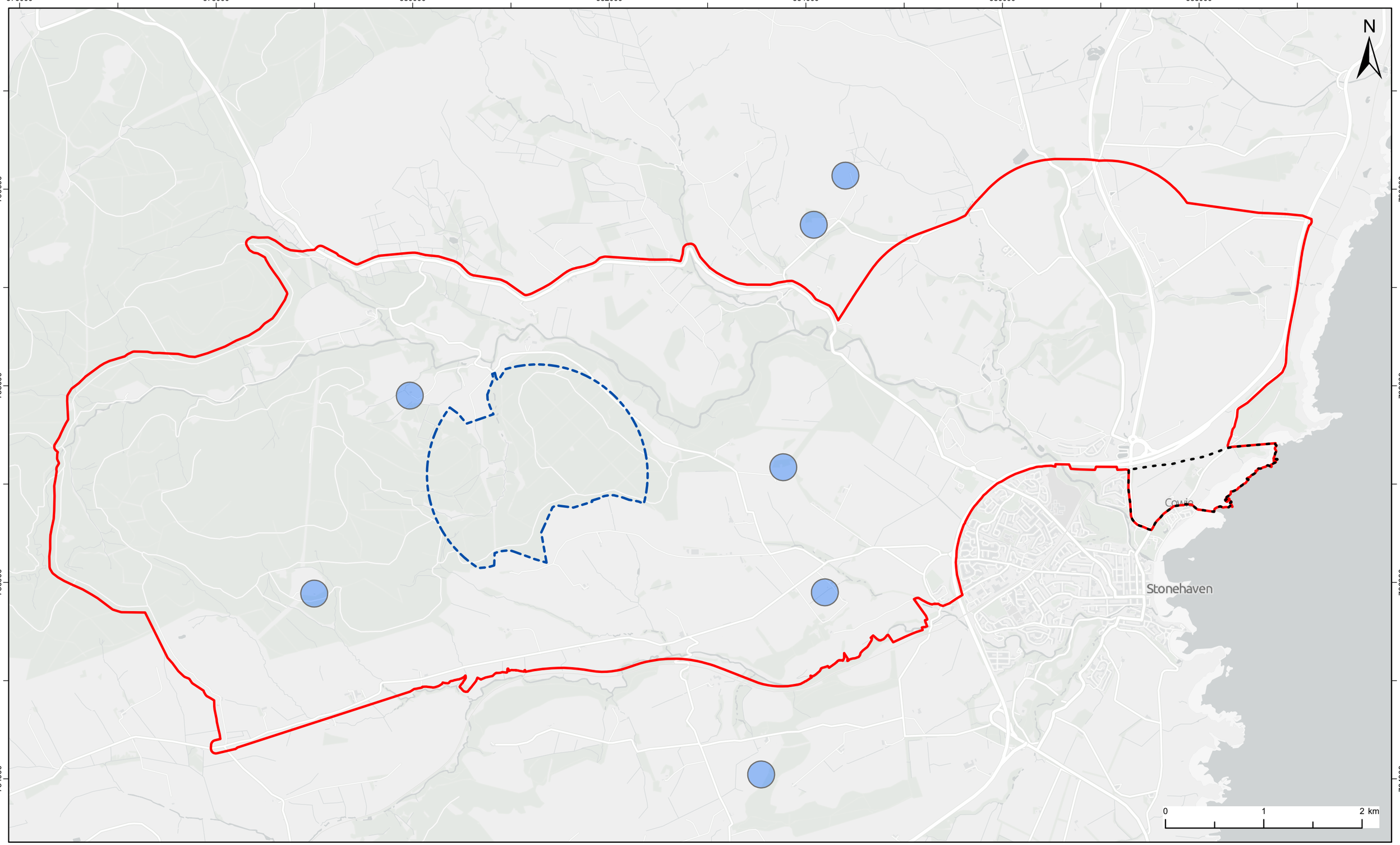
Figure Title:
Bathing Waters within the Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0020

Figure 7.4



Haskoning
Enhancing Society Together
Bellrock



Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Private Water Supply (data obtained from Aberdeenshire Council)

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

Coordinate System: British National Grid

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Scale @ A3
1:35,000

Figure Title:
Private Water Supplies within the Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0021

Figure 7.5

376000 378000 380000 382000 384000 386000 388000

790000 788000 786000 784000

N

Cowie

Stonehaven

0 1 2 km

Haskoning
Enhancing Society Together

Bellrock

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh

Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Scottish Water Combined Storm Overflow
- Septic Tanks

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

Coordinate System: British National Grid

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Scale @ A3
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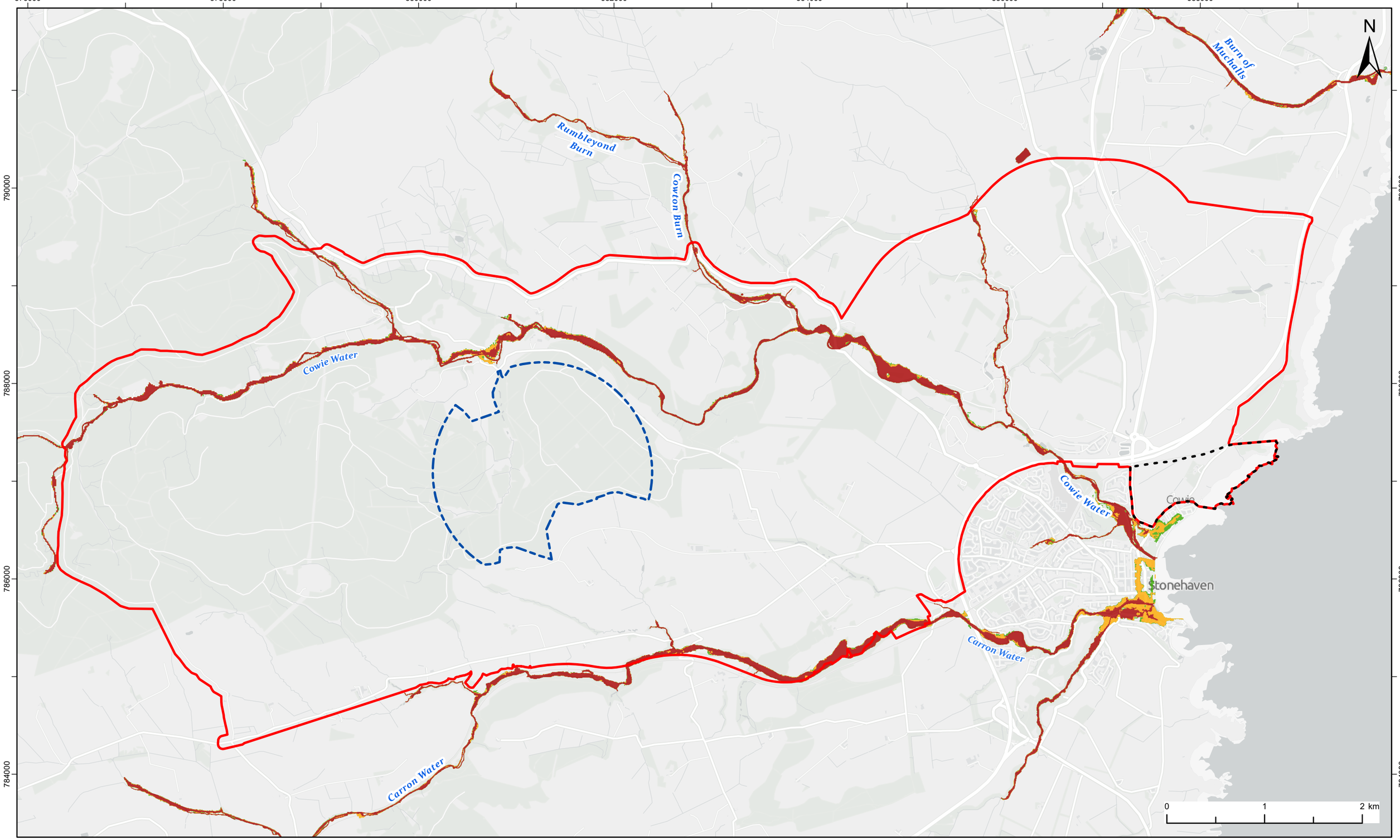
Figure Title:
Discharges within the Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0022

Figure 7.6





Haskoning
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Bellrock

Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Fluvial Flood Risk (High Likelihood)
- Fluvial Flood Risk (Medium Likelihood)
- Fluvial Flood Risk (Low Likelihood)

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

Coordinate System: British National Grid

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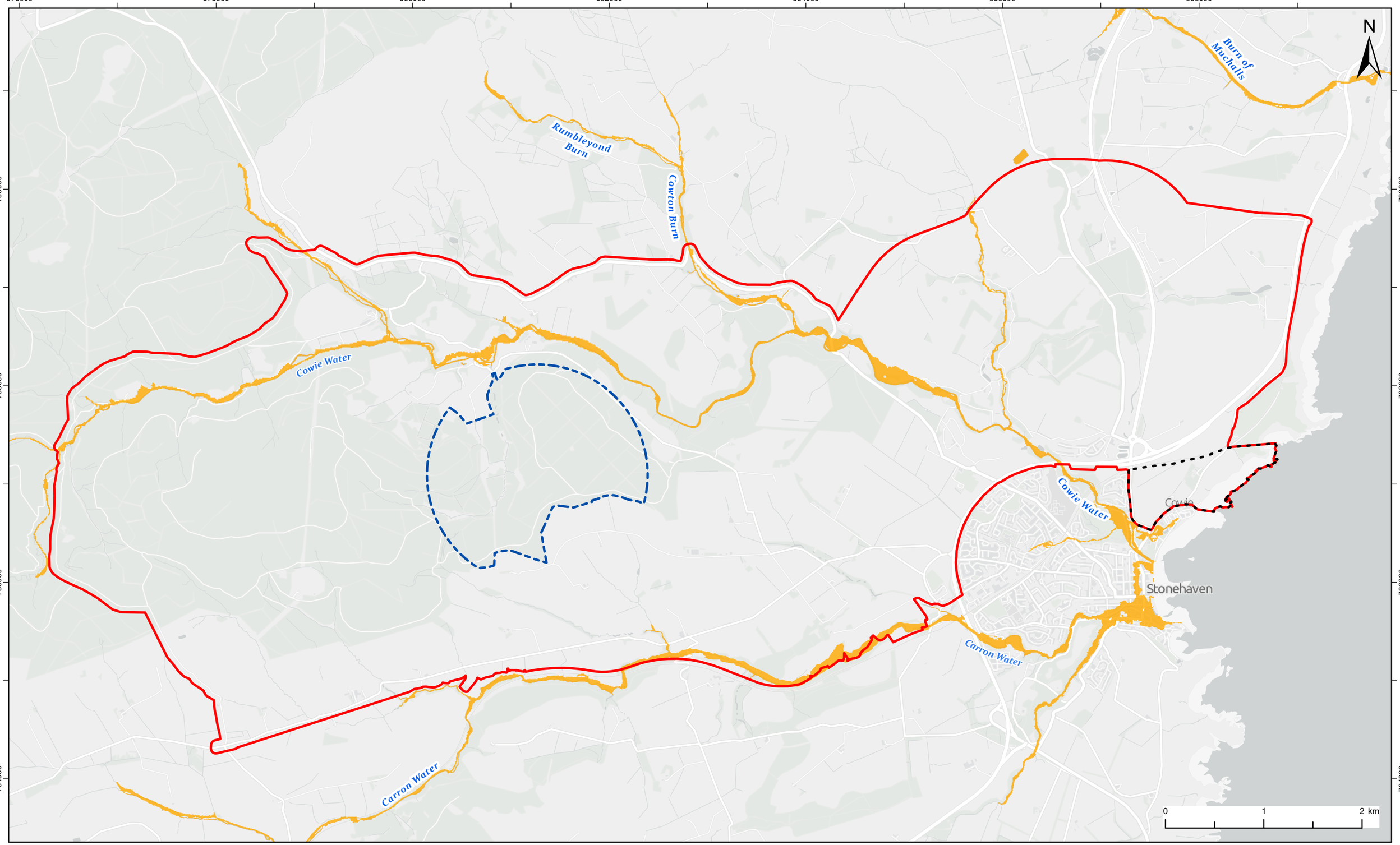
Figure Title:
Fluvial Flood Risk Zones within the Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0023

Figure 7.7



Haskoning
Enhancing Society Together
Bellrock



Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Future Fluvial Flood Risk (Medium Likelihood Plus Climate Change)

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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Scale @ A3
1:35,000

Figure Title:
Future Fluvial Flood Risk Zones within the Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0024

Figure 7.8

387000
388000
389000
390000
788000
787000
786000
N
A90
A92
A90
A90
Cowie
A957
Stonehaven
0 100 200 300 400 500 Metres

Haskoning
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Bellrock

SCOTLAND
Edinburgh

Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Boundary
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Coastal Flood Risk (High Likelihood)
- Coastal Flood Risk (Medium Likelihood)
- Coastal Flood Risk (Low Likelihood)

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

Coordinate System: British National Grid

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Scale @ A3
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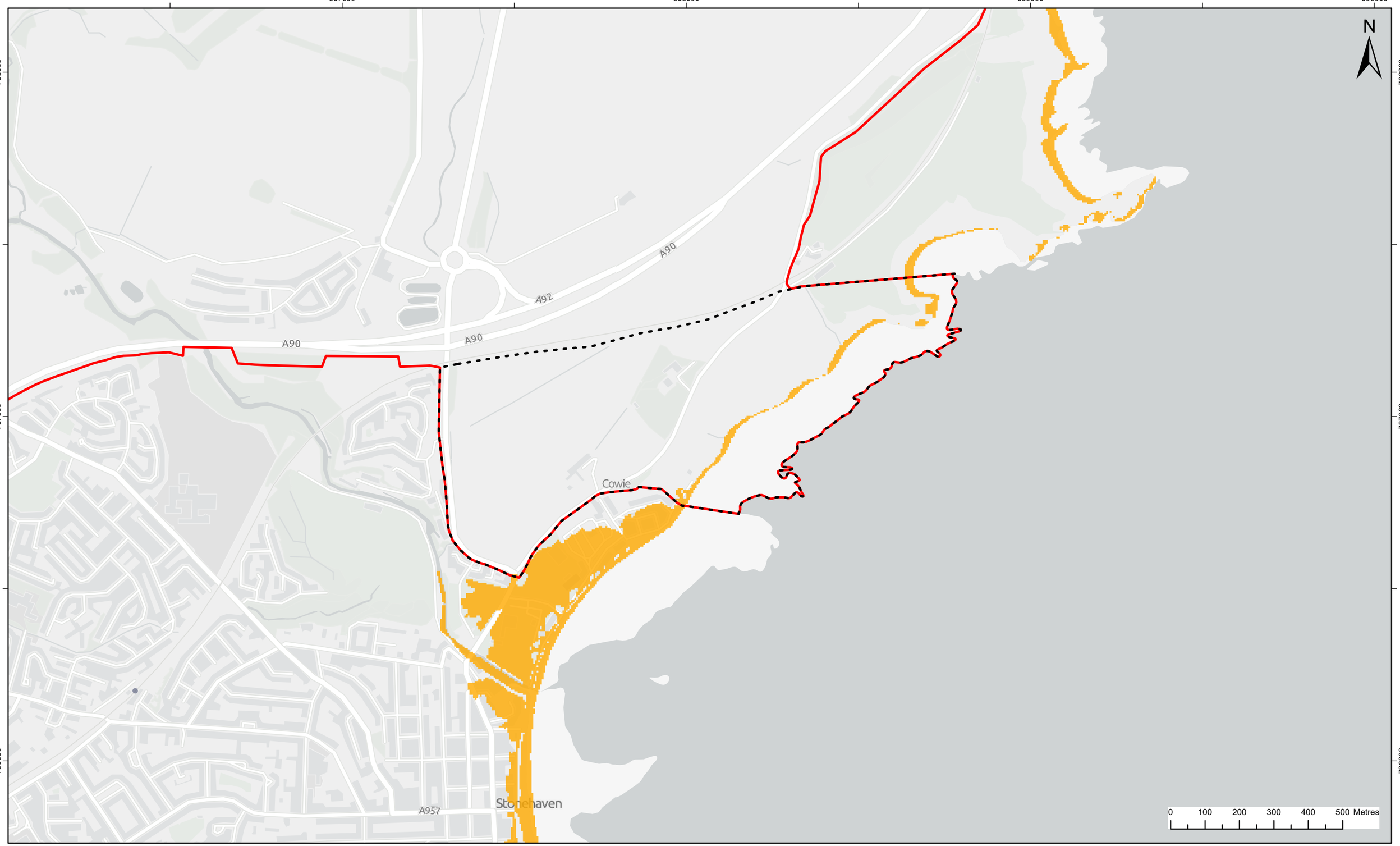
Figure Title:
Coastal Flood Risk Zones within the Preferred Landfall Area of Search

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0025

Figure 7.9



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Bellrock



Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Boundary
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Future Coastal Flood Risk (Medium Likelihood Plus Climate Change)

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

Coordinate System: British National Grid

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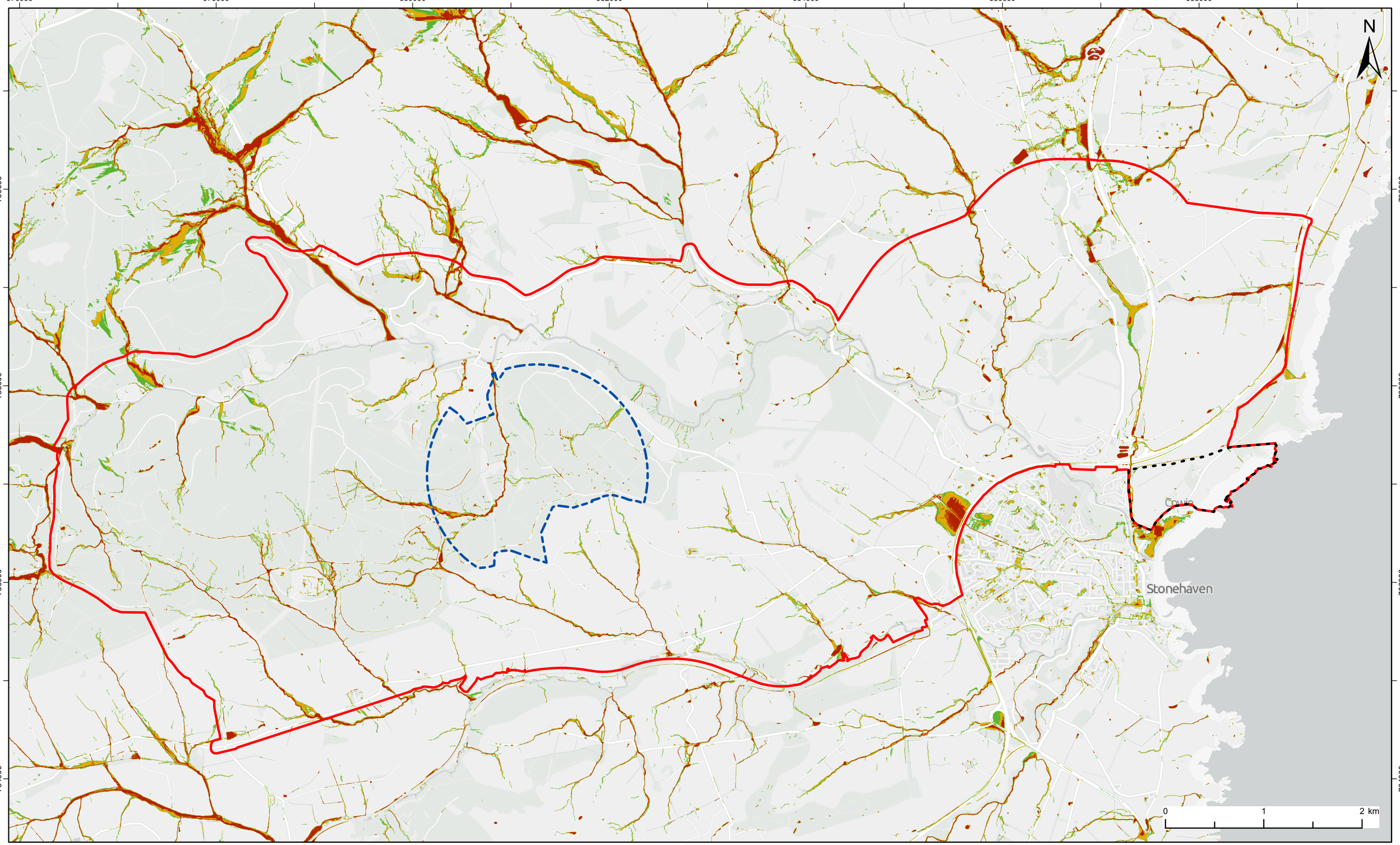
Figure Title:
Future Coastal Flood Risk Zones within the Preferred Landfall Area of Search

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0245

Figure 7.10



Haskoning
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Bellrock



Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Surface Water Flood Risk (High Likelihood)
- Surface Water Flood Risk (Medium Likelihood)
- Surface Water Flood Risk (Low Likelihood)

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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Scale @ A3
1:35,000

Figure Title:
Surface Water Flood Risk Zones within the Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0246

Figure 7.11

380000 381000 382000 383000

788000 787000 786000

N

0 100 200 300 400 500 Metres

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Bellrock



Legend:
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Surface Water Flood Risk (High Likelihood)
- Surface Water Flood Risk (Medium Likelihood)
- Surface Water Flood Risk (Low Likelihood)

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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Scale @ A3
1:10,000

Figure Title:
Surface Water Flood Risk Zones within the Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0247

Figure 7.12

376000 378000 380000 382000 384000 386000 388000

790000 788000 786000 784000

N

Cowie

Stonehaven

0 1 2 km

Haskoning
Enhancing Society Together

Bellrock

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh

Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Future Surface Water Flood Risk (Medium Likelihood Plus Climate Change)

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

Coordinate System: British National Grid

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Scale @ A3

1:35,000

Figure Title:

Future Surface Water Flood Risk Zones within the Hydrology and Flood Risk Study Area

Project:

Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:

Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0248

Figure 7.13

380000
381000
382000
383000
788000
787000
786000
N
0 100 200 300 400 500 Metres

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Bellrock



Legend:
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Future Surface Water Flood Risk (Medium Likelihood Plus Climate Change)

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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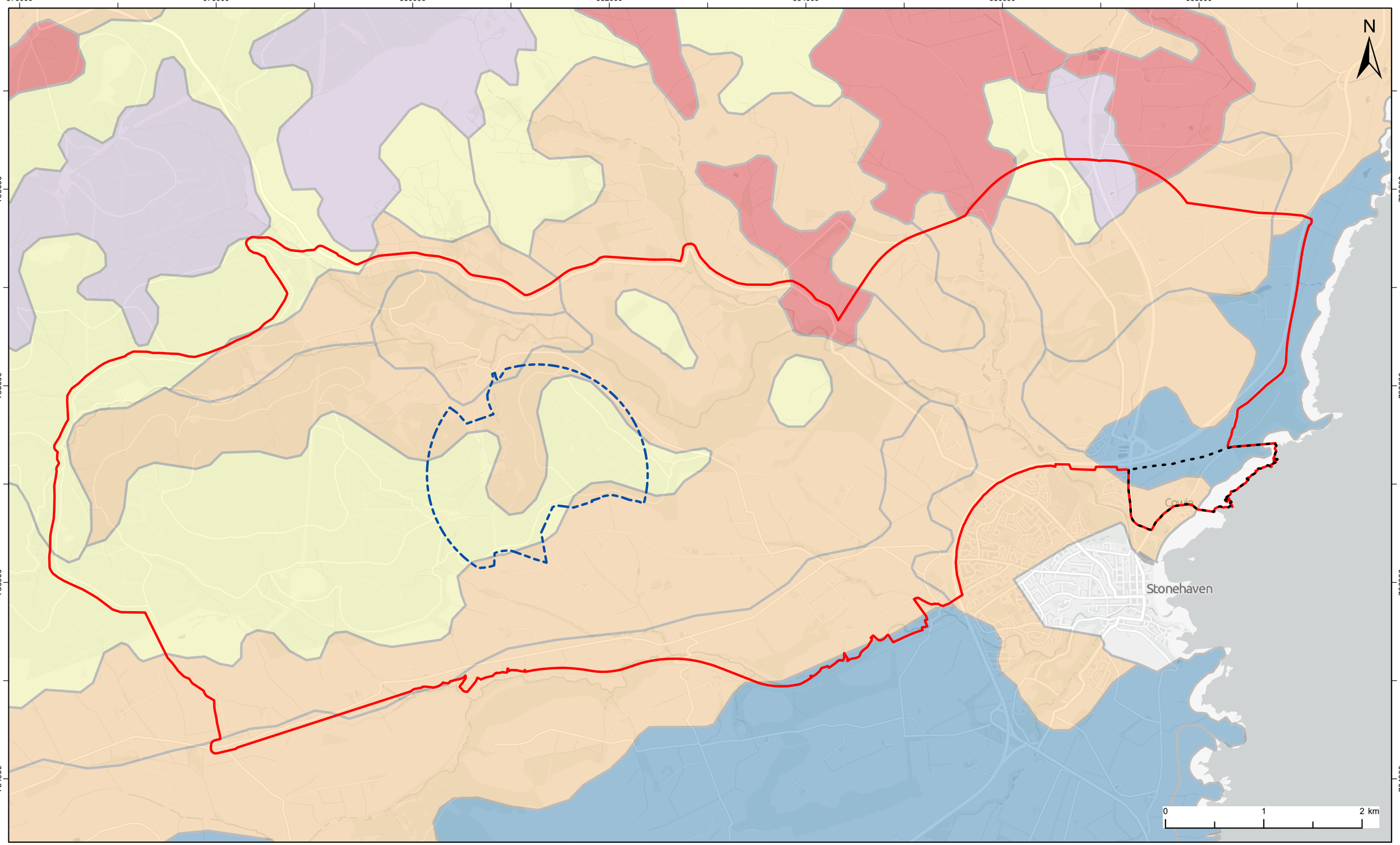
Figure Title:
Future Surface Water Flood Risk Zones within the Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0249

Figure 7.14



Haskoning
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Bellrock



Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Land Use and Agriculture Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search

Soil Boundaries

- Brown Soils
- Mineral Gleys
- Mineral Podzols
- Peat
- Peaty Podzols

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

Coordinate System: British National Grid

Source:

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Soil Survey of Scotland Staff (1981). Soil maps of Scotland at a scale of 1:250 000. Macaulay Institute for Soil Research, Aberdeen. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.4646891, Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2026. Contains data from OS Zoomstack, © Haskoning UK Ltd, 2026.
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Scale @ A3
1:35,000

Figure Title:
Soil Types within the Land Use and Agriculture Study Area

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0026

Figure 8.1

376000 378000 380000 382000 384000 386000 388000

790000 788000 786000 784000

N

Stonehaven

0 1 2 km

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Edinburgh

Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Land Use and Agriculture Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search

Land Capability for Agriculture

- 3.1
- 3.2
- 4.1
- 4.2
- 5.2
- 5.3
- 6.1
- 6.2
- 6.3
- Built-up Area

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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Scale @ A3

1:35,000

Figure Title:

Land Capability for Agriculture within the Land Use and Agriculture Study Area

Project:

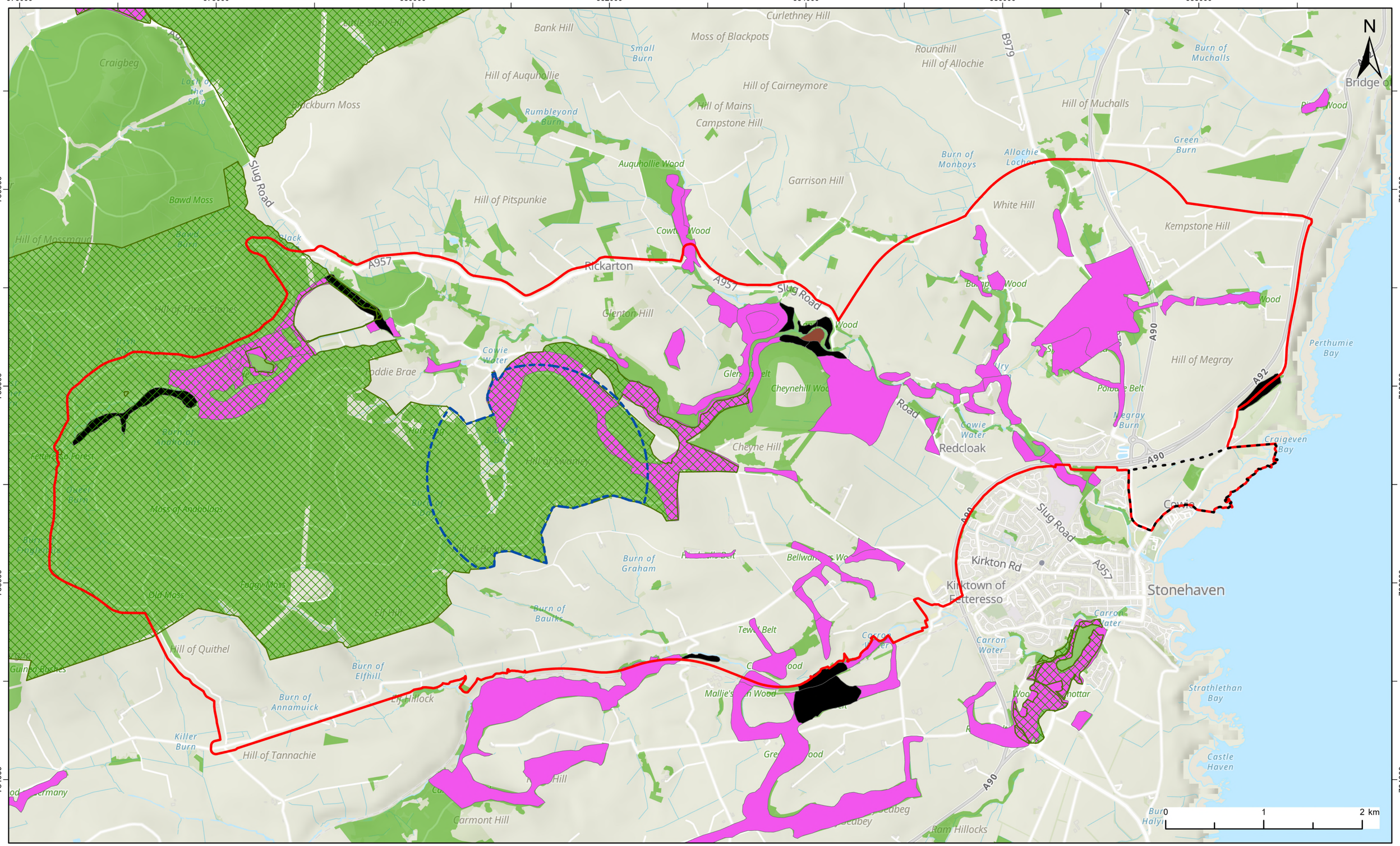
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:

Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0027

Figure 8.2



Haskoning
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Bellrock

Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Land Use and Agriculture Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- National Forest Inventory Scotland 2023
- FLS Freehold Land

Ancient Woodland Inventory

- Ancient (of Semi-natural Origin)
- Long-Established (of Plantation Origin)
- Other (on Roy Map)

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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Figure Title:

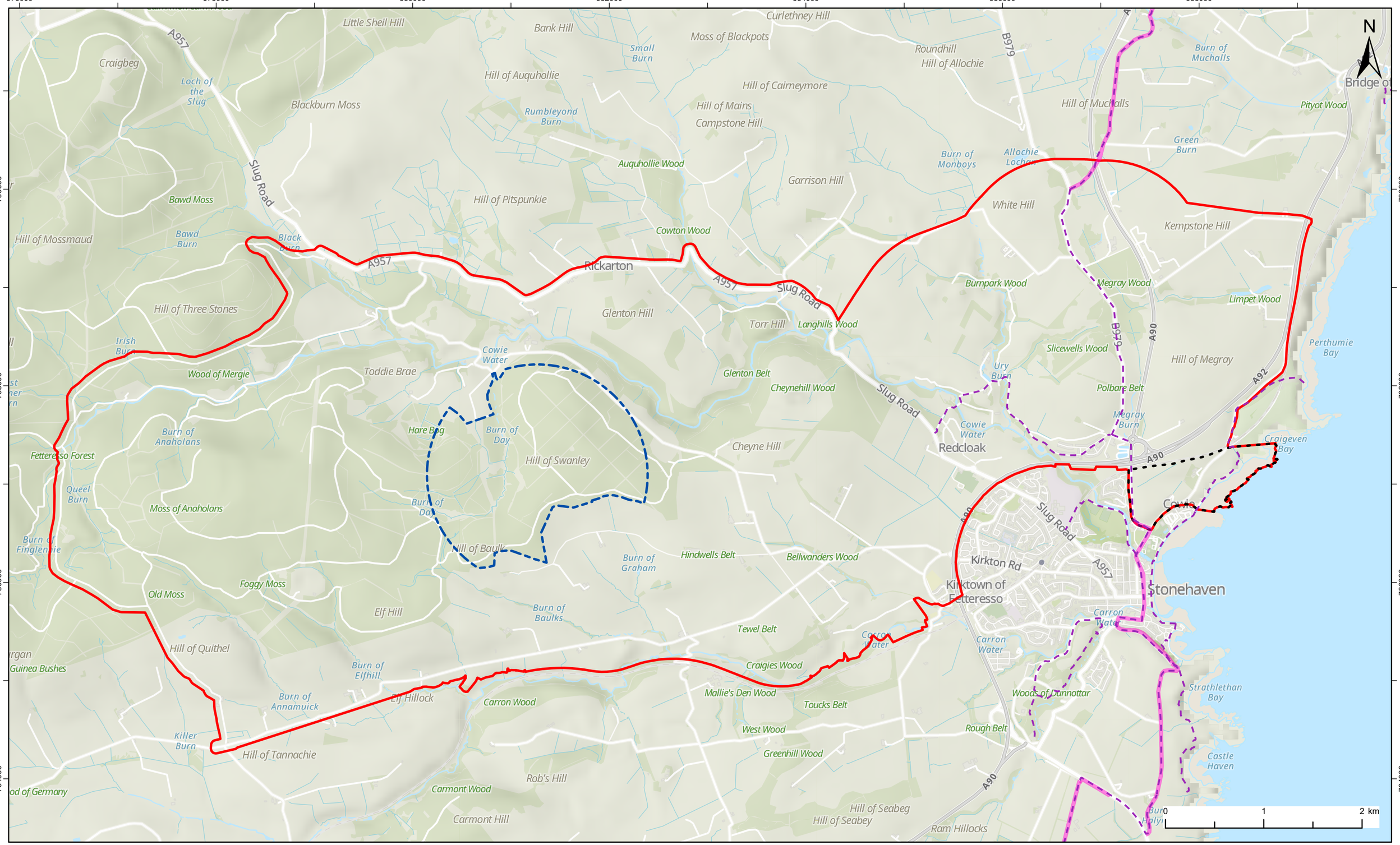
Forestry within the Land Use and Agriculture Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0028

Figure 8.3



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Bellrock



Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Land Use and Agriculture Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Core Path
- National Cycle Network

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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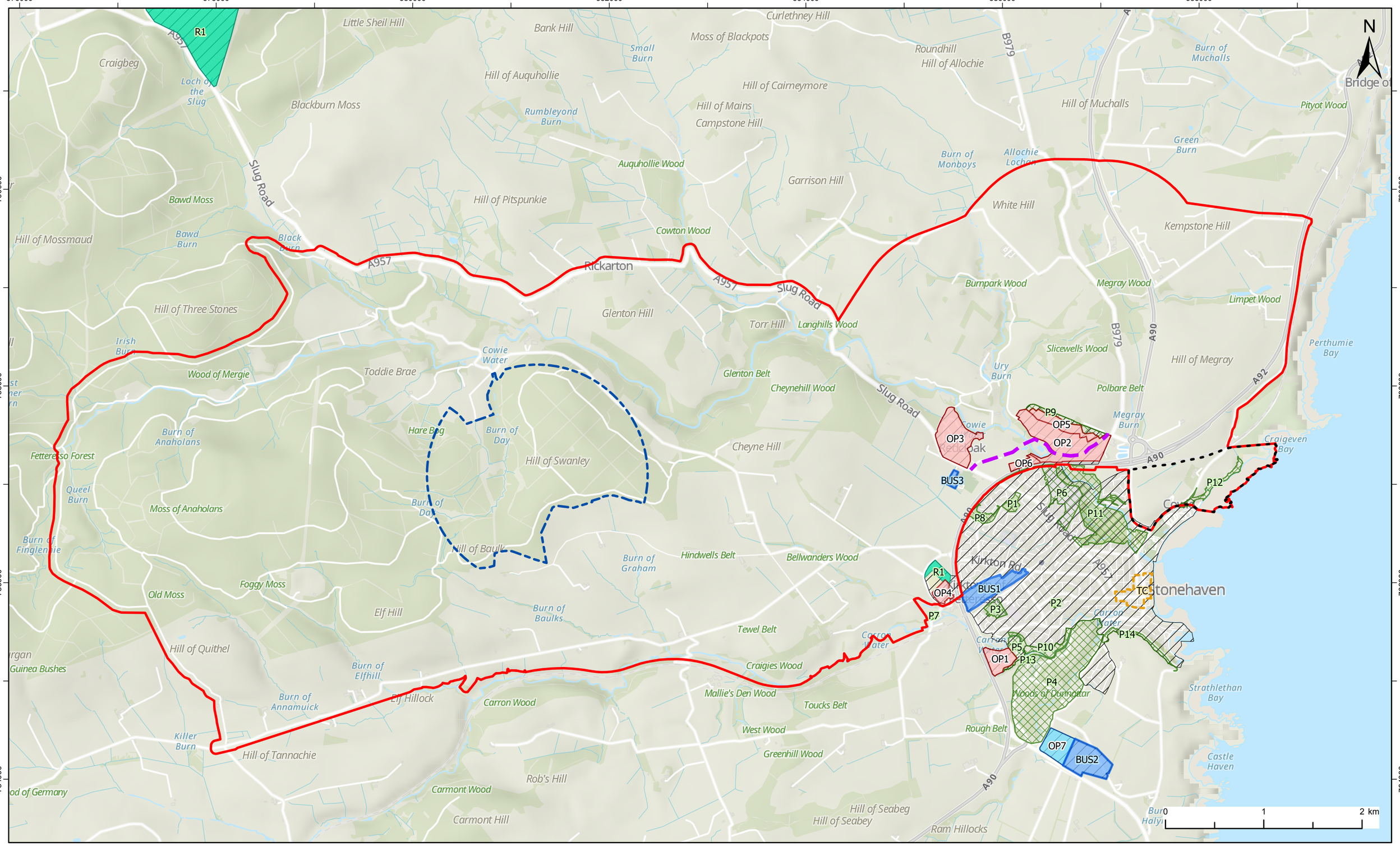
Figure Title:
Core Paths within the Land Use and Agriculture Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0029

Figure 8.4



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Bellrock



Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Land Use and Agriculture Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search

Settlement Statement Data

- Indicative Route
- Existing Employment Land
- Housing Land
- Employment Land
- Protected Area
- Reserved Land
- Retail Centre
- Settlement Boundary

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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Scale @ A3
1:35,000

Figure Title:
Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan Land Allocations within the Land Use and Agriculture Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0030

Figure 8.5

370000
380000
390000
790000
780000
N
Banchory
Woodlands
Portlethen Village
Downies
Cammachmore
Netherley
A90
A92
Newtonhill
trachan
A957
Muchalls
Stonehaven
Drumlithie
Auchenblae
Catterline
0 1 2 km

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Bellrock

SCOTLAND
Edinburgh

Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Habitats and Species Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Designated Sites Study Area

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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Scale @ A3
1:75,000

Figure Title:
Onshore Ecology Study Areas

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0031

Figure 9.1

370000
380000
390000
790000
780000

River Dee SAC
Banchory
Woodlands
Red-Moss-of-Netherley SSSI
Portlethen Village
Downies
Cammachmore
Newtonhill
Muchalls
A90
A92
A957
Garron Point SAC
Garron Point SSSI
Stonehaven
Fowlsheugh SSSI
Loch of Lumgair SSSI
Drumlithie
Fowlsheugh SPA
Crawton Bay SSSI
Auchenblae
Cattermine
0 1 2 km
N

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Edinburgh

Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Designated Sites Study Area

Designations
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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Scale @ A3
1:75,000

Figure Title:
National/International Designated Sites for Nature Conservation within the Designated Sites Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0032

Figure 9.2

380000 385000

790000 790000

785000 785000

N

Little Sheil Hill
Bank Hill
Curlethney Hill
Moss of Blackpots
Roundhill
Hill of Allochie
Burn of Muchalls
Craigbeg
Loch of the Slug
Blackburn Moss
Hill of Auquhollie
Small Burn
Hill of Cairneymore
Hill of Mains
Campstone Hill
Rumbleyond Burn
Hill of Muchalls
Pityot Wood
Green Burn
Auquhollie Wood
Burn of Monboys
Allochie Lochan
Garrison Hill
Bawd Moss
Hill of Pitspunkie
White Hill
Kempstone Hill
Hill of Mossmaud
Bawd Burn
Black Burn
Cowton Wood
Rickarton
Burnpark Wood
Megray Wood
Limpet Wood
Hill of Three Stones
Glenton Hill
Torr Hill
Langhills Wood
Irish Burn
Slicewells Wood
Hill of Megray
Wood of Mergie
Glenton Belt
Ury Burn
Cheynehill Wood
Polbare Belt
Megray Burn
Burn of Anaholans
Hare Bog
Burn of Day
Cowie Water
Fetteresso Forest
Cheyne Hill
Redcloak
Hill of Swanley
Queel Burn
Moss of Anaholans
Burn of Finglennie
Hill of Baulk
Burn of Graham
Hindwells Belt
Bellwanders Wood
Kirkton Rd
Kirktown of Fetteresso
Foggy Moss
Old Moss
Elf Hill
Burn of Baulks
Carron Water
Tewel Belt
Hill of Quithel
Guinea Bushes
Burn of Elfhill
Craigies Wood
Fetteresso LNCS
Elfhill LNCS
Burn of Annamuick
Carron Wood
Mallie's Den Wood
Toucks Belt
Woods of Dunnottar
Killer Burn
Hill of Tannachie
West Wood
Rough Belt
Greenhill Wood
Rob's Hill
Carmont Wood
Hill of Seabeg
Hill of Seabey
Carmont Hill
Ram Hillocks

Mergie LNCS
Muchalls to Stonehaven Bay LNCS
Downie Point to Todhead Coast LNCS

A957
A90
B979
Slug Road

0 1 2 km

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Bellrock

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Edinburgh

Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Habitats and Species Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS)

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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Scale @ A3
1:35,000

Figure Title:
Local Nature Conservation Sites within the Habitats and Species Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0033

Figure 9.3

380000 385000

790000 785000

N

Little Sheil Hill · Bank Hill · Curlethney Hill · Moss of Blackpots · Small Burn · Roundhill · Hill of Allochie · Burn of Muchalls · Craigbeg · Loch of the Slug · A957 · Blackburn Moss · Hill of Auquhollie · Hill of Cairneymore · Hill of Mains · Campstone Hill · Rumbleyond Burn · Auquhollie Wood · Hill of Muchalls · Pityot Wood · Green Burn · Burn of Monboys · Allochie Lochan · Garrison Hill · Slug Road · Bawd Moss · Hill of Pitspunkie · White Hill · Kempstone Hill · Hill of Mossmaud · Bawd Burn · Black Burn · Cowton Wood · A957 · Rickarton · Burnpark Wood · Megray Wood · Limpet Wood · Hill of Three Stones · Glenton Hill · Torr Hill · Langhill Wood · Irish Burn · Cowie Water · Sucewells Wood · B979 · A90 · Perthumie Bay · Wood of Mergie · Toddie Brae · Glenton Belt · Cheynehill Wood · Ury Burn · Hill of Megray · A92 · Polbare Belt · Burn of Anaholans · Hare Bog · Burn of Day · Megray Burn · Fetteresso Forest · Cheyne Hill · Redcloak · Craigeven Bay · Hill of Swanley · Queel Burn · Moss of Anaholans · Slug Road · Burn of Finglennie · Hill of Baulk · Burn of Graham · Hindwells Belt · Bellwanders Wood · Kirkton Rd · A957 · Kirktown of Fetteresso · Stonehaven · Old Moss · Foggy Moss · Elf Hill · Burn of Baulks · Carron Water · Tewel Belt · Hill of Quithel · Guinea Bushes · Burn of Elfhill · Craigies Wood · Strathlethan Bay · Burn of Annamuick · Elf Hillock · Carron Wood · Mallie's Den Wood · Toucks Belt · Woods of Dunnottar · Killer Burn · West Wood · Rough Belt · Castle Haven · Hill of Tannachie · Greenhill Wood · Rob's Hill · Carmont Wood · Hill of Seabeg · Carmont Hill · Ram Hillocks

0 1 2 km

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Edinburgh

Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Habitats and Species Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search

Habitat Map of Scotland

- Coastal Vegetated Shingle
- Lowland Heathland
- Lowland Fen
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Native Pine Woodlands
- Upland Mixed Ashwoods
- Upland Oakwood
- Wet Woodland

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

Coordinate System: British National Grid

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Scale @ A3
1:35,000

Figure Title:
Scottish Biodiversity List Habitats within the Habitats and Species Study Area

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0034

Figure 9.4

380000 385000

790000

785000

N

Little Sheil Hill
Bank Hill
Curlethney Hill
Moss of Blackpots
Roundhill
Hill of Allochie
Burn of Muchalls
Craigbeg
Loch of the Slug
Small Burn
Hill of Auquhollie
Hill of Cairneymore
Blackburn Moss
Rumbleyond Burn
Hill of Mains
Campstone Hill
Hill of Muchalls
Pityot Wood
Green Burn
Auquhollie Wood
Burn of Monboy
Garrison Hill
Bawd Moss
Hill of Pitspunkie
White Hill
Kempstone Hill
Hill of Mossmaud
Bawd Burn
Black Burn
Cowton Wood
Rickarton
Burnpark Wood
Megray Wood
Limpet Wood
Hill of Three Stones
Glenton Hill
Torr Hill
Langhills Wood
Irish Burn
Slicewells Wood
Perthumie Bay
Cowie Water
Toddie Brae
Ury Burn
Hill of Megray
Wood of Mergie
Glenton Belt
Cheynehill Wood
Polbare Belt
Megray Burn
Burn of Anaholans
Hare Bog
Burn of Day
Cheyne Hill
Craigeven Bay
Fetteresso Forest
Hill of Swanley
Redcloak
Queel Burn
Moss of Anaholans
Burn of Finglennie
Hill of Baulk
Burn of Graham
Hindwells Belt
Bellwanders Wood
Kirkton Rd
Kirktown of Fetteresso
Stonehaven
Foggy Moss
Old Moss
Elf Hill
Burn of Baulks
Carron Water
Tewel Belt
Hill of Quithel
Guinea Bushes
Burn of Elfhill
Craigies Wood
Strathlethan Bay
Burn of Annamuick
Elf Hillock
Carron Wood
Mallie's Den Wood
Woods of Dunnottar
Toucks Belt
Killer Burn
West Wood
Rough Belt
Hill of Tannachie
Greenhill Wood
Castle Haven
Rob's Hill
Carmont Wood
Hill of Seabeg
Carmont Hill
Ram Hillocks

A957 A90 A92 B979 Slug Road

0 1 2 km

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Edinburgh

Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Habitats and Species Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Nationally Important Peat Area

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

Coordinate System: British National Grid

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Scale @ A3
1:35,000

Figure Title:
Nationally Important Peat Areas within the Habitats and Species Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0035

Figure 9.5

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380000 385000

790000 785000

N

0 1 2 km

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SCOTLAND
Edinburgh

Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Habitats and Species Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search

National Forest Inventory Scotland 2023

- Assumed Woodland
- Broadleaved
- Conifer
- Felled
- Mixed Mainly Broadleaved
- Mixed Mainly Conifer
- Young Trees
- Windblow

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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Scale @ A3
1:35,000

Figure Title:
Woodland Types within the Habitats and Species Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0036

Figure 9.6

380000 385000

790000 785000

N

Little Sheil Hill
Bank Hill
Curlethney Hill
Moss of Blackpots
Small Burn
Roundhill
Hill of Allochie
Burn of Muchalls
Craigbeg
Loch of the Slug
Hill of Auquhollie
Hill of Cairneymore
Blackburn Moss
Rumbleyond Burn
Hill of Mains
Campstone Hill
Hill of Muchalls
Pityot Wood
Green Burn
Auquhollie Wood
Burn of Monboys
Allochie Lochan
Garrison Hill
Bawd Moss
Hill of Pitspunkie
White Hill
Kempstone Hill
Hill of Mossmaud
Bawd Burn
Black Burn
Cowton Wood
Rickarton
Burnpark Wood
Megray Wood
Limpet Wood
Hill of Three Stones
Glenton Hill
Torr Hill
Landhills Wood
Irish Burn
Slicewells Wood
Perthumie Bay
Cowie Water
Toddie Brae
Glenton Belt
Ury Burn
Hill of Megray
Wood of Mergie
Cheynehill Wood
Polbare Belt
Megray Burn
Burn of Anaholans
Hare Bog
Burn of Day
Cheyne Hill
Redcloak
Craigeven Bay
Fetteresso Forest
Hill of Swanley
Queel Burn
Moss of Anaholans
Cowie
Burn of Finglennie
Hill of Baulk
Burn of Graham
Hindwells Belt
Bellwanders Wood
Kirkton Rd
Kirktown of Fetteresso
Stonehaven
Foggy Moss
Old Moss
Elf Hill
Burn of Baulks
Tewel Belt
Carron Water
Hill of Quithel
Guinea Bushes
Burn of Elfhill
Craigies Wood
Strathlethan Bay
Burn of Annamuick
Elf Hillock
Mallie's Den Wood
Toucks Belt
Woods of Dunnottar
Carron Wood
Killer Burn
West Wood
Rough Belt
Hill of Tannachie
Greenhill Wood
Castle Haven
Rob's Hill
Carmont Wood
Hill of Seabeg
Carmont Hill
Ram Hillocks

A957 Slug Road B979 A90 A92

0 1 2 km

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Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Habitats and Species Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search

Ancient Woodland Inventory

- Ancient (of semi-natural origin)
- Long-Established (of plantation origin)
- Other (on Roy map)

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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Scale @ A3
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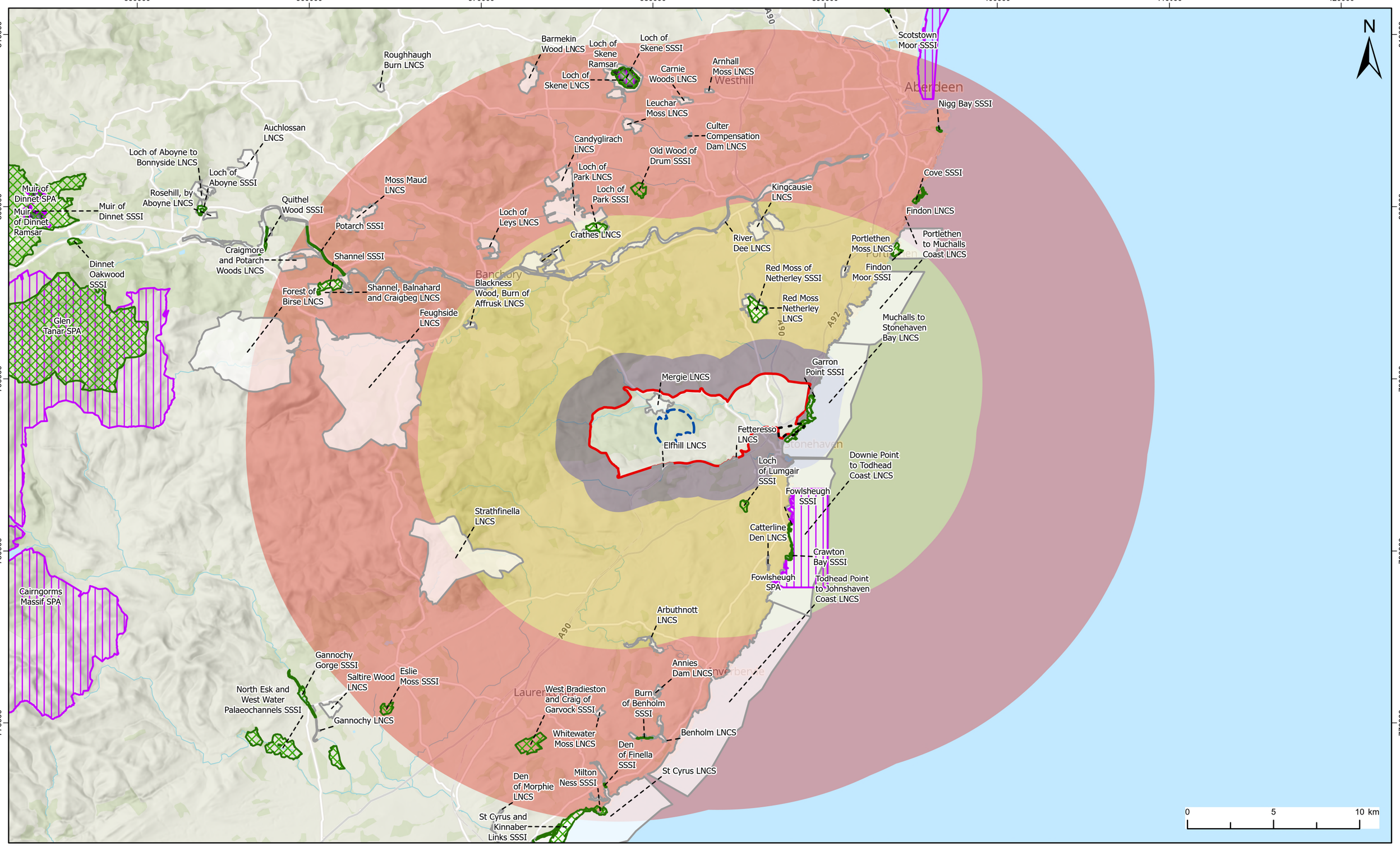
Figure Title:
Ancient Woodland Sites Within the Habitats and Species Study Area

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0037

Figure 9.7



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Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Boundary
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- OnTDA Scoping 2 km Buffer
- OnTDA Scoping 10 km Buffer
- OnTDA Scoping 20 km Buffer

Designations

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Ramsar Site
- Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS)

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

Coordinate System: British National Grid

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Scale @ A3
1:200,000

Figure Title:
Designated Sites within the Onshore Ornithology Study Areas

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0038

Figure 10.1

365000 370000 375000 380000 385000 390000 395000 400000

790000 785000 780000 775000 770000

N

A957

A90

A92

Dunnotar Castle to Cowie

Stonehaven

Catterline

Inverbervie to Crawton

Roadside of Kinneff

Arbuthnott

Inverbervie

Inverbervie to Brighead Bush

Gourdon

Point O`Bard to Brighead Bush

St Cyrus to Point O`Bard

Fettercairn

Luthermuir

0 1 2 3 4 5 km

0 0.5 1 km

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Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Boundary
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) Site
- Intertidal Surveys Study Area

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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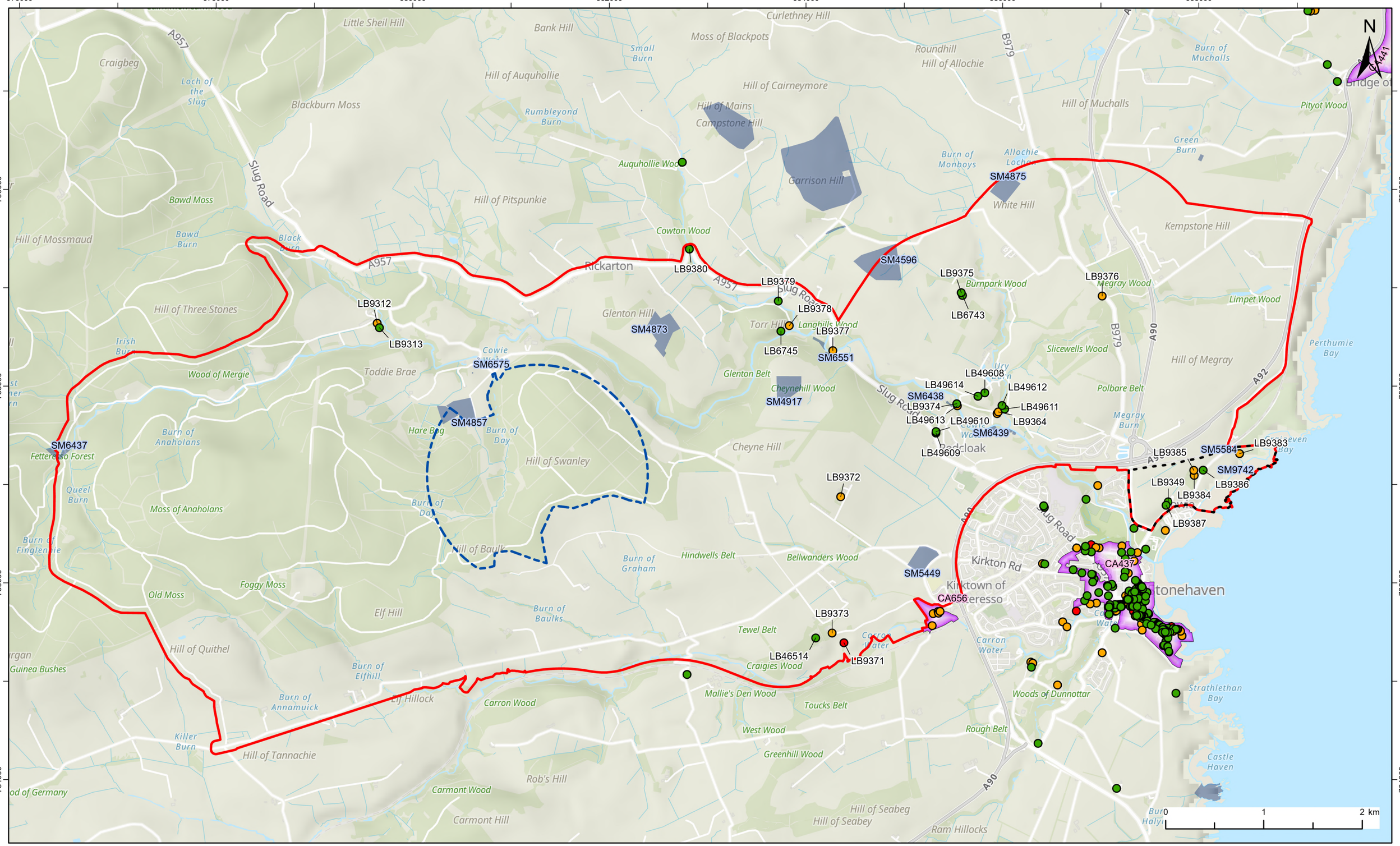
Figure Title:
Spatial Extent of Available Onshore Ornithology Data Sources

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0039

Figure 10.2



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Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument

Listed Buildings by Category

- A
- B
- C

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

Coordinate System: British National Grid

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Scale @ A3
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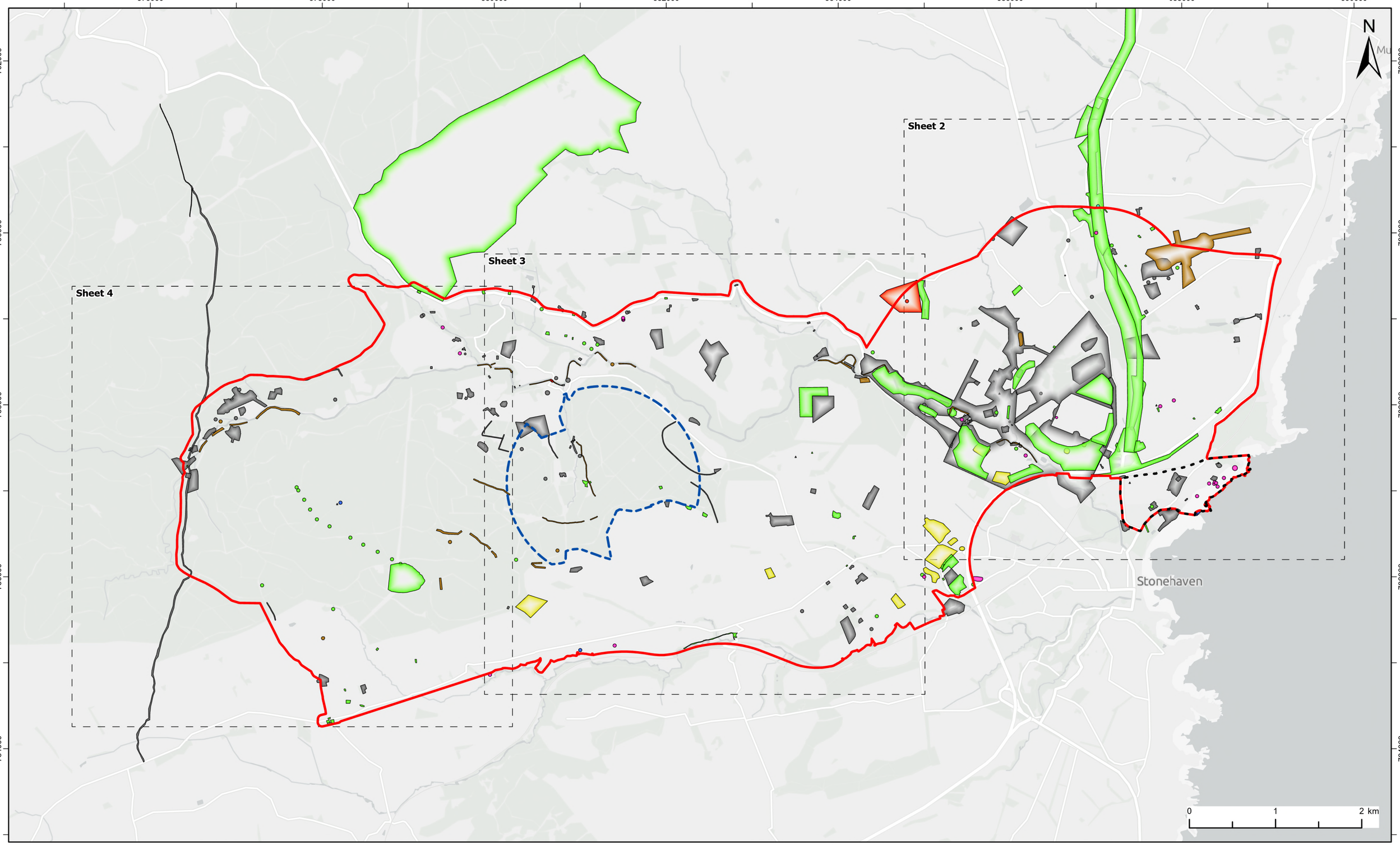
Figure Title:
Designated Heritage Assets within the Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0040

Figure 11.1



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Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Sheet Extent Boxes 1:20k
- MAB Air Crash Sites

Non-designated Heritage Asset

- Building
- Cropmark
- Document
- Earthwork
- Find Spot
- Maritime
- Monument
- Natural

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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Scale @ A3
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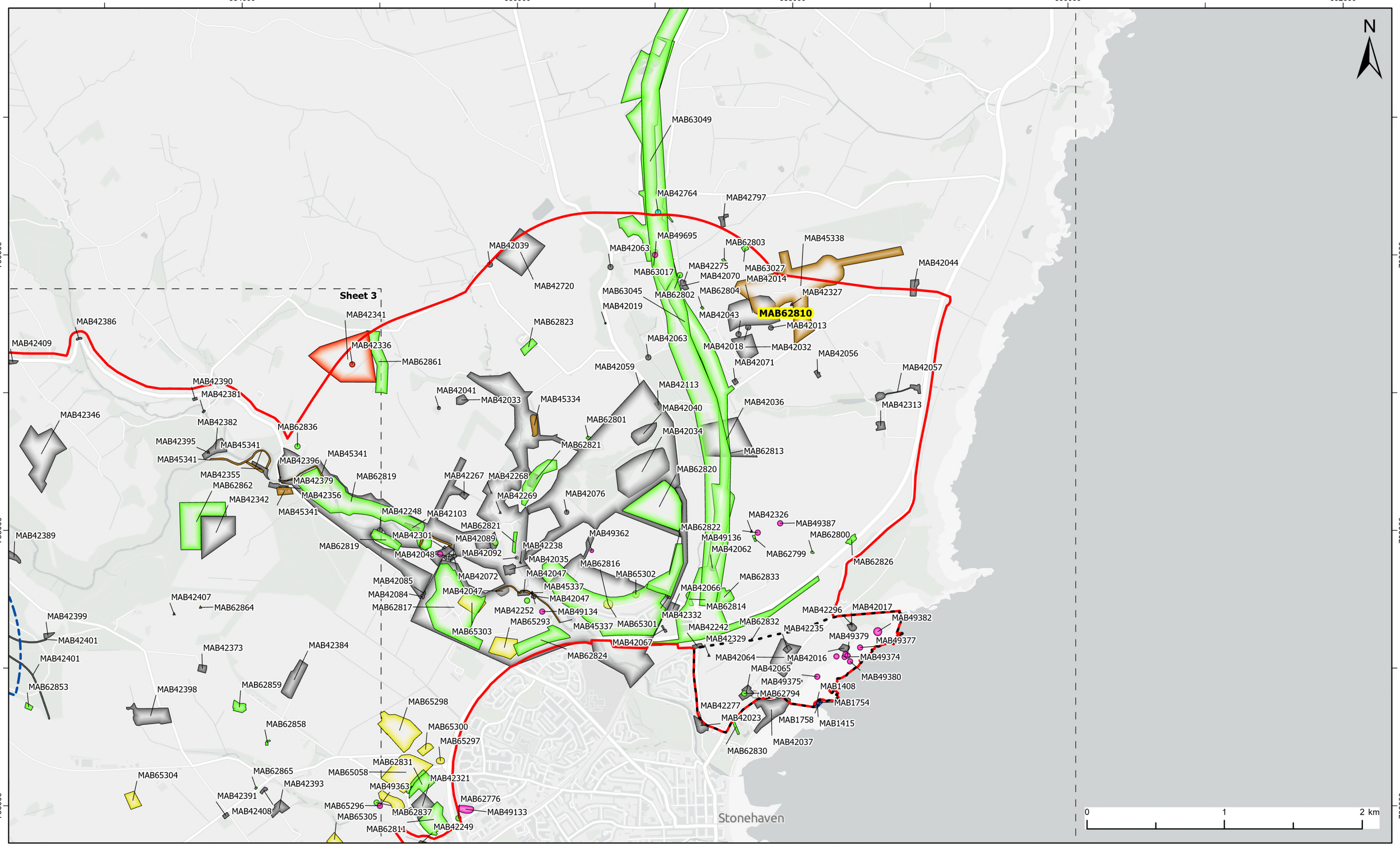
Figure Title:
Non-designated Heritage Assets within the Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Study Area (Sheet 1 of 4)

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0041

Figure 11.2



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Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Sheet Extent Boxes 1:20k
- MAB Air Crash Sites

Non-designated Heritage Asset

- Building
- Cropmark
- Document
- Earthwork
- Find Spot
- Maritime
- Monument
- Natural

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

Coordinate System: British National Grid

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Scale @ A3
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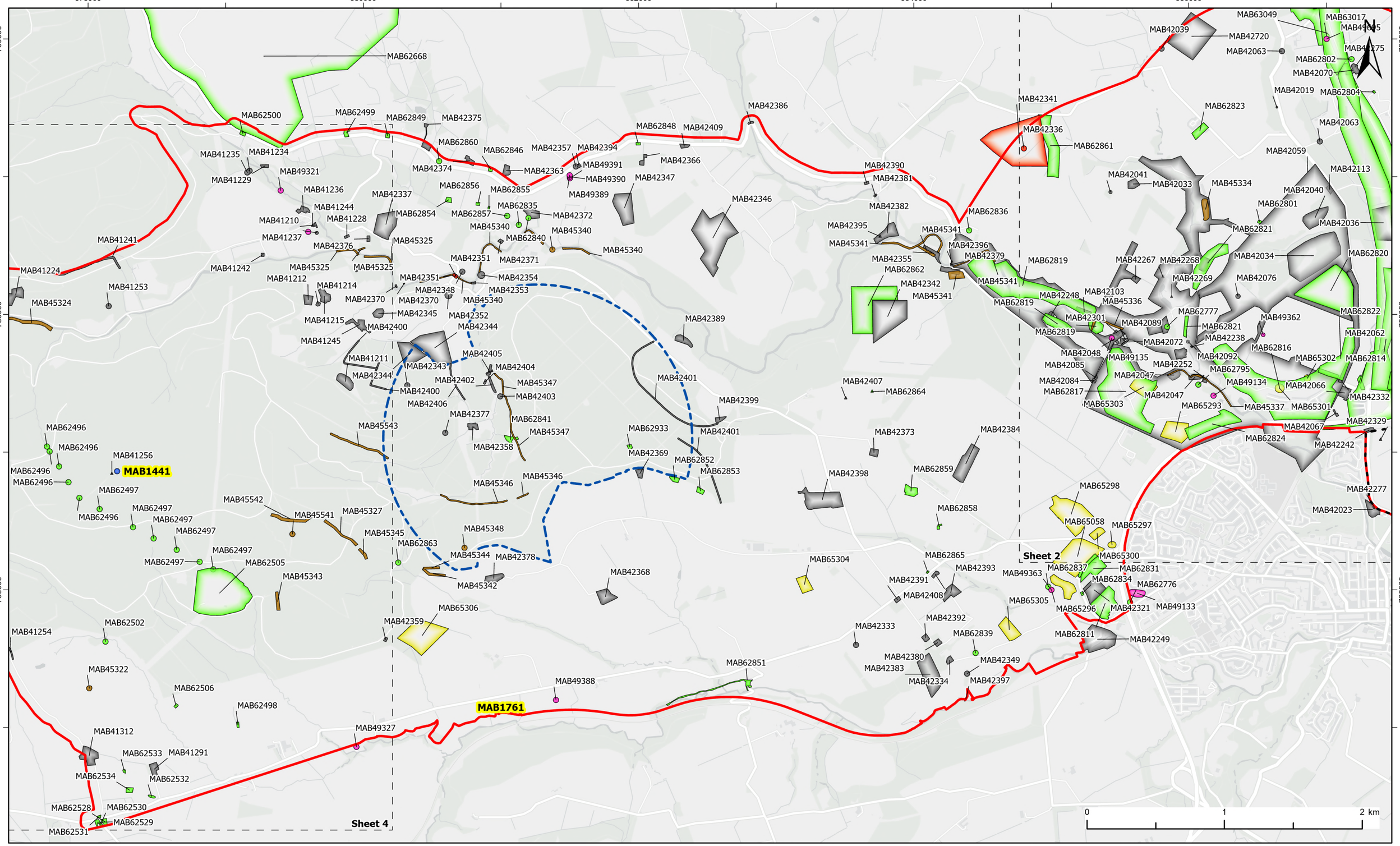
Figure Title:
Non-designated Heritage Assets within the Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Study Area (Sheet 2 of 4)

Project:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report:
Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0041

Figure 11.2



Haskoning
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Bellrock



Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Sheet Extent Boxes 1:20k
- MAB Air Crash Sites

Non-designated Heritage Asset

- Building
- Cropmark
- Document
- Earthwork
- Find Spot
- Maritime
- Monument

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

Coordinate System: British National Grid

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Scale @ A3
1:25,000

Figure Title:
Non-designated Heritage Assets within the Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Study Area (Sheet 3 of 4)

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0041

Figure 11.2

374000 376000 378000 380000 382000

788000 786000 784000

Sheet 3

N

MAB62668 MAB62500 MAB62499 MAB62849 MAB42375 MAB62848 MAB42409 MAB62860 MAB62846 MAB49389 MAB42394 MAB42366 MAB42374 MAB42363 MAB49391 MAB49390 MAB42347 MAB41235 MAB41234 MAB41229 MAB49321 MAB41236 MAB62856 MAB62855 MAB42337 MAB42346 MAB41244 MAB62854 MAB62857 MAB62835 MAB42372 MAB41210 MAB41237 MAB49322 MAB41228 MAB42376 MAB45340 MAB62840 MAB45340 MAB41241 MAB45325 MAB45340 MAB41242 MAB45325 MAB42351 MAB42371 MAB42370 MAB42351 MAB42354 MAB41247 MAB41224 MAB41212 MAB41214 MAB42348 MAB42353 MAB41239 MAB41253 MAB42370 MAB45340 MAB41233 MAB41223 MAB42345 MAB42352 MAB41238 MAB45326 MAB41215 MAB42400 MAB42344 MAB41240 MAB41232 MAB41250 MAB41245 MAB45324 MAB45324 MAB42389 MAB41211 MAB42405 MAB45324 MAB42343 MAB42404 MAB41230 MAB41251 MAB42344 MAB42388 MAB42403 MAB45324 MAB41217 MAB41230 MAB42400 MAB45347 MAB62503 MAB42406 MAB42401 MAB41218 MAB42402 MAB42399 MAB42377 MAB62841 MAB41615 MAB45543 MAB42401 MAB45347 MAB62496 MAB62496 MAB62933 MAB42358 MAB62496 MAB41256 MAB42369 MAB62852 MAB41246 MAB1441 MAB62853 MAB62496 MAB45346 MAB62497 MAB45346 MAB45542 MAB62496 MAB45541 MAB45327 MAB62497 MAB62497 MAB45345 MAB45348 MAB62497 MAB62863 MAB62497 MAB45344 MAB42378 MAB62505 MAB45343 MAB42368 MAB62504 MAB45342 MAB65306 MAB41254 MAB62502 MAB42359 MAB45322 MAB62851 MAB49388 MAB62506 MAB62498 MAB1761 MAB41312 MAB49327 MAB62533 MAB41291 MAB62534 MAB62532 MAB62528 MAB62530 MAB62529 MAB62531

0 1 2 km

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Edinburgh

Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Sheet Extent Boxes 1:20k
- MAB Air Crash Sites

Non-designated Heritage Asset

- Building
- Cropmark
- Document
- Earthwork
- Find Spot
- Maritime
- Monument

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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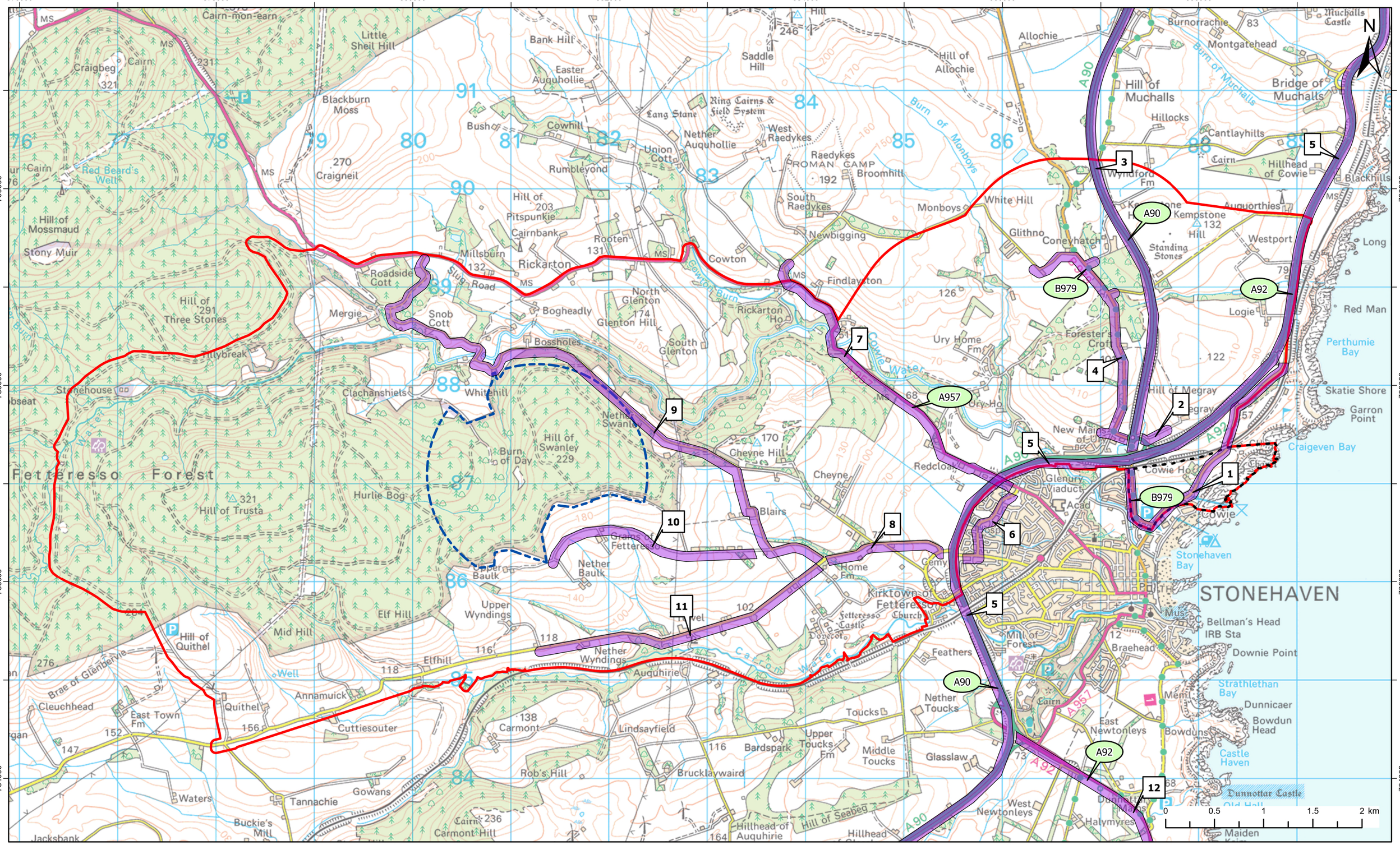
Figure Title:
Non-designated Heritage Assets within the Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Study Area (Sheet 4 of 4)

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0041

Figure 11.2





Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Boundary
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Links Forming the Initial Traffic and Transport Study Area

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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Figure Title:

Links Forming the Initial Traffic and Transport Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0042

Figure 12.1

386000
387000
388000
389000
788000
787000
786000
N
A90
A92
122
Hill of Megray
Burn
Glen Ury
Megray Burn
Megray Farm
The Neuk
Craigeven Bay
LM1
Cowie
Road
Maxie Burn
Bath Street
Stonehaven Bay
Ardluthe Road
0 100 200 300 400 500 Metres

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Bellrock

SCOTLAND
Edinburgh

Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Boundary
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- Noise Montioring Location Areas
- Residential Properties

REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR
1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

Coordinate System: British National Grid

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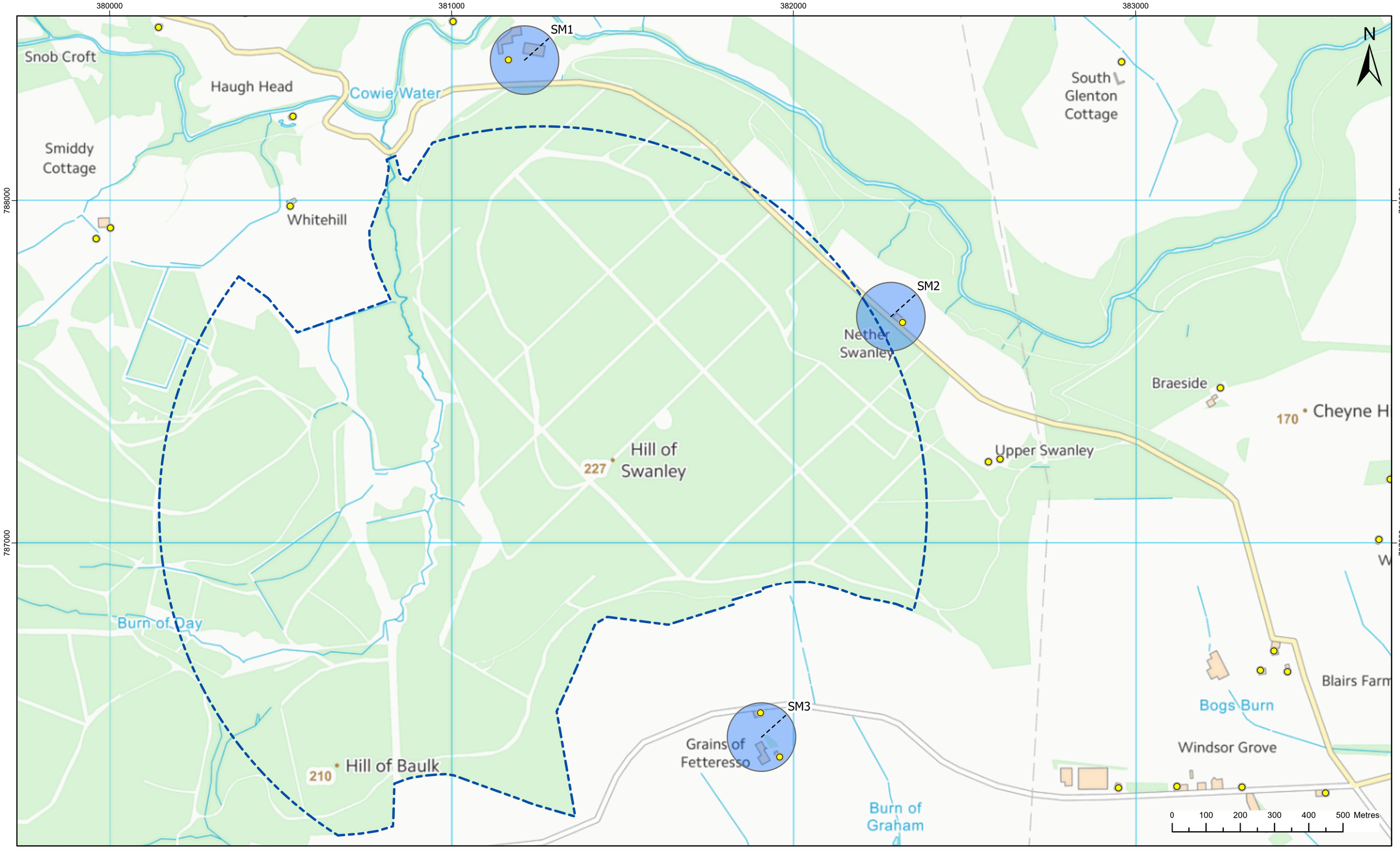
Figure Title:
Proposed Noise Monitoring Locations at the Preferred Landfall Area of Search

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0045

Figure 13.1



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Legend:
- Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Boundary
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Noise Montioring Location Areas
- Residential Properties

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1	21/10/2026	Final	DL	FML	BMcG

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1:10,000

Figure Title:
Proposed Noise Monitoring Locations at the Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0046

Figure 13.2

320000 340000 360000 380000 400000 420000 440000 460000

860000 840000 820000 800000

N

DT14 DT67 DT4 DT39 DT40 DT100 DT101 CM5 DT49 DT103 DT5 DT64 DT47 CM6 DT63 DT91 DT20 DT22 DT81 DT94 DT33 DT88 DT19 DT18 CM2 DT105 DT6 DT75 DT104 DT85 DT98 CM4 DT70 DT8 DT45 CM3 DT7 DT71 DT72

Aberdeen

FB/SS

PH/BH PH/MS

E/SM

I/BR I/TH I/MC I/GH

W/SR W/AM

0 5 10 km

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Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transition Development Area Scoping Boundary / Air Quality Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search
- ACC 2025 Non Automatic Monitoring NO2
- ACC 2025 Automatic Monitoring NO2
- Air Quality Management Area
- AC 2025 Diffusion Tube

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Figure Title:

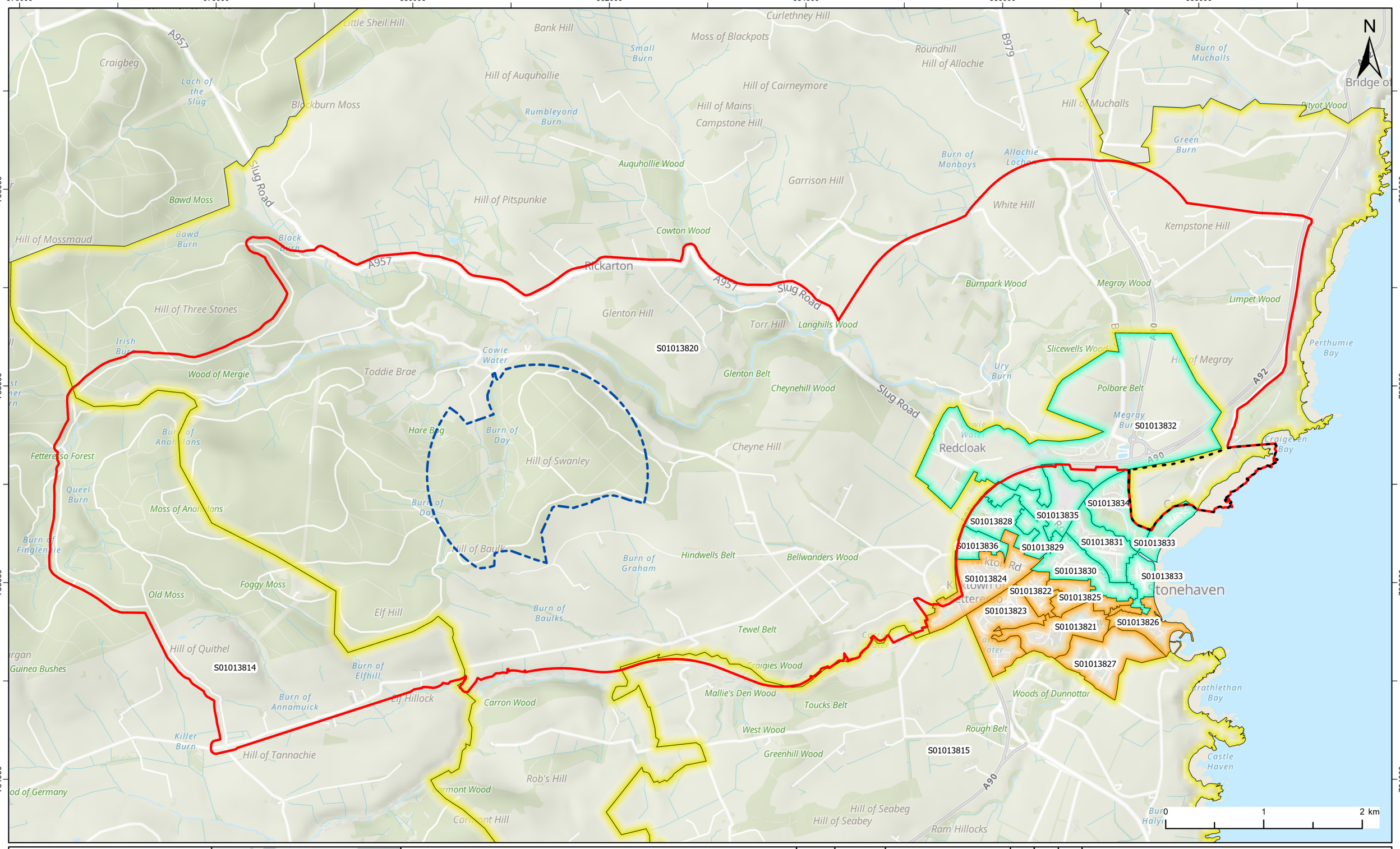
Air Quality Study Area and Existing Monitoring Locations

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0043

Figure 14.1



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Legend:

- Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Boundary / Human Health Study Area
- Preferred Onshore Substation Area of Search
- Preferred Landfall Area of Search

Data Zone Boundaries 2022

- Fetteresso, Netherley and Catter
- Stonehaven North
- Stonehaven South

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Scale @ A3
1:35,000

Figure Title:
Human Health Data Zones within the Human Health Study Area

Project: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)

Report: Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Scoping Report

Drawing No.: RHDV_BEL_CST_FGR_0244

Figure 18.1

Bellrock
OFFSHORE WIND

nadara

Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm

Onshore Transmission Development Area

Scoping Report – Volume 1

Appendix B: Mitigation and Monitoring Register

Date: October 2026

Document Number: RHDV_BEL_CST_REG_0002

Revision Number: 1

Classification: Public

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Revision History

Rev.	Prepared By	Checked By	Approved By	Date
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Glossary of Terminology

Term	Definition
Applicant	Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm Limited, the legal entity submitting the Planning Permission in Principle for the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area.
Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm (or the Bellrock Project)	An offshore wind farm capable of exporting up to 1.8 GW of renewable energy to the National Electricity Transmission System. The Wind Farm Development Area is located 120 km east of Stonehaven and will connect to the National Electricity Transmission System at the proposed SSEN Transmission Hurlie substation, west of Stonehaven in Aberdeenshire. The Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm comprises of the following Development Areas: ▪ Wind Farm Development Area; ▪ Offshore Transmission Development Area; and ▪ Onshore Transmission Development Area.
Bellrock OnTDA PPP Application Boundary	The boundary that will accompany the Planning Permission in Principle application following design refinement.
Bellrock OnTDA Scoping Boundary	The boundary used to define the extent of the environmental scoping exercise.
Decommissioning	The process of removing, dismantling, or otherwise making safe of the Onshore Transmission Infrastructure at the end of its operational life, together with any appropriate reinstatement of land, in accordance with the relevant regulatory requirements and an approved decommissioning strategy.
Development Area	For consenting purposes, the area for which separate consents and/or Marine Licence will be sought by the Applicant, comprising: ▪ Wind Farm Development Area; ▪ Offshore Transmission Development Area; and ▪ Onshore Transmission Development Area.
Embedded Mitigation	Measures incorporated into the project design or standard working practices to avoid or reduce environmental effects.
Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD)	A method of cable installation where the cable is drilled beneath a feature without the need for trenching.
Joint Bay	Underground structure constructed at intervals along the onshore export cable route to join sections of onshore export cables.
Landfall	The area in which the offshore export cables come ashore and transition between the offshore export cables and the onshore export cables. For the purpose of the Onshore Transmission Development Area, the landfall includes the area landward of Mean Low Water Springs.
Link Box	Underground chamber accessed by manhole, or an above ground cabinet located close to the onshore export cables, housing low voltage electrical earthing links and allowing periodic access for testing of the onshore export cables. A fence may be installed around the access manhole or link box for protection.
Mean Low Water Springs	The average, over a year, of the heights of two successive low waters during those periods of 24 hours (once every fortnight) when the range of the tide is greatest.

Term	Definition
Onshore export cable corridor	The planning application boundary within which the onshore export cables route will be located.
Onshore export cables	Electrical and fibre optic cables between the transition joint bay(s) at landfall to the onshore substation and onward to the Hurlie substation which may be laid directly within cable ducts or protective troughs.
Onshore substation (OnSS)	Onshore substation which will be fenced and house electrical equipment (such as transformers, reactive compensation equipment, harmonic filters, switchgear, and protection and control systems), thereby enabling renewable electricity from the wind farm to be received via the onshore export cables and exported to the National Electricity Transmission System.
Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA)	The boundary within which the Onshore Transmission Infrastructure will be constructed, operated and maintained, and decommissioned (and overlaps partially with the Offshore Transmission Development Area).
Onshore Transmission Infrastructure	Infrastructure located within the Onshore Transmission Development Area including transition joint bay(s); onshore export cables; onshore substation; temporary construction compounds; temporary working areas; environmental mitigation areas; drainage/irrigation infrastructure; access works; and any other associated infrastructure (including activities associated with the Onshore Transmission Infrastructure construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning).
Operation and Maintenance	Day-to-day supervision and monitoring of the Onshore Transmission Infrastructure. Preventative and corrective maintenance tasks to ensure the assets remain in good working order and prevent failures over the operational lifetime.
Transition joint bay	An underground structure at the landfall accessed by manhole or other means which accommodates the jointing of the offshore export cables and the onshore export cables. A fence may be installed around the access manhole for protection.
Trenchless technique	A trenchless technique is a subsurface construction method, such as horizontal directional drilling, which are used to install cables with minimal surface excavation.

Glossary of Abbreviations

Term	Definition
BEP	Biodiversity Enhancement Plan
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
DIA	Drainage Impact Assessment
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
HDD	Horizontal Directional Drilling
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
ISEP	Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals
MSC	Matters Specified in Conditions
NRMM	Non-Road Mobile Machinery
OnSS	Onshore Substation
OnTDA	Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area
PAD	Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries
PPP	Planning Permission in Principle
TCP	Tree Constraints Plan
TPP	Tree Protection Plan
WCPP	Woodland Compensatory Planting Plan
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation

1 Introduction

1. This Appendix presents the preliminary Mitigation and Monitoring Register for the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA) at the scoping stage. This Appendix summarises the proposed mitigation, monitoring, and management plans identified from the current project design and technical scoping assessments presented in **Chapters 5** to **19** of the **Bellrock OnTDA Scoping Report (Volume 1)**. The relevance of each mitigation measure to the individual technical scoping assessment is described within the respective technical chapters.

2. As the project design evolves, the mitigation measures may be refined and additional mitigation measures may be developed through the iterative design and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes, informed by stakeholder consultation, the Scoping Opinion and design development. An updated Mitigation and Monitoring Register will be included in support of the Bellrock OnTDA EIA Report.

3. As set out in Chapter 4: Approach to Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment of the **Bellrock OnTDA Scoping Report (Volume 1)**, the Bellrock OnTDA EIA Report will identify mitigation measures in accordance with the three types of mitigation defined by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA, now the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP), 2024):

   - **Primary mitigation:** Measures that are inherent components of the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Infrastructure and could include modifications to the location or design made during the pre-application phase (e.g. reduction in onshore substation (OnSS) design footprint to minimise landscape and visual effects);
   - **Secondary mitigation:** Measures that will require further activity to achieve the desired outcome. The effectiveness of these mitigation measures will be assessed within the Bellrock OnTDA EIA Report and an assessment of residual effects provided. Mitigation will be secured by a consent condition (e.g. the creation of new artificial bat roosts to replace a roost subject to loss or disturbance during construction); and
   - **Tertiary mitigation:** Measures that would occur with or without input from the EIA, such as actions undertaken to meet other existing legislative requirements, or actions that are standard practices used to manage commonly occurring environmental effects. These measures are treated as an inherent part of the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Infrastructure (e.g. development and adherence to management plans, such as a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)).

4. Primary and tertiary mitigation are considered to be ‘embedded’ mitigation as they are incorporated as part of the design of the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Infrastructure. The assessment of the likely significant environmental effects for the pre-mitigation scenario presented within the Bellrock OnTDA EIA Report will take embedded mitigation (i.e. primary and tertiary mitigation) into account in determining the magnitude of impact. Accordingly, the EIA should assume the delivery of both forms of mitigation. Effects that would otherwise occur in the absence of these embedded

mitigation measures are not considered potential effects, as their implementation removes the pathway through which such effects could arise (IEMA, 2024).

5. Following assessment of the likely significant effects of the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Infrastructure, any further mitigation measures (secondary mitigation) will be outlined within the individual chapters of the Bellrock OnTDA EIA Report.

6. An outline version of the following Management Plans will be submitted in support of the Planning Permission in Principle (PPP) Application. Full versions of these outline plans will be submitted as part of the subsequent Application for Approval of MSC:

- Outline Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP);
- Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP);
- Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP);
- Outline Drainage Impact Assessment (DIA);
- Outline Landscape Plan;
- Outline Peat Management Plan (if required);
- Outline Woodland Compensatory Planting Plan (WCPP); and
- Outline Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries (PAD).

7. In addition to the Management Plans mentioned above, full versions of the following additional plans will be submitted as part of the Application for Approval of MSC:

- Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare Strategy;
- Drilling Fluid Management Plan;
- Soil Management Plan; and
- Tree Constraints Plan (TCP)/Tree Protection Plan (TPP).

8. The outline and final versions of these management plans, submitted in support of the applications for PPP Application and Application for Approval of MSC, will be informed by advice from Aberdeenshire Council through the Scoping process and ongoing stakeholder consultation.

9. **Table 1.1** below provide a summary of the purpose of each of the management plans outlined above, which the Applicant commits to developing prior to construction.

10. Additional management plans may be prepared post-consent where required by the conditions of the Bellrock OnTDA PPP. The final suite of management plans and their associated content will be determined through the consenting process, taking account of the final project design and the requirements of the Bellrock OnTDA PPP.

Table 1.1: Overview of Management Plans to be Prepared to Support the Development of the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Infrastructure

Plan/Programme	Purpose	Timing of Management Plan Submission
Plans Submitted in Outline Form with the PPP Application, and then in Final Form with the Application for Approval of MSC		
Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP)	The BEP will set out measures to deliver biodiversity enhancement opportunities associated with the Bellrock OnTDA, taking account of local biodiversity priorities and habitat enhancement opportunities.	An Outline BEP will be submitted in support of the Bellrock OnTDA PPP Application. A final BEP will be submitted to Aberdeenshire Council for approval as part of the Application for Approval of MSC.
Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)	The CEMP will set out the framework for environmental management during construction of the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Infrastructure. The CEMP will include, or cross-reference as appropriate, measures relating to pollution prevention, soil handling, waste management, public rights of way management, emergency response procedures, environmental monitoring and construction best practice.	An Outline CEMP will be submitted in support of the Bellrock OnTDA PPP Application. A final CEMP will be submitted to Aberdeenshire Council for approval as part of the Application for Approval of MSC.
Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP)	The CTMP will set out measures to manage construction traffic associated with the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Infrastructure, including access arrangements, abnormal load deliveries, traffic management measures, vehicle routing and community liaison procedures.	An Outline CTMP will be submitted in support of the Bellrock OnTDA PPP Application. A final CTMP will be submitted to Aberdeenshire Council for approval as part of the Application for Approval of MSC.
Drainage Impact Assessment (DIA)	The DIA will set out the construction and operational drainage strategy for the Onshore Transmission Infrastructure, including details of runoff rates, drainage layout, outfall locations and water attenuation layout and requirements.	An Outline DIA will be submitted in support of the Bellrock OnTDA PPP Application. A final DIA will be submitted to Aberdeenshire Council for approval as part of the Application for Approval of MSC.
Landscape Plan	The Landscape Plan will set out landscape mitigation, planting proposals, habitat reinstatement measures, long-term management requirements and any tree protection measures associated with the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Infrastructure.	An Outline Landscape Plan will be submitted in support of the Bellrock OnTDA PPP Application. A final Landscape Plan will be submitted to Aberdeenshire Council for approval as part of the Application for Approval of MSC.
Peat Management Plan (if required)	The Peat Management Plan will set out measures to minimise potential impacts to sensitive peat habitat. The plan will include details for soil protection, soil handling, soil use and soil remediation for peaty soils.	An Outline Peat Management Plan will be prepared in accordance with any consent requirements and will be submitted to Aberdeenshire Council for approval as part of the Application for Approval of MSC, if required.

Plan/Programme	Purpose	Timing of Management Plan Submission
Woodland Compensatory Planting Plan (WCPP)	The WCPP will set out measures to deliver compensatory planting required for the delivery of the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Infrastructure, to mitigate for woodland removal required during the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Infrastructure's construction and operation.	An Outline WCPP will be submitted in support of the Bellrock OnTDA PPP Application. A final WCPP will be submitted to Aberdeenshire Council for approval as part of the Application for Approval of MSC.
Outline Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and Protocol for Archaeological Discoveries (PAD).	The WSI and PAD will describe the measures that will be implemented during construction and operatiin and maintenance to avoid or minimise adverse effects on archaeological and cultural heritage receptors, including procedures for recording, reporting and managing unexpected discoveries.	An Outline WSI and PAD will be submitted in support of the Bellrock OnTDA PPP Application. A final WSI and PAD will be submitted to Aberdeenshire Council for approval as part of the Application for Approval of MSC.
Plans Submitted as Final Versions with the Application for Approval of MSC		
Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare Strategy	The Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare Strategy will set out the proposed approach for decommissioning the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Infrastructure, including environmental mitigation, infrastructure removal and site restoration measures.	A final Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare Strategy will be prepared in accordance with any consent conditions and submitted at the appropriate stage of the project lifecycle.
Drilling Fluid Management Plan	The Drilling Fluid Management Plan will consider breakout of drilling fluids or muds that could be released to the environment. The Drilling Fluid Management Plan will document how risks of any fluid breakouts will be reduced, and in the event of an outbreak from trenchless construction works, how any breakout will be managed and mitigated.	A final Drilling Fluid Management Plan will be prepared in accordance with any consent requirements and will be submitted to Aberdeenshire Council for approval as part of the Application for Approval of MSC.
Soil Management Plan	The Soil Management Plan will set out measures to ensure appropriate management of soils during construction. This will include details on the correct excavation, storage and reinstatement procedures for all land subject to construction activities.	A final Soil Management Plan will be prepared in accordance with any consent requirements and will be submitted to Aberdeenshire Council for approval as part of the Application for Approval of MSC.
Tree Constraints Plan (TCP)/Tree Protection Plan (TPP)	The TCP and TPP will set out the trees to be subject to protection and management during construction, including any required stand-off distances and protection measures.	A final TCP and TPP will be prepared in accordance with any consent conditions and will be submitted to Aberdeenshire Council for approval as part of the Application for Approval of MSC.

2 Mitigation and Monitoring Measures

11. **Table 2.1** presents the preliminary embedded mitigation measures identified for the Bellrock OnTDA at the Scoping stage. Consistent with the mitigation hierarchy (IEMA, 2024), the register currently includes primary (inherent design measures) and tertiary (standard good practice) mitigation measures that are embedded within the project design and have, therefore, been considered in the scoping assessments. Secondary mitigation measures will be identified, where required, through the EIA process and informed by the outcomes of the preliminary impact assessments

12. The embedded mitigation measures presented in **Table 2.1** may be refined as the project design evolves, and additional embedded mitigation measures may also be developed through the iterative design and EIA processes, informed by stakeholder consultation and the Scoping Opinion. As such, the Mitigation and Monitoring Register is a live document and will be updated throughout the EIA process, with an updated register presented within the Bellrock OnTDA EIA Report.

13. Further details on the relevance of each mitigation measure to the individual technical assessments are provided within the respective Chapters 5 to 19 of the **Bellrock OnTDA Scoping Report (Volume 1).**

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Table 2.1: Mitigation and Monitoring Measures for the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area

Project Phase			Mitigation and Monitoring Measure	EIA Topic															Mitigation Type (Primary or Tertiary)
Construction	Operation and Maintenance	Decommissioning		Landscape and Visual Impact (Chapter 5)	Geology and Ground Conditions (Chapter 6)	Hydrology and Flood Risk (Chapter 7)	Land Use and Agriculture (Chapter 8)	Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation (Chapter 9)	Onshore Ornithology (Chapter 10)	Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage (Chapter 11)	Traffic and Transport (Chapter 12)	Noise and Vibration (Chapter 13)	Air Quality (Chapter 14)	Socioeconomics, Tourism and Recreation (Chapter 15)	Greenhouse Gas Assessment (Chapter 16)	Climate Change Risk Assessment (Chapter 17)	Human Health (Chapter 18)	Major Accidents and Disasters (Chapter 19)	
✓	✓	X	Site selection was informed by the Bellrock OnTDA Design Principles and included consideration of sensitive receptors.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		Primary
X	X	✓	Production of a Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare Strategy.	✓			✓		✓	✓							✓	✓	Tertiary
✓	X	X	Development of and adherence to a CEMP.	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	Tertiary
✓	✓	X	Development of and adherence to a Landscape Plan.	✓						✓									Tertiary
X	✓	X	Consideration of offsite landscaping.	✓															Primary
✓	X	X	Production of Hydrogeological Risk Assessments, if required.		✓	✓													Tertiary
✓	X	X	Production of a contaminated land and groundwater scheme, if required.		✓														Tertiary
✓	X	X	in areas where the onshore export cable corridor is required to cross natural watercourses, where trenchless techniques are proposed to be used, a buffer zone of at least 10 m between the watercourse and any above ground works will be retained, except at locations of crossings of the Cowie and Ury Burns, where the buffer zone will be at least 15 m. In other areas of the Bellrock OnTDA, the Applicant will look to retain a precautionary 50 m buffer zone between above ground works and natural watercourses, where practicable.			✓												Tertiary
✓	X	X	Wheel washing is carried out in a designated area of hardstanding prior to entering the public highway.			✓													Tertiary
✓	X	X	Adherence to measures to intercept sediment runoff at source.			✓													Primary
✓	X	X	Use of textile site fencing at the toe of the slope, where appropriate.			✓													Primary
✓	X	X	Routing of drainage through the site drainage system, where practicable.			✓													Primary
✓	X	X	Minimise amount of time stripped ground and soil stockpiles are exposed prior to seeding or covering.			✓													Tertiary
✓	X	X	Temporary works areas (e.g. construction compounds and trenchless crossing areas) within the Bellrock OnTDA will comprise hardstanding of permeable material where practicable.			✓													Tertiary
✓	✓	X	Appropriate capture and treatment of water prior to discharge under an Environmental Authorisation.			✓													Primary

Project Phase			Mitigation and Monitoring Measure	EIA Topic															Mitigation Type (Primary or Tertiary)
Construction	Operation and Maintenance	Decommissioning		Landscape and Visual Impact (Chapter 5)	Geology and Ground Conditions (Chapter 6)	Hydrology and Flood Risk (Chapter 7)	Land Use and Agriculture (Chapter 8)	Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation (Chapter 9)	Onshore Ornithology (Chapter 10)	Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage (Chapter 11)	Traffic and Transport (Chapter 12)	Noise and Vibration (Chapter 13)	Air Quality (Chapter 14)	Socioeconomics, Tourism and Recreation (Chapter 15)	Greenhouse Gas Assessment (Chapter 16)	Climate Change Risk Assessment (Chapter 17)	Human Health (Chapter 18)	Major Accidents and Disasters (Chapter 19)	
✓	X	X	Diversion of clean water away from the area of construction work.			✓													Tertiary
✓	X	X	Avoidance of known mapped flood likelihood events for storage of construction materials and equipment, where possible.			✓													Primary
✓	X	X	Development of and adherence to a Drilling Fluid Management Plan.			✓													Tertiary
✓	X	X	Development of and adherence to a Soil Management Plan.				✓						✓						Tertiary
✓	X	X	Development of and adherence to a CTMP.				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	Tertiary
✓	✓	✓	Selection of access routes to make best use of the existing highway network.				✓				✓								Tertiary
✓	X	X	Production of a DIA.			✓										✓			Tertiary
✓	✓	X	Link boxes and cable joint bays will be located as close to field boundaries as possible.				✓												Primary
X	✓	X	Onshore export cables will be designed to minimise thermal losses and maintain cable temperatures within acceptable operating limits.				✓												Primary
✓	✓	X	Transition joint bay(s), joint bays and onshore export cables will be located underground.				✓												Primary
✓	X	X	Where obstacles such as watercourses cannot be crossed by a trench, trenchless techniques (e.g. Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD)) will be used for onshore export cable installation.			✓		✓			✓								Primary
✓	✓	✓	Trenchless techniques (e.g. HDD) will be utilised at landfall to install underground ducting (or other conduit) between the onshore entry point and the offshore exit point (the latter being seaward of Mean Low Water Springs).					✓											Primary
✓	✓	✓	Post-construction monitoring surveys will be undertaken following land reinstatement.					✓											Tertiary
✓	X	✓	The working width required for hedgerow removal will be kept to a minimum.					✓											Primary
X	✓	X	Permanent external operational lighting will only be required within the OnSS.					✓											Primary
✓	✓	✓	Development of and adherence to a BEP.					✓											Tertiary
✓	✓	✓	Development of and adherence to a WCPP.					✓											Tertiary

Project Phase			Mitigation and Monitoring Measure	EIA Topic														Mitigation Type (Primary or Tertiary)
Construction	Operation and Maintenance	Decommissioning		Landscape and Visual Impact (Chapter 5)	Geology and Ground Conditions (Chapter 6)	Hydrology and Flood Risk (Chapter 7)	Land Use and Agriculture (Chapter 8)	Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation (Chapter 9)	Onshore Ornithology (Chapter 10)	Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage (Chapter 11)	Traffic and Transport (Chapter 12)	Noise and Vibration (Chapter 13)	Air Quality (Chapter 14)	Socioeconomics, Tourism and Recreation (Chapter 15)	Greenhouse Gas Assessment (Chapter 16)	Climate Change Risk Assessment (Chapter 17)	Human Health (Chapter 18)	Major Accidents and Disasters (Chapter 19)	
✓	X	X	Construction lighting will be controlled, as set out in the CEMP, to minimise light spill onto sensitive habitats.					✓	✓									Tertiary
✓	X	X	An Ecological Clerk of Works will supervise ecologically sensitive activities during construction.					✓	✓									Tertiary
✓	X	X	All excavations left open overnight will include an escape ramp with adequate grip, at least 30 cm wide and set at an angle of no greater than 45° and fences will be used when the construction site is not manned.					✓										Tertiary
✓	X	X	Pre-construction ecology surveys will be undertaken prior to the commencement of any works where relevant.					✓										Tertiary
✓	X	X	Peat probing surveys will be conducted should the Bellrock OnTDA overlap with areas of carbon-rich soils (i.e. Class 1, 2, 3 or 5) (Scotland's Soils, 2016).					✓										Tertiary
✓	✓	✓	Following relevant industry guidance and best practice, whilst ensuring compliance with applicable national and international legislation.			✓			✓							✓		✓	Tertiary
✓	X	✓	Development of and adherence to a WSI and PAD.							✓									Tertiary
✓	✓	X	The OnSS will be designed and maintained in accordance with recognised industry good practice and relevant standards.									✓							Primary
✓	X	X	Core project working hours (excluding those at the landfall) are proposed to avoid night-time working and will generally be between 07:00 and 19:00 Monday to Friday and 07:00 and 12:00 on Saturdays. Deviations from these hours may occur for critical activities, non-noise-generating works, 24-hour operations where required, or in response to safety or emergency situations.									✓					✓		Primary
✓	X	✓	Adherence to measures to manage emissions from Non-road Mobile Machinery in line with best practice.										✓						Tertiary
✓	✓	✓	Engage with potential suppliers to build local supply chain capacity.											✓					Tertiary
✓	✓	✓	Collaborate with local and national agencies on enterprise and skills development programmes to train and upskill the workforce.											✓					Tertiary
✓	✓	✓	Adherence to Environmental Management System ISO14001.												✓				Tertiary
X	✓	X	Implementation of a Gas Leakage Monitoring and Detection System, if SF_6 containing equipment is required.												✓				Tertiary

Project Phase			Mitigation and Monitoring Measure	EIA Topic															Mitigation Type (Primary or Tertiary)
Construction	Operation and Maintenance	Decommissioning		Landscape and Visual Impact (Chapter 5)	Geology and Ground Conditions (Chapter 6)	Hydrology and Flood Risk (Chapter 7)	Land Use and Agriculture (Chapter 8)	Onshore Ecology and Nature Conservation (Chapter 9)	Onshore Ornithology (Chapter 10)	Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage (Chapter 11)	Traffic and Transport (Chapter 12)	Noise and Vibration (Chapter 13)	Air Quality (Chapter 14)	Socioeconomics, Tourism and Recreation (Chapter 15)	Greenhouse Gas Assessment (Chapter 16)	Climate Change Risk Assessment (Chapter 17)	Human Health (Chapter 18)	Major Accidents and Disasters (Chapter 19)	
✓	✓	✓	The design of the Onshore Transmission Infrastructure will be undertaken in accordance with applicable engineering standards and good practice guidance in relation to climate resilience requirements.													✓			Tertiary
X	✓	X	The use of three single-core (trefoil arrangement) high-voltage, metal sheathed cables and the burial of cables to a suitable depth.														✓		Primary

3 References

Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (2024). Implementing the Mitigation Hierarchy from Concept to Construction. August 2024. Available at: https://www.iema.net/media/oone2qce/iema-mitigation-in-eia-guidance-final.pdf

Scotland's Soils (2016). Carbon and Peatland 2016 map. Available at: https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/thematic-maps/carbon-and-peatland-2016-map/



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Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm

Onshore Transmission Development Area

Scoping Report – Volume 1

Appendix C – Interim Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Date: October 2026

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Rev.	Prepared By	Checked By	Approved By	Date
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Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm - Onshore Transmission Development Area

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal – Interim Report

Date: 08 October 2026

Control Sheet

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Executive Summary

Cura Terrae Land and Nature Ltd was commissioned by the Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm (herein the 'Bellrock Project') to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) for the Bellrock Project Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA). The OnTDA is the area within which the Bellrock Project Onshore Transmission Infrastructure will be located and includes the Cowie to Hurlie substation onshore export cable corridor, landfall and onshore substation (OnSS). The aim of the appraisal is to establish the baseline ecological conditions including the habitats present and any evidence of protected or notable species which may be affected by the Bellrock Project Onshore Transmission Infrastructure.

Garron Point Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a statutory designated site, is situated along the eastern site boundary, as well as the Muchalls to Stonehaven Bay Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS). There are small areas of ancient and native woodland within and adjacent to the site.

The following UKHab primary habitats were identified within the site: regionally important maritime cliffs, littoral rock, other native hedgerow, a burn, Holcus Juncus neutral grassland, lines of trees, and gorse/willow/mixed scrub; and site-important other neutral grassland, coniferous woodland, arable land/cereal cropland, modified grassland, bracken, non-native hedgerow, buildings and drainage ditches. Holcus Juncus grassland is a potential Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystem (GWDTE).

Invasive non-native species (INNS) were identified within the site and comprised Rhododendron, garden/hybrid bluebell, buddleia, Japanese rose, montbretia, cotoneaster and sea buckthorn.

Field evidence of badger, red squirrel, pine marten, brown hare, reptiles, barn owl, common frog, and invertebrates was recorded during the survey. No field evidence of bats, otter, water vole, fish, Scottish wildcat or hedgehog was recorded during the survey, however, suitable habitat for these species is present on site and in the surrounding habitats.

The following further targeted surveys are recommended for the Bellrock Project:

- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment;
- National Vegetation Classification (NVC) survey;
- Bat Activity Surveys on three buildings on site assessed as offering low potential to host roosting bats if works are required within 30 m. In addition, aerial inspections of trees within the site and 30 m of the site boundary which were assessed as containing bat potential roost features (PRFs). Static detector surveys and night-time bat walkovers (NBW) are also recommended in suitable bat habitats;
- Red squirrel survey;
- Pine marten survey;
- Reptile survey;
- Breeding bird surveys, raptor surveys and targeted nightjar survey;
- Otter and water vole survey and fish habitat assessment; and
- Northern brown argus survey.

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K INNS Survey Plan

L Faunal Survey Plan

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Glossary

Term	Definition
Biodiversity Net Gain	An approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a measurably better state than before development.
Designated site	An area formally identified for nature conservation because of its ecological, geological or landscape interest.
Ecological connectivity	The extent to which habitats are linked, enabling species to move between them.
Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystem	A terrestrial ecosystem whose structure and function depend substantially on groundwater.
Habitat condition	A measure of habitat quality assessed against criteria for the relevant habitat type.
Important Ecological Feature	A designated site, habitat, species or species group considered sufficiently important to require assessment.
Invasive non-native species	A species introduced outside its native range that may spread and cause ecological, environmental or economic harm.
Onshore Transmission Development Area	The area within which the Bellrock Project's onshore transmission infrastructure will be located.
Potential Roost Feature	A feature in a tree or structure that could provide suitable conditions for roosting bats.
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	An initial assessment used to establish baseline ecological conditions, identify constraints and recommend further survey or assessment.
Red-line boundary	The mapped boundary defining the site or application area under consideration.
Survey area	The site together with any additional buffer or connected habitat included within the scope of a survey.
UK Habitat Classification	A hierarchical system used to identify, classify and map habitats in the United Kingdom.

Units and Acronyms

Unit or acronym	Meaning	Unit or acronym	Meaning
ACIEEM	Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management	MCIEEM	Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
AWI	Ancient Woodland Inventory	MLWS	Mean Low Water Springs
BCT	Bat Conservation Trust	MMU	Minimum Mapping Unit
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain	NESBiP	North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership
BOCC	Birds of Conservation Concern	NESBReC	North East Scotland Biological Records Centre
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management	NPF4	National Planning Framework 4

Unit or acronym	Meaning	Unit or acronym	Meaning
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report	NVC	National Vegetation Classification
EPS	European Protected Species	NWSS	Native Woodland Survey of Scotland
FAR	Further Assessment Required	OnSS	Onshore substation
FWT	Functional Wetland Typology	OnTDA	Onshore Transmission Development Area
GW	gigawatt	PEA	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
GWDTE	Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystem	PRF	Potential Roost Feature
HVAC	High Voltage Alternating Current	SAC	Special Area of Conservation
HVDC	High Voltage Direct Current	SBL	Scottish Biodiversity List
IEF	Important Ecological Feature	SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
IIA	Important Invertebrate Area	SPA	Special Protection Area
INNS	Invasive non-native species	SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature	SSEN	Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks
km	kilometre	SSRS	Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels
LEPO	Long-Established woodland of plantation origin	TN	Target Note
LNCS	Local Nature Conservation Site	UKHab	UK Habitat Classification
m	metre	WANE	Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011
m^2	square metre	WCA	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Terms of Reference

Cura Terrae Land and Nature Limited was commissioned by Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm Limited to conduct a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at a site referred to as Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm (herein the 'Bellrock Project') Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA).

The OnTDA is defined as the area delineated by the red line boundary as shown in **Appendix A**. The 'Survey Area' comprises the OnTDA with an additional a 50 m buffer for most protected species and extended buffers applied to watercourses (200 m) and mobile species where required, as outlined in **Section 2**. **It should be noted that this is an interim report and the full extent of the Survey Area has not yet been surveyed due to land access constraints.**

The observations and recommendations in this document relate to the OnTDA boundary as provided by Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm Limited at the time of the survey.

1.2 Scope of Report

The aim of the study is to establish a baseline ecological assessment of the OnTDA to inform Scoping of the Environmental Impact Assessment for the development of the Bellrock Project. The objectives were as follows:

- Conduct a desk study to gather previously recorded ecological data relating to the Survey Area;
- Categorise and map the broad habitats present on the site and assess their condition;
- Search for field evidence of a range of protected or notable species which may frequent the Survey Area;
- Identify suitable habitat for protected or notable species in the Survey Area;
- Evaluate the habitats and species applicable to site against geographic levels of importance; and
- Make recommendations for any potential further surveys to inform the proposed Bellrock Project and/or species licensing requirements.

1.3 Site Description

The Site Location Plan can be found in **Appendix A**. The site is located to the north and north-west of Stonehaven in Aberdeenshire. It predominantly comprises lowland agricultural fields and commercial forestry plantation. Five watercourses traverse the site, namely the Cowie Water, Ury Burn, Megray Burn, Burn of Day and Burn of Baulk. Additional smaller field and forestry drains are also present within agricultural fields and Fetteresso Forest. The A90 and A92 pass through the OnTDA, alongside several smaller A and B-class roads.

The surrounding landscape is characterised primarily by agricultural land. The town of Stonehaven lies directly to the south of the landfall Area of Search at Cowie. The western extent of the OnTDA is located within Fetteresso Forest.

1.4 Project Description

The Bellrock Project is a proposed floating offshore wind farm located in the North Sea off the east coast of Aberdeenshire, Scotland. The Bellrock Project is being developed by Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm Limited, owned solely by Nadara.

The Bellrock Project will generate and transmit renewable electricity, exporting up to 1.8 gigawatts (GW) to the National Electricity Transmission System via Scottish and Southern Energy Transmission's (SSEN Transmission) proposed Hurlie substation in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. The Bellrock Project is in the process of preparing an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA Report) in support of an application for planning permission in principle for the OnTDA, which is planned to be submitted to Aberdeenshire Council towards the end of 2027. Survey data is being collected during 2026/2027 to inform the EIA Report.

The Bellrock OnTDA comprises all Onshore Transmission Infrastructure landward of Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) required to connect the Bellrock Project to the National Electricity Transmission System. This includes:

- **Landfall:** located at Cowie, Aberdeenshire, where between two and six ducts are installed using trenchless techniques, allowing the offshore export cables to be brought ashore and connected to onshore export cables within the transition joint bay;
- **Onshore export cables:** up to six underground High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) or High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) onshore cable circuits, each up to 18 km in length, installed between landfall and the onshore substation
- **Onshore substation (OnSS):** electrical equipment (such as converters, transformers, switchgear, and protection and control systems) enabling renewable electricity from the Bellrock Wind Farm Development Area received via the onshore export cables to be exported to the National Electricity Transmission System, and ancillary infrastructure; and
- **Hurlie substation connection works**: infrastructure between the Bellrock OnSS to (and within) the Hurlie substation to connect the Onshore Transmission Infrastructure to the National Electricity Transmission System.

2 METHOD

2.1 Desk Study

To identify potential ecological sensitivities associated with the OnTDA, a desk study was undertaken in April 2026, prior to the field survey commencing. The following sources were reviewed:

- North East Scotland Biological Records Centre (NESBReC) biological records[1] for protected and notable species and non-statutory designated sites within a 2 km radius of the site;
- North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership (NESBiP)[2] for Local Priority Habitats and Species;
- NatureScot Sitelink website[3] for statutory designated sites up to 5 km from the site;
- Records of ancient woodland and native woodland available through Scotland's Environment Web[4], within or adjacent to the site;
- The Scottish Biodiversity List (SBL)[42] for Priority Habitats and Species;
- Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels (SSRS) interactive sightings map for recent sightings of red squirrel within 2 km of the site;
- Scotland's Carbon and Peatland map available at Scotland's Environment Web[4] for areas of peatland within the site;
- A search for Buglife, B-Lines and Important Invertebrate Areas (IIA) within 2 km of the site; and
- Aerial imagery from Google Earth[5].

2.2 Field Survey

The survey was undertaken between the 13th and 15th of April and 24th June 2026 led by EnviroCentre Ecologists, who are associate members of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (ACIEEM). The results of the survey have been technically reviewed by full members (MCIEEM).

The surveys were designed in accordance with guidance endorsed by NatureScot and CIEEM[6] and focussed on plants and habitats present within the site, as well as faunal species considered most likely to occur within the

[1] NESBReC data search conducted 15th April 2026. Available at: https://nesbrec.org.uk/services/ (Assessed April 2026)
[2] Available at: https://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/ (Accessed 02/04/2026)
[3] Available at: https://sitelink.nature.scot/map (Accessed 02/04/2026)
[4] Available at: https://www.environment.gov.scot/maps/scotlands-environment-map/ (Accessed 02/04/2026)
[5] Available at: https://www.google.com/earth/ (Accessed 02/04/2026)
[6] CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. 2nd edition. available at: https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Guidelines-for-Preliminary-Ecological-Appraisal-Jan2018-1.pdf

habitats present across the site and surrounding landscape. Weather conditions during the survey were as follows:

- 13 and 14 April: Dry and sunny with 15% cloud cover, wind gusts up to 20 mph, and an average air temperature of 9°C;
- 15 April: Overcast with 100% cloud cover, light showers from 13:30, wind gusts up to 25 mph, and an average air temperature of 11°C; and
- 24 June: Dry and sunny with clear skies, a light breeze, and an average temperature of 17°C.

This following section provides details of the survey methodologies adopted for the Survey Areas described in **Table 2-1**. Survey buffers are shown in **Appendix L**. Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) and beaver (*Castor fiber*) were not considered further in this assessment, as the site is located outside their known distribution and there is an absence of biological records and or suitable habitat[7].

Table 2-1: Survey Areas

Habitat/Species/Species Group	Survey Area (where accessible)
Habitats	OnTDA
Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE)	OnTDA + up to 250 m buffer
Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)	OnTDA + 50 m buffer
Bats (*Chiroptera spp.*)	OnTDA + 50 m buffer
Otter (*Lutra lutra*)	OnTDA + watercourses up to a 200 m buffer
Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibius*)	OnTDA + watercourses up to a 200 m buffer
Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*)	OnTDA + 50 m buffer
Pine Marten (*Martes martes*)	OnTDA + 100 m buffer
Scottish Wildcat (*Felis sylvestris*)	OnTDA + 200 m buffer
Badger (*Meles meles*)	OnTDA + 100 m buffer
West European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)	OnTDA + 50 m buffer
Brown Hare (*Lepus europaeus*)	OnTDA + 50 m buffer
Birds	OnTDA + 50 m buffer
Amphibians	OnTDA + 50 m buffer
Reptiles	OnTDA + 50 m buffer
Invertebrates	OnTDA
Fish Habitat Suitability	OnTDA + watercourses up to a 200 m buffer
Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*)	OnTDA + watercourses up to a 200 m buffer

[7] Based on professional judgement.

2.2.1 UKHab Survey

A UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) survey was undertaken in accordance with the relevant user manual[8]. UKHab provides a hierarchical framework for the rapid recording and classification of habitats using satellite imagery and field survey. The system comprises five levels of Primary Habitat classification which include ecosystems, broad habitats, priority habitats and Annex I habitats, along with non-hierarchical secondary codes which provide additional information on the environment, management and origin of primary habitats. These secondary codes can also be used to map habitat mosaics and identify notable species features. The information collected is used to identify ecologically sensitive features and habitats, inform the need for relevant species surveys, and support the recommendation of mitigation and enhancement measures in relation to the proposed development.

The survey was undertaken using the UKHab Professional Edition with a Minimum Mapping Unit (MMU) of 400 m^2 reflecting the large size of the site. The survey aimed to classify habitats up to level five where possible. Where level fife classification could not be determined, or where it was not considered representative of the habitat due to the absence of indicative species, habitats were classified to level four or the broader level three habitat category.

The DAFOR scale (Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional, Rare) is used in text to describe the relative abundance of vegetative species recorded within each UKHab habitat.

The information collected was used to identify ecologically sensitive features and habitats and inform the need for relevant species surveys.

Where appropriate, UKHab symbology shown on maps may be amended to improve clarity.

2.2.2 Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems

The Functional Wetland Typology[9] was used to support the identification of wetland habitats that derive their water from groundwater and surface water. This information assists in determining whether further surveys are required to establish the presence and potential sensitivity of Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs). To inform the assessment of groundwater dependency, observations were made of local topography, underlying geology, and relevant features including springs, diffuse ground water emergence and floristic indicators of base enrichment.

[8] UKHab Ltd (20230). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at: https://www.ukhab.org) (Accessed April 2026)
[9] SNIFFER (2009) *WFD95: A Functional Wetland Typology for Scotland - Field Survey Manual. Version 1*. ISBN: 978-1-906934-22-4

2.2.3 Habitat Condition Assessment

For the purpose of informing future Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessments, the baseline habitats on site were assessed using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric[10] in accordance with the user guide[11] and supporting documentation[12].

Habitat Condition is a measure of habitat quality, based on the biodiversity value of habitat relative to other habitats of the same type.

Most baseline habitats are assigned a result of Good, Moderate or Poor based on the scoring instructions provided within the condition criteria set out in the technical supplement.

Certain habitats are allocated a fixed condition score and do not require an assessment. These are identified as 'No assessment required – condition fixed at 'Poor' for some Low distinctiveness habitats, or 'No assessment required – condition N/A' for all Very Low distinctiveness habitats.

It should be noted that during a condition assessment, a habitat parcel, hedgerow length or watercourse may contain areas of differing condition. Where such differences are identified within a habitat, separate condition assessment should be undertaken to ensure accurate representation.

2.2.4 Invasive Non-Native Species

The survey included a check for the presence of any invasive non-native species (INNS)[13] including but not limited to the following:

- Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*);
- Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*);
- Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*); and
- Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

[10] Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2023). *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool.* Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides
[11] Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2023). *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: User Guide (draft)*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a1d98e9c7335e2ca6daadd5/The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_-_User_Guide_-_June_2026.pdf.
[12] Natural England (2023) *The Biodiversity Metric Supporting Documents (JP039)*. Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720.
[13] NatureScot (2026) *Developing with Nature guidance, Annex B: List of invasive non-native species (INNS) of plant*. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/developing-nature-guidance#annex-b

2.2.5 Bats

An assessment was undertaken in accordance with the criteria set out by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT)[14]. The suitability of structures for roosting, as well as habitats for bat commuting and foraging, was in accordance with the criteria set out in **Table 2-2** below.

Table 2-2: Suitability Classification of Roosting Habitat in Structures and Commuting and Foraging Habitats for Bats

Suitability	Roosting Features	Foraging and Commuting Habitats
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. The site is close to and connected to known roosts.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.

[14] Collins, J.(ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition).* The Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN-978-1-7395126-0-6

Suitability	Roosting Features	Foraging and Commuting Habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats as any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).

The suitability of roosting habitats in trees was classified according to the criteria in **Table 2-3** below.

Table 2-3: Suitability of Roosting Habitat in Trees

Suitability	Roosting Features
Potential Roost Feature (PRF)	A tree with at least one PRF present
Further Assessment Required (FAR)	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree
None	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any

2.2.6 Otter

The otter survey followed best practice guidelines[15,16], and aimed to identify suitable otter habitat and field signs, including:

- Spraints (otter faeces/droppings used as territorial signposts). Often located in prominent positions and can be placed on deliberate piles of soil or sand. Three categories are used for describing otter spraint: Dried fragmented (Df); Dried intact (Di); and Not fully dry (Nd);
- Footprints;
- Feeding remains (can often be a useful indication of otter presence);
- Paths/slides (otter can often leave a distinctive path from and into the watercourse);
- Holts (underground shelter) are generally found:
  - Within tree roots at the edge of the bank of a river;
  - Within hollowed out trees;
  - In naturally formed holes in the riverbanks that can be easily extended; or
  - Preferably in ready-made holes created by other large mammals such as badger setts, rabbit burrows or outlet pipes.
- Couches/lay-ups (places for lying up above ground are usually located near a watercourse, between rocks or boulders, under dense vegetation).

[15] Chanin, P. (2003). *Monitoring the Otter Lutra Lutra. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers, Monitoring Series (No. 10).* Peterborough: EN, CCW, EA, SEPA, SNH & SNIFFER.
[16] NatureScot (2024) *Standing advice for planning consultations – Otters*. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/standing-advice-planning-consultations-otters (Accessed July 2026)

2.2.7 Water Vole

The water vole survey was undertaken in conjunction with the otter survey and covered the same Survey Area. The survey was conducted in accordance with standard survey guidelines[17,18] and comprised an assessment of the site's habitat suitability[19] as described in **Table 2-4** below.

Table 2-4: Water Vole Habitat Suitability Criteria

Habitat Category	Dry areas for burrows or Nests			Herbaceous vegetation	Water
	Bank Profile	Bank Substrate	Variation in water level		
Optimal (all criteria need to be met)	Steep (approaching 1:1) on at least one side of a watercourse. Steep or shallow on static waterbodies or fen type habitat	Earth or peat	No noticeable variation during the summer months; banks are not overtopped regularly[20]	Continuous swathe of tall and luxurious riparian vegetation providing 90 – 100% cover on the banks (tall tussocky grassland) and marginal/in channel vegetation is present (emergent species)	Permanent water
Good (all criteria need to be met)	Steep (approaching 1:1) on at least one side of a watercourse. Steep or shallow on static waterbodies or fen-type habitat	Earth or peat banks, or stony/reinforced bank with gaps allowing access to the earth behind	No noticeable variation during the summer months; banks are not overtopped regularly	Continuous swathe of bankside or in channel (emergent) vegetation providing at least 60% ground cover. May be dominated by grasses and weeds rather than luxurious riparian vegetation. The vegetation should generally be tall, except in urban or suburban areas, where shorter bankside vegetation may also qualify	Permanent water. Or routinely wet for at least two – three months during the summer, and where other 'good' habitat present in immediately adjacent areas with permanent water
Suitable but poor[21]	Any habitat that falls short of the criteria to qualify as 'good' but does not meet the criteria of 'negligible' value could reasonably be considered to be 'suitable but poor'				
Negligible (will generally need to meet the	Shallow profile on both banks	Rocky or gravel, unsuitable for burrowing	Considerable variation in water level – the bank	No or limited bankside and marginal vegetation (due to shading or other	N/A

[17] Dean, M., Strachan R. Gow, D. & Andrews, R. (2016). *The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (The Mammal Society Mitigation Guidance Series)*. Eds: Fiona Mathews and Paul Chanin. The Mammal Society, London. (Accessed April 2026)

[18] NatureScot (2024). *Standing advice for planning consultation – Water voles*. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/standing-advice-planning-consultations-water-voles (Accessed July 2026)

[19] Dean, M. (2021). Water Vole Field Signs and Habitat Assessment. Pelagic Publishing. Exeter, pp 18-19 (Accessed April 2026)

[20] In general, it is considered that overtopping once every 5-10 years is likely to be too frequent for water vole; overtopping less frequently than this is also considered likely to be problematic for water vole.

[21] The term 'suitable but poor' is used to avoid the possible misinterpretation of 'poor' habitat being dismissed as unsuitable', when this is not the case, as water voles utilise habitat that is of low quality and which is therefore still 'suitable'.

Habitat Category	Dry areas for burrows or Nests			Herbaceous vegetation	Water
	Bank Profile	Bank Substrate	Variation in water level		
criteria for herbaceous vegetation and at least one other)			toe can move by more than 1 m horizontally over the breeding season	'permanent factors – note that management can change and is often a 'temporary' factor)	
	Vertical bank face with no burrowing opportunities behind it	Reinforced banks with no gaps	N/A		

A detailed search of field evidence was not conducted but field signs including the following were noted when found:

- Faeces: 8-12 mm long, 4-5 mm wide; cylindrical and blunt ended pellets; colour variable with food type. Most droppings left in latrines near the nest, at range boundaries and at water entry points;
- Latrine sites: concentrations of faeces, often with fresh droppings on top of old ones;
- Runways: often 5-9 cm broad and multi-branched; usually within 2 m of water's edge and often forming tunnels through vegetation; leading to water's edge or burrows;
- Burrows: 4-8 cm diameter, wider than high; eroded entrances then contract down to typical size; entrances located at water's edge; however, some entrances can be up to 3 m from the water; no spoil heaps;
- Nests: size and shape of a rugby ball, often in base of rushes, sedges or reeds;
- Feeding stations: located along runways, or at platforms along water's edge; usually a pile of cut/chewed vegetation in sections approximately 10 cm long; vegetation ends show marks of two large incisors. Piles of chopped grass, sedge or rush stems, rush pith and leaves;
- Lawns: short, grazed vegetation around land entrances, often used during nursing periods;
- Footprints: difficult to tell from rat; adult hind foot 26-34 mm (heel to claw); stride 120 mm (smaller than rat); occur at water's edge and lead into vegetation; and
- Sound: characteristic 'plop' when a vole enters the water.

2.2.8 Red Squirrel

A survey was undertaken in accordance with best practice guidance[22,23] and comprised an initial appraisal of habitat suitability and recording of distinct signs of squirrel activity. It should be noted that neither sign can be used to reliably distinguish between red and grey squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis*).

- Dreys – dreys are the nests made by both species of squirrel in trees. Dreys are distinguishable from birds' nests as they are normally 50 cm in diameter and 30 cm deep, comprise a ball shape and are usually densely constructed. The dreys are normally located close to the main stem of the tree at a height of 3 m or more; and
- Feeding evidence – where cone producing trees (conifers) are present, evidence of squirrel feeding is searched for. Although the two species of squirrel cannot be distinguished from feeding remains, the way squirrels break open seeds and nuts (which are then left on the forest floor) is diagnostic of squirrels as opposed to other faunal species.

2.2.9 Pine Marten

A habitat assessment was conducted, considering presence of suitable woodland habitat, likely prey availability (small mammals, birds and invertebrates) and potential resting and commuting sites.

Incidental field signs were also recorded in line with standard guidance[24,25]. These included scats on prominent features such as tree stumps, dead logs or stones, footprints and identification of any potential den sites (elevated tree cavities and between rocks or crags).

It should be noted that where pine marten populations are sparse and territorial defence is relatively limited, searches for signs (including scats) may fail to detect presence. This is because individuals may be less likely to deposit scats as territory markers; in such circumstances, scats are more commonly deposited at den sites and within foraging areas.

[22] Gurnell, J., Lurz, P., McDonald, R. & Pepper, H. (2009) *Practical Techniques for surveying and monitoring squirrels. Forestry Commission Practice Note 11.*
[23] NatureScot (2024) Standing advice for planning consultations - Red Squirrels Available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/standing-advice-planning-consultations-red-squirrels (Accessed 27/08/2026)
[24] Birks, J. (2012) Pine marten. In: Cresswell, W.J., Birks, J.D.S., Dean, M., Pacheco, M., Trewhella, W.J., Wells, D. and Wray, S. (2012). *UK BAP Mammals: Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation*. The Mammal Society, Southampton
[25] NatureScot (2024) Standing Advice for Planning Consultations – Pine marten. Available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/standing-advice-planning-consultations-pine-martens (Accessed 13/08/2026)

2.2.10 Badger

A badger survey was undertaken within suitable and accessible habitat, with reference to the methodologies described by Scottish Badgers[26] and NatureScot[27,28]. The survey aimed to identify the following field evidence:

- Setts (any structure or place, which displays signs indicating current use by badger/located within an active badger territory, as defined by NatureScot guidance[29]);
- Day beds (above ground areas where badgers sleep, characterised by flattened vegetation or bundles of grass);
- Dung pits (single faeces deposit placed in a small excavation);
- Latrines (collection of faecal deposits often used by badger clans to mark home range boundaries);
- Foraging signs such as diggings or snuffle holes (badgers use their snout to turn over vegetation or soft soil to forage for bulbs and invertebrates);
- Paths (network of paths generally linking setts to foraging habitat);
- Breach points (gaps in fences or crossing points over roads);
- Scratching posts (marks on tree trunks/ fallen trees where badgers have left claw marks);
- Guard hair; and
- Footprints.

Badger foraging habitat was classified on a primary and secondary basis as per best practice guidance[30]. An assessment of the distribution of primary and secondary habitat (defined below) within the Survey Area was undertaken:

- Primary foraging habitat: short grazed or mown grassland, improved or unimproved, golf course habitat and broadleaved woodland (> 80% broadleaves); and
- Secondary foraging habitat: arable, rough grassland (not grazed by domestic stock or mown), scrub and mixed woodland.

[26] Scottish Badgers: Surveying for Badgers – Good Practice Guidelines. Version 1: 2018. Available from: https://www.scottishbadgers.org.uk/userfiles/file/planning_guidelines/Surveying-for-Badgers-Good-Practice-Guidelines_V1.pdf (Accessed May 2026)
[27] NatureScot: Licensing Guidance. Available from: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2018-10/Guidance%20-%20Licensing%20-%20Badgers%20-%20What%20is%20a%20Badger%20sett_.pdf (Accessed May 2026)
[28] NatureScot: Protected Species Advice for Developers – Badger. Available from: https://www.nature.scot/species-planning-advice-badger (Accessed May 2026)
[29] NatureScot definition of current use: "*There is no case law to clarify what signs of current use means. For the purpose of this guidance, and in the absence of such case law, we consider that the presence of field signs such as bedding, fresh spoil heaps, signs of recent digging, hair, latrines, or footprints in or around the potential sett or evidence of badgers entering or exiting the structure or place in question would indicate current use of the structure / place by a badger.*"
[30] The Highland Council. Best Practice Guidance – Model badger Protection Plan (BPP)– Badger foraging habitats (2006). Available from: https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/2635/badger_best_practice_guidance_badger_protection_plans_september_2006 (Accessed April 2026)

2.2.11 Wildcat

A wildcat survey was conducted in line with NatureScot guidance[31] and comprised a search of suitable habitat for potential den sites, including large log piles, tree roots, rock piles or disused mammal holes such as badger setts and rabbit warrens. The survey also included a search for potential evidence of wildcat presence, including scats (e.g. on prominent features such as tree stumps, dead logs or stones), prey remains, scratch marks and footprints.

It should be noted that wildcat, hybrid, and domestic cat cannot be reliably distinguished from field evidence alone. Therefore, any potential den sites were mapped to inform future observation[32].

2.2.12 West European Hedgehog

The suitability of habitats to support hedgehog was assessed in the field, in accordance with relevant guidance[33]. Suitable habitats include:

- Grazed pastureland separated into small fields by hedgerows;
- Deciduous woodland copses (oak, beech);
- Overgrown verges or margins; and
- Suburban gardens, woodpiles or parklands.

2.2.13 Brown Hare

Relevant guidance[34] was used to identify direct evidence of brown hare and to assess habitat suitability in the field, as follows:

- Direct sightings;
- Suitable habitat: lowland, mixed arable, hayfields and pastureland with hedgerows and field margins;
- Forms (resting places): typically, beside a tuft of grass or rushes or a shallow scrape in soil, on a gentle slope with a good view ahead; and
- Droppings: hard round or slightly flattened pellets, about 1cm across, usually straw to mid brown coloured, scattered in small quantities or singular.

[31] NatureScot (2014) Guidance – Wildcat Survey Methods Available at: https://www.nature.scot/doc/guidance-wildcat-survey-methods (Accessed 27/08/2026)
[32] Cresswell, W.J., Birks, J.D.S., Dean, M., Pacheco, M., Trewhella, W.J., Wells, D. and Wray, S. (2012). *UK BAP Mammals: Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation*. The Mammal Society, Southampton
[33] Cresswell, W.J., Birks, J.D.S., Dean, M., Pacheco, M., Trewhella, W.J., Wells, D. and Wray, S. (2012). *UK BAP Mammals: Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation*. The Mammal Society, Southampton
[34] Cresswell, W.J., Birks, J.D.S., Dean, M., Pacheco, M., Trewhella, W.J., Wells, D. and Wray, S. (2012). *UK BAP Mammals: Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation*. The Mammal Society, Southampton

2.2.14 Reptiles

An assessment of the habitat suitability for reptiles was undertaken during field work, in accordance with criteria set out by Amphibian and Reptile Conservation[35] to determine the sites potential suitability to support 'good'[36] reptile populations. The assessment considers habitat type, basking and foraging opportunities, and connectivity with other areas of potential reptile habitat. The quality of the reptile habitat was assessed using the following criteria:

- High – Suitable vegetation cover offering foraging opportunities, basking sites and a variety of refugia. Good linkages with other areas of reptile habitat. For example, semi-improved grassland with areas of dense continuous scrub.
- Moderate – Some suitable vegetation cover offering foraging opportunities, basking sites and refugia. Limited linkages to other areas of suitable reptile habitat. For example, dense continuous scrub surrounded by short, improved grassland.
- Low – Unsuitable vegetation cover with no linkages to other areas of suitable reptile habitat. For example, dense mature conifer plantation, closely mown amenity grassland.

In addition, any direct sightings of reptiles and features offering suitable hibernation refugia, such as e.g. dry-stone walls, vegetated stone piles containing cavities etc were recorded.

2.2.15 Common Toad

Relevant guidance[37,38] was used in the field to identify direct evidence of common toad and to assess habitat suitability for common toad as follows:

- Direct sightings of toads (including spawn, toad tadpoles, toadlets and adult toads);
- Suitable aquatic habitat: medium (10 – 100 m^2) or large (> 100 m^2) ponds, on or within 500 m of the site; and
- Suitable terrestrial habitat: lightly grazed pasture, scrub, open woodland, gardens and moors.

[35] Edgar, P., Foster, J. and Baker, J. (2010). *Reptile Habitat Management Handbook*. Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Bournemouth
[36] As defined by Froglife Advice Sheet 10 Available at: Froglife Advice Sheet 9 (Accessed 13/08/2026)
[37] McInerny, C. & Minting, P. (2016) *The Amphibians and Reptiles of Scotland*.
[38] Beebee TJC, Griffiths RA (2000) *Amphibians and reptiles*. HarperCollins, vol 270. New Naturalist, London

2.2.16 Invertebrates

In addition to the desk-based assessment, a general habitat suitability survey was undertaken to assess the site's potential to support invertebrate species, in line with Buglife guidance[39].

2.2.17 Birds

Habitats within the Survey Area were assessed for their potential to support breeding and over wintering birds.

Bird observations were recorded during the survey, including incidental records of the following:

- Birds present – nesting or foraging on-site, flying over site, or remains;
- Pellets/droppings;
- Nests – within trees or in ground vegetation;
- Eggs – intact/broken or within nest/below nest; and
- Feathers – adult or natal down.

2.2.18 Fish

An assessment of watercourses was conducted in the field, to determine their potential to support notable fish species, according to professional judgement, and identify the need for a detailed fish habitat assessment. Any obstacles for migratory fish were noted during the survey.

2.2.19 Freshwater Pearl Mussel

A general habitat suitability survey was undertaken of watercourses and their substrate types within the survey reaches, by walking along the bank. The purpose of this assessment was to identify specific areas most likely to support mussels, informed by established habitat preferences derived from previous studies and professional experience[40] [41]. Habitat preferences of freshwater pearl mussel include:

- Coarse sand and gravel beds of fast-flowing, non-calcareous streams and rivers; and
- Dependent on the presence of trout or salmon to complete their life cycle.

[39] https://www.buglife.org.uk/resources/planning-hub/good-practice-planning-for-invertebrates/ (Accessd 08/10/2026)

[40] https://www.energyisles.co.uk/site/assets/files/1495/eiar_-_volume_5_-_appendix_7_5_-_fwpm_survey.pdf

[41] https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/species/S1029/

2.3 Constraints

2.3.1 Desk Study

Desk studies are limited by the reliability of third-party information and the geographical availability of biological and/or ecological records and data. This emphasises the need to collate up-to-date, site-specific data based on field surveys by experienced surveyors. The absence of a species from biological records should not be interpreted as confirmation of its absence. Observed species distribution patterns should be interpreted with caution as they may reflect variations in survey or reporting effort rather than true species distribution.

2.3.2 Field Survey

At the time of the writing, landowner access was not agreed for the full survey area. Every effort was made to appraise these areas from publicly accessible land, however there was limited safe roadside or public rights of way, with much of the land being inaccessible. Aerial imagery has been reviewed for these sections, but it wasn't possible to fully determine habitats present or potential for protected species at this time. The areas surveyed are shown in **Appendix A: Site Location Plan**.

Some areas of plantation woodland in the west of the Survey Area were too dense to be surveyed in detail. These areas were considered to provide relatively limited habitat suitability for protected species. A small drone was used to fly over these areas to aid visual inspection, however, due to the density of the canopy, features may still have been missed.

Areas of wet grassland with waterlogged ground conditions in the northwest (within Fetteresso Forest), along with steep slopes in the east (near Landfall) could not be surveyed in detail due to health and safety constraints. These areas were instead observed using binoculars and it is considered that adequate coverage was gained to enable an informed assessment of habitats and protected species suitability.

Similarly, sections of coastal cliff in the eastern part of the site and within the adjacent survey buffers were inaccessible for detailed survey due to their steepness. These areas were observed using binoculars; however, it remains possible that certain plant species and evidence of protected species were not identified.

Access to private gardens within residential properties in the survey area was not permitted. Nevertheless, the areas were appraised from a distance to determine their potential suitability for protected species.

The west extent of the Burn of Baulks could not be accessed due to significant treefall across the length located within the site boundary, whilst it was possible to appraise potential habitat for protected species, field signs may have been missed. Due to the above, a full condition assessment of this watercourse could not be undertaken.

2.4 Evaluation of Ecological Features

European, national and local governments and specialist organisations have together identified a large number of sites, habitats and species that provide the key focus for biodiversity conservation in the United Kingdom and Ireland, supported by policy and legislation. These provide an objective starting point for identifying important ecological features that need to be considered in the Bellrock Project surveys. A geographical level of importance, as described in **Appendices C and D** has been assigned to the designated sites, habitats and species identified on the site and in the survey area. Where a feature is important at more than one level in the table, its overriding importance is that of the highest level. Usually only the highest level of legal protection is listed.

2.5 Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Legislation, planning policies, conservation initiatives and general guidance relevant to this study include:

- Directive (2009/147/EC) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (the 'Birds Directive'), transposed into Scots law by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended);
- The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended), transposed into Scots law from Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (the 'Habitats Directive') 1992 (92/4/3EEC);
- The Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended);
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA);
- The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 (as amended);
- The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 (WANE);
- The Scottish Biodiversity List[42] for Priority Habitats and Species;
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- National Planning Framework 4;
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045;
- The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023; and
- North East Scotland Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

A summary of protected species legislation is provided in **Appendix B**.

[42] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-biodiversity-list/ (Accessed May 2026)

3 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

3.1 Designated Sites

A map of designated sites within 5km of the site can be found in **Appendix E**.

3.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

One statutory designated site lies within the site boundary, with a further four located within a 5 km radius. In addition, one designated site for wintering geese is situated within a distance of 20 km from the site. The designated site details are provided in **Table 3-1** below.

Table 3-1: Statutory Designated Sites

Site Name	Designation[43]	Distance and Orientation	Designated Features	Connected to the Site
Garron Point	SSSI	Located on eastern boundary of site.	The site is designated as a SSSI due to the presence of Narrow-mouthed whorl snail (*Vertigo angustior*) and Northern brown argus butterfly (*Aricia artaxerxes*). The site is also designated for geological reasons including the site being a maritime cliff, the presence of Dalradian, non-marine Devonian, Ordovician Igneous and Silurian - Devonian Chordata.	Yes, the site is adjacent to the SSSI with potential habitat for northern brown argus to extend into the site.
Garron Point	SAC	700 m east	The site is designated as an SAC due to the presence of Narrow-mouthed whorl snail (*Vertigo angustior*)	No, due to the small size of the snail, it is likely outwith dispersal distance and there isn't any suitable habitat within the site.
Fowlsheugh	SPA	3.1 km south	The site is designated an SPA due to the presence of breeding Fulmar *(Fulmarus glacialis*) and Guillemot (*Uria aalge*)	Fulmar and Guillemot from the SPA could utilise coastal habitats within and adjacent to the site.
Loch of Lumgair	SSSI	4.1 km south	The site is designated as a SSSI due to the habitats present. The two habitats of importance are wet woodland and basic fen – Schwingmoor type.	No connectivity due to distance and lack of hydrological connection.
Red Moss of Netherley	SSSI, SAC	4.1 km north	The site is designated as a SSSI due to the habitats present. The habitat of importance is raised bog.	No connectivity due to distance and lack of hydrological connection.
Loch of Skene	SSSI, SPA, Ramsar	18.9 km north	The site is designated due to the large number of waterfowl, particularly internationally important numbers of greylag geese (*Anser answer*) and pink-footed geese (*Anser brachyrhynchus*).	The site is within foraging distances for wintering geese and has some suitable habitat, although it is not known as a regular feeding/roosting spot, it could be used occasionally.

[43] SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), SAC (Special Area of Conservation), SPA (Special Protection Area), RAMSAR (Convention on Wetlands of International Importance)

3.1.2 Non-Statutory Designated Sites

A small part of the Muchalls to Stonehaven Bay Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS) is located within the site boundary in the east. Four additional non-statutory designated sites are present within a 2 km buffer of the site boundary as detailed in **Table 3-2**, with Muchalls to Stonehaven Bay LNCS and Elfhill LNCS being ecologically connected with the site via waterbodies/watercourses and scrub, grassland and woodland.

Table 3-2: Non-Statutory Designated Sites

Site Name	Designation	Distance and Orientation
Muchalls to Stonehaven Bay	LNCS	On-site on eastern section
Mergie	LNCS	300 m northwest
Elfhill	LNCS	485 m south
Downie Point to Todhead Coast	LNCS	1.5 km south
Fetteresso	LNCS	1.7 km south

3.2 Ancient and Native Woodland

Multiple areas of woodland listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) are present within and adjacent to the site boundary as shown in **Appendix F**. Parts of a parcel of Long-Established woodland (of plantation origin) (LEPO) fall within the west of the site, with additional LEPO woodland adjacent.

Woodland listed on the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS) is present within and adjacent to the site, as shown in **Appendix G**. These are largely associated with riparian corridors of the Cowie and Ury. A small parcel of native pinewood is present within and adjacent to the site, to the north of Hill of Swanley. A small parcel of regenerating native woodland of unidentifiable type is present on the southern boundary of Fetteresso Forest.

Parcels of lowland mixed deciduous woodland are located within the centre and east of the site, associated with farmland and Megray Woods.

Ancient and Native Woodlands are protected through NPF4 Policy 6 and so are considered to be of National (Scotland) importance.

3.3 Carbon and Peatland Soils

No Class 1 or 2 peatland soils indicative of priority peatlands are present within the site. There is an area of Megray Wood which is Class 3 soil: "*Dominant vegetation is not priority peatland but is associated with wet and acidic type. Occasional peatland habitats can be found. Most soils are carbon rich soils, with some areas of deep peat*." There is a further area of Class 5 soil within Fetteresso Forest, surrounding the Burn of Baulk: "*Soil information takes precedence over vegetation data. No peatland habitat recorded. May also include areas of bare soil. Soils are carbon-rich and deep peat*."

3.4 Habitats

The UKHab Habitat Survey Plan can be found in **Appendix H** alongside photographs of habitats which can be found in **Appendix I**. The condition assessment sheets can be found in **Appendix J**.

There were 24 UKHab primary habitats present within the areas of the site surveyed, as summarised within **Table 3-3**. Where there are distinct differences within the primary habitat code classification due to management and/or species composition, these have been identified using secondary codes.

Table 3-3: On-site Habitats

Habitat Type	Primary Habitat	Primary Code	Secondary Codes
Grassland	Bracken	g1c	-
	Other neutral grassland	g3c	10 – Scattered scrub 12 – Scattered bracken 14 – Scattered rushes 32 – Scattered trees 503 - Wet
	Holcus Juncus neutral grassland	g3c8	-
	Modified grassland	g4	100 - Grazed
Woodland and forest	Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland	w1f7	-
	Other broadleaved woodland	w1g	33 – Line of trees
	Other woodland - mixed	w1h	-
	Other coniferous woodland	w2c	29 - Plantation 202 – Young trees – self-set 206 – Felled 217 – Woodland open space 503 - Wet
Heathland and shrub	Other native hedgerow	h2a6	-
	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	h2b	-
	Gorse scrub	h3e	-
	Mixed scrub	h3h	-
	Willow scrub	h3j	-
Cropland	Arable and horticulture	c1	600 - Ploughed
	Cereal crops	c1c	-
	Non-cereal crops	c1d	-
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	u1b	-
	Buildings	u1b5	-
	Built linear features	u1e	114 – Dry stone wall 800 – Road 802 - Railway 839 – Track 853 – Mortared wall
Sparsely vegetated land	Soft Rock Sea Cliff	s2a6	702 – Saline influence
Rivers and lakes	Other rivers and streams	r2b	48 – Freshwater – heavily modified

Habitat Type	Primary Habitat	Primary Code	Secondary Codes
Marine inlets and transitional waters	Splash zone with lichens	t1e	-
	Other littoral rock	t1f	-
	Beach	t2h	-

3.4.1 Bracken

Dense bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) was present on the coastal slopes in the east of the site (**Appendix I: Photo 1**). Bracken is a widespread and common habitat and is therefore of site importance. It does not require a condition assessment.

3.4.2 Other Neutral Grassland

Areas of ungrazed other neutral grassland were present in the east, west and along field margins throughout the site (**Appendix I: Photo 2**).

Along the coast, the other neutral grassland was dominated by Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*). Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*) were frequently identified. Lesser celandine (*Ficaria verna*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), bracken, creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), greater plantain (*Plantago major*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), common rock rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*) and broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) were occasionally present. Ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), pink purslane (*Claytonia sibirica*), dandelions (*Taraxacum* agg.), common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), common dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*), garden daffodils (*Narcissus* spp.) and garden/hybrid bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta x hispanica*) were rarely identified. Scattered gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), osier willow (*Salix viminalis*) and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) were also occasionally present in this area, as were scattered young sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*).

In areas of neutral grassland in unmanaged fields and along field and road margins, Yorkshire fog was the dominant species, with cock's-foot abundant and ribwort plantain frequently identified. Common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), dandelions, common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), common ragwort and hogweed were occasionally present. Creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), soft rush (*Juncus effusus*), raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*), rosebay willowherb and bramble were rarely identified.

In Fetteresso Forest in the west of the site, areas of other neutral grassland were generally wetter (secondary code 503) and dominated by cock's-foot, with tufted hair grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) and soft rush abundant. Yorkshire fog, heather, sharp flowered rush (*Juncus articutiflorus*) and *Rhytidiadelphus* moss were occasionally identified. Marsh thistle (*Cirsium palustre*), broad-leaved dock, creeping buttercup, water forget-me-not (*Myosotis scorpoidies*) and common sorrel were rarely present.

Scattered semi-mature sycamore were identified adjacent to the wetter area in the northwest close to the Burn of Day.

Neutral grasslands that are not species rich are a widespread and common habitat and are therefore considered to be of site importance.

The other neutral grassland in the forest in the west and close to the coastline in the east was assessed as being in 'moderate' condition, due to a lack of bare ground, a varied sward height, but also species indicating sub-optimal condition. The other neutral grassland adjacent to roads and on field margins in the east and west was assessed as being in 'poor' condition, due to a lack of species richness and a high level of species indicative of sub-optimal condition.

3.4.3 Holcus Juncus Neutral Grassland

Two small areas of Holcus Juncus neutral grassland were identified within woodland in the west (**Appendix I: Photo 3**) within a poorly drained depression with waterlogged ground and adjacent to the Burn of Day. Yorkshire fog was dominant, with soft rush, jointed rush, horsetail (*Equisetum* spp.) and cock's-foot being abundant. Marsh thistle, broad-leaved dock and common sorrel were occasionally identified. Gorse, common nettle and water forget-me-not were rarely present.

Scattered young self-set Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) were present on the edges of this habitat.

Wet grasslands are listed within the NESBiP Freshwater Statement[44] due to their potential for groundwater influence and utility for breeding birds and are therefore considered to be of regional importance to biodiversity.

The Holcus Juncus neutral grassland on site was a good representation of its habitat type, however, it was lacking in species richness and a varied sward height. Therefore, its habitat condition score was assessed as 'moderate'.

3.4.4 Modified Grassland

Modified grassland was present in grazed fields, pasture and mown amenity areas in the west, centre and east of the site (**Appendix I: Photo 4**). Perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) was dominant, with white clover frequently being present. Broad-leaved dock, cock's-foot, daisy (*Bellis perennis*), creeping buttercup and ribwort plantain were occasionally present. Spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), dandelions, rosebay willowherb and common sorrel were rarely identified.

[44] NESBiP (2019), Grasslands. Available at: https://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/FreshwaterHabitatsv1.pdf.pdf (Accessed May 2026)

Scattered semi-mature wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) (**Appendix H; Target Note 5**), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and sycamore were present adjacent to the A92 layby in the east.

Modified grassland is a common and widespread habitat and is therefore of site importance.

Ash is an SBL species considered to be of national (Scotland) importance.

The modified grassland within the surveyed area was lacking in species richness, with little variation in sward height. Therefore, this habitat was assessed as having a condition score of 'poor'.

3.4.5 Other Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland is present as shelterbelt planting, separating two fields near the centre of the OnTDA.

The species included abundant sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), frequent Swedish whitebeam (*Sorbus intermedia*) and occasional beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*), wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) and rare blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). The ground flora comprised neutral grassland species as well as woodland species such as foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) scaly male-fern (*Dryopteris affinis*), and wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*).

Lowland mixed deciduous woodland is listed on the NESBiP priority habitat statement and so is considered to be regionally important.

The condition is assessed as being moderate due to the lack of variety in tree age and stand structure as well as a high proportion of non-native species.

3.4.6 Other Woodland Mixed

Other woodland mixed is present as shelterbelt planting within a field towards the centre of the OnTDA.

The species mix is similar to that described in **Section 3.4.5**, however the proportion of Scots pine is higher. There are also some occasional alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) (**Appendix H; Target Note 6**) and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).

Other woodland – mixed is a common and widespread habitat of site importance.

Ash is an SBL species considered to be of national (Scotland) importance.

The condition is assessed as poor due to the lack of varied age groups and structure.

3.4.7 Other Broadleaved Woodland – Line of Trees

Three lines of young, semi-mature and mature broadleaved trees were identified in the east and west of the site (**Appendix I: Photo 5**). The lines of trees in the east comprised ash, wild cherry, sycamore and holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). The line of trees in the west comprised young osier willow.

Linear woodland habitat qualifies as a NESBiP priority habitat within the Woodland habitat statement[45] and provides important ecological connectivity for wildlife, and therefore is of regional importance.

The lines of broadleaved trees in the east were assessed as being in 'poor' condition due to being <70 % native species, containing gaps >5 m, and showing impact from adjacent farming/urban activity.

The line of osier willows in the west was assessed as being in 'poor' condition due to a lack of native species and veteran trees/ecological features for wildlife.

3.4.8 Other Coniferous Woodland

Extensive other coniferous plantation woodland was present in the west of the site in Fetteresso Forest (**Appendix I: Photo 6**). Young and semi-mature Sitka spruce was dominant, with frequent larch (*Larix decidua*), and occasional Scots pine and Norway spruce (*Picea abies*). Goat willow was rarely present. Scattered gorse and broom were present on woodland edges and in open woodland areas. Ground flora was generally sparse, and comprised heather, bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), haircap moss (*Polytrichum* spp.), glittering wood moss (*Hylocomium splendens*) and great wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*).

Areas of coniferous plantation that had been clear felled, likely within the last five years, were noted in the north and west of the woodland (**Appendix I: Photo 7**). Non-native regeneration was occurring in these areas, with young self-set Sitka spruce dominant and young self-set larch rarely identified. Heather was abundant and red fescue was frequently present. Soft rush, gorse, broom and common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*) were occasionally present. Bramble, raspberry, foxglove, great wood-rush and bell heather (*Erica cinerea*) were rarely identified.

Open woodland areas were present in the centre and west of the coniferous forest, where trees were more widely spaced and the ground flora was higher. Species present included heather, bilberry, and lichen (*Cladonia* spp.). Sphagnum moss (*Sphagnum* spp.), soft rush and haircap moss were abundant in wetter open areas.

Other coniferous plantation woodland is common and widespread in the local landscape and considered to be of site importance.

[45] Available at: https://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Woodlandsv1-1.pdf (Accessed May 2026)

Due to a lack of native species, tree age classes, open spaces or varied structure, the other coniferous woodland on site was assessed as being in 'poor' condition.

3.4.9 Other Native Hedgerow

Lengths of other native hedgerow were identified along field margins in the Landfall and to the south of Fetteresso Forest (**Appendix I: Photo 8**). They were generally flailed and species poor. Hawthorn was generally the dominant species, with gorse dominant in some hedgerow in the west. Broom, bramble and hazel (*Corylus avellana*) were occasionally identified. The ground flora comprised cock's-foot, ribwort plantain, rosebay willowherb, cleavers (*Galium aparine*), Yorkshire fog, lesser celandine, common nettle and hogweed.

The NESBiP Woodland Habitat Statement classes hedgerows as highly valuable habitat for biodiversity, especially in agricultural areas, therefore, the other native hedgerow is of regional importance.

The other native hedgerow in the west and east was generally assessed as being in 'moderate' condition, due to having a height >1.5 m and a lack of large gaps, but also due to being impacted by nutrient enrichment.

The other native hedgerow adjacent to the coast in the east of the site contained more gaps and a larger gap at the base, and was, therefore, assessed as being in 'poor' condition.

3.4.10 Non-native and Ornamental Hedgerow

A length of ornamental beech hedgerow was present close to the ruined building on the south boundary of Fetteresso Forest in the west (**Appendix I: Photo 9**).

Non-native and ornamental hedgerow is a common and widespread habitat and is, therefore, considered of site importance.

The non-native hedgerow on site was assessed as being in 'poor' condition due to lacking native species.

3.4.11 Gorse Scrub

Gorse scrub was identified on the coast in the east and along the south boundary of Fetteresso Forest in the west (**Appendix I: Photo 10**). Gorse was dominant, with broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) abundant and bramble frequently identified. Broad-leaved dock, cock's-foot and perennial ryegrass were present in the ground flora.

Scattered young self-set Sitka spruce were present in the gorse scrub in the west.

Gorse scrub is listed within the NESBiP Woodland Statement and is, therefore, considered to be of regional importance for biodiversity.

The gorse scrub on site contained a range of shrub age classes, edges with grassland and clearings, but also a lack of species and contained species indicative of sub-optimal condition. Therefore, this habitat was assessed as being in 'moderate' condition.

3.4.12 Mixed Scrub

Mixed scrub was identified near the east site boundary on the steeply sloped area southeast of the A92 layby (**Appendix I: Photo 11**). Japanese rose (*Rosa rugosa*) and gorse were abundant. Hawthorn, sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), bramble and shrubby cinquefoil (*Potentilla fruticosa*) were occasionally identified. Flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*) was rarely present. The ground flora comprised cock's-foot, dandelions, rosebay willowherb, bracken and snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*).

Scattered semi-mature Scots pine and beech were present in the mixed scrub.

Scrub is listed within the NESBiP Woodland Statement and is, therefore, considered to be of regional importance for biodiversity.

The mixed scrub on site was dominated by non-native species and was lacking in variable age groups, therefore, its condition was assessed as 'poor'.

3.4.13 Willow Scrub

Small areas of self-seeded willow scrub dominated by osier willow were present on the coast within the south of the landfall area (**Appendix I: Photo 12**). Bracken was abundant in this habitat. Cleavers, lesser celandine, broad-leaved dock, Yorkshire fog, creeping buttercup and bramble were occasionally present. Hogweed, garden/hybrid bluebell, garden daffodil, greater plantain and pink purslane were rarely identified.

Scrub is listed within the NESBiP Woodland Statement and is, therefore, considered to be of regional importance for biodiversity.

Due to a lack of species richness, the presence of sub-optimal species and a lack of varied shrub age range, the willow scrub on site was assessed as being in 'poor' condition.

3.4.14 Arable and Horticulture

Ploughed and tilled fields were present in farmland in the east and west of the site (**Appendix I: Photo 13**). No crop seedlings were present at the time of survey on 13 -15 April 2026.

Arable land is common and widespread and is of site importance.

Arable land does not require a condition assessment.

3.4.15 Cereal Crops

Fields with cereal crop seedlings were widespread in the east of the site (**Appendix I: Photo 14**).

Arable land is common and widespread and is of site importance.

Cereal cropland does not require a condition assessment.

3.4.16 Non-Cereal Crops

One field with potatoes was present in farmland near the centre of the OnTDA.

Arable land is common and widespread and is of site importance.

Non-cereal cropland does not require a condition assessment.

3.4.17 Developed Land with a Sealed Surface

Areas of hard standing were present in the east of Stonehaven car parking areas.

Developed land with a sealed surface is of negligible importance for biodiversity.

Developed land with a sealed surface does not require a condition assessment.

3.4.18 Buildings

The following buildings and structures were located within the surveyed areas of the site:

- Wooden sheds/garages (**Appendix I: Photo 15, Appendix H: Target Note 3**).
- A complex of six sheds and garages of wooden construction with tiled or corrugated metal roofing, located within the site, on the north edge of Cowie.
- Stone outbuilding with ruins (**Appendix I: Photo 16, Appendix H: Target Note 1**).
- An outbuilding of stone and mortar construction with a corrugated metal roof and open internal roof space (no loft), located on the south boundary of Fetteresso Forest. The wooden door was open at time of survey, allowing access by wildlife. The ruins of a stone cottage were adjacent.
- Railway shed (**Appendix I: Photo 17, Appendix H: Target Note 2**).
- A small wooden shed with corrugated metal roof, located immediately adjacent to the railway in the east of the site.
- Field outbuilding (**Appendix I: Photo 28, Appendix H: Target Note 4**)
- A shed of wooden construction with wood fascia and a corrugated metal roof, located in pasture/agricultural land in the west of the site.

Buildings are common and widespread and are therefore of site importance.

Urban features including buildings do not require a condition assessment.

3.4.19 Built Linear Features

Roads, unsurfaced tracks and post-and-wire fencing were present throughout the OnTDA. Mortared walls were noted in the east, whilst dry stone walls were present within the landfall area.

Dry stone walls are considered within the NESBiP Built Environment Statement[46] to offer habitat for wildlife like reptiles and are, therefore, a habitat of regional importance.

Roads, tracks and fencing are of negligible importance for biodiversity.

Built linear features do not require a specific condition assessment.

3.4.20 Soft Rock Sea Cliff

Soft rock sea cliffs are located near the east site boundary within the landfall area (**Appendix I: Photo 18**).

Vegetation species composition varied along the stretch of cliffs between Cowie and the area of willow scrub containing species characteristic of calcareous grassland. This area comprised of frequent bird's-foot trefoil *(Lotus corniculatus)*, bloody crane's-bill *(Geranium sanguineum)*, common rock-rose *(Helianthemum nummularium)*, lady's bedstraw *(Galium verum)*, yarrow *(Achillea millefolium)*, ribwort plantain *(Plantago lanceolata)*, cock's-foot, tufted vetch *(Vicia cracca)* and kidney vetch *(Anthyllis vulneraria)* in addition to occasional harebell *(Campanula rotundifolia)*, germander speedwell *(Veronica chamaedrys)*, false oat grass *(Arrhenatherum elatius)*, daisy, hawk's-beard *(Crepis sp.)* and meadow vetchling *(Lathyrus pratensis)*. Additionally, white clover, *red clover (Trifolium pratense)*, sea thrift *(Armeria maritima)*, sorrel, crested dog's-tail *(Cynosurus cristatus)* and common ragwort.

The bedrock geology composition of these cliffs were noted predominantly as areas of sandstone and siltstone, with a smaller area running from the cliffs into the intertidal zone found to be North Britain Siluro-Devonan calc-alkaline dyke suite bedrock[47].

The remaining areas of soft rock sea cliffs were typically characterised by areas of dominant Yorkshire fog and cock's-foot, with other areas dominated by bracken and gorse. Red fescue, ribwort plantain and red campion were frequently identified. Primrose, hogweed, broad-leaved dock, common rock-rose, common nettle, pink purslane and dog violet were occasionally identified. Scattered bramble and heather were also present.

[46] Available at: https://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/BuiltEnvironmentv1.pdf (Accessed April 2026)
[47] Information available at: https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/?_ga=2.197842025.711769440.1783435012-1088507481.1783435012)Accessed July 2026)

Maritime grasslands are listed in the NESBiP Marine and Coastal Statement[48] as a priority habitat and are, therefore, of regional importance.

The soft rock sea cliff habitat that contained a high diversity of species typically associated with calcareous grassland was assessed as being of 'good' condition whereby the area represented a good example of this habitat type, exhibiting varied vegetation structure, areas of naturally open ground and bare surfaces enabling colonisation and succession. Additionally, this area was noted as having an absence of invasive non-native species and a low percentage cover of species indicative of sub-optimal condition.

The remaining areas of soft rock sea cliff represented a good example of this habitat type, exhibiting varied sward height and the presence of some bare surfaces. However, it supported a relatively high proportion of species indicative of sub-optimal condition, alongside scrub covering exceeding 10%. Therefore, its condition was assessed as 'moderate'.

3.4.21 Other Rivers and Streams

Watercourses present within the surveyed area of the site boundary were as follows:

- Burn of Day was located in Fettersso Forest and flows north to the Cowie Water (**Appendix I: Photo 19**);
- Burn of Baulks was located in Fetteresso Forest and farmland to the south of the forest, approx. 2.5 km south of Burn of Day. It flows to the south where it joins with the Carron Water; and
- Various drainage ditches within farmland and along tracks/roads.

The Burn of Day flows west to northeast through coniferous plantation woodland and rough grassland. Substrate composition includes pebbles and grit with occasional cobbles, alongside earth banks and areas of overshading in the western extent. In the western section, the burn disperses into marshy areas dominated by Yorkshire fog and sharp -flowered rush, with no defined banks present. The burn was culverted at the point where it was intersected by the track.

The Burn of Baulk flows west to southeast through coniferous plantation with peat soils and containing significant treefall along its length. It disperses into a grassland area outside of the site boundary, and was culverted at the point where it was intersected by the track.

Rivers and burns are listed within the NESBiP Freshwater Statement and are, therefore, considered to be of regional importance to biodiversity.

Drainage ditches are common and widespread and are considered to be of site importance.

In the west extent of the site the Burn of Day was noted to be rich in bank top trees, marginal aquatic vegetation and natural channel bed materials, as well as containing natural features across the channel. However, it also

[48] Available at: https://www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/MarineAndCoastalv1.pdf (Accessed May 2026)

flowed through plantation and had silt cover across the channel. Therefore, it was assessed as being in 'fairly good' condition.

The Burn of Baulk was heavily affected by treefall impacting accessibility and the overall assessment. The two sections that were able to be accessed were assessed as broadly corresponding to 'moderate' condition. However, as a full assessment of this extent of the watercourse was not able to be surveyed this classification score should not be treated as representative of the overall length and therefore a final classification.

In the west extent of the site an artificial drainage channel that feeds into the Burn of Baulk was visually assessed to contain good water quality, a fringe of marginal aquatic vegetation, little physical damage, deep water levels, little shading and lacked INNS. However, it did also contain approximately >10 % duckweed and tended to lack a range of emergent/submerged/floating vegetation. Therefore, this drainage channel was assessed as being in 'moderate' condition using the Ditch condition assessment criteria.

Field drains to the south of the Slug Road, within Landfall and to the south of Fetteresso Forest are assessed as being in 'poor' condition due to poor water quality, lack of aquatic marginal vegetation, physical damage such as poaching, lack of sufficient water levels and shading.

3.4.22 Splash Zone with Lichens

Within the landfall area to the east, some areas within the intertidal zone situated between other littoral rock and beach habitats were identified as splash zone with lichens habitat.

These were observed as areas of rocks around the high tide line within the supralittoral spray zone, with the tops of rocks covered by lichen, primarily *Xanthoria species* and *Caloplaca* species.

Coastal rocky areas are listed in the NESBiP Marine and Coastal Statement as a priority habitat and are, therefore, of regional importance.

Due to a lack of artificial structures and direct human impacts and an absence of litter from the majority of the coastline within the site, the habitat condition was assessed as 'good'.

3.4.23 Other Littoral Rock

Unvegetated littoral rock habitat composed of was observed within the landfall area to the east of the site, typically below the high tide line (**Appendix I: Photo 20**). Within this habitat, frequent gutweed (*Ulva intestinalis*), bladder wrack (*Fucus vesiculosus*) and sea lettuce (*Ulva Lactuca*) observed.

As the site boundary extended beyond the tideline at the time of the survey (which was undertaken during an ebb tide), it has been assumed that the other littoral rock continues and extends to the survey boundary.

Coastal rocky areas are listed in the NESBiP Marine and Coastal Statement as a priority habitat and are, therefore, of regional importance.

Due to a lack of artificial structures and direct human impacts and litter being absent from the majority of the coastline within the site at the time of survey, the habitat condition was assessed as 'good'.

3.4.24 Beach

Within the landfall area, areas of beach habitat were noted below the sea cliffs at the top of the shoreline.

The sediment was a mixture of sand, pebble and cobble with minimal vegetation, with spear-leaved orache (*Atriplex prostrata*) and sea mayweed (*Tripleurospermum maritimum*) occurring rarely.

Beaches areas are listed in the NESBiP Marine and Coastal Statement as a priority habitat and are, therefore, of regional importance.

Due to a lack of artificial structures and direct human impacts and an absence of litter from the majority of the coastline within the site, the habitat condition was assessed as 'good'.

3.4.25 Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTE)

The two areas of Holcus Juncus grassland within woodland in the west of the OnTDA (**Appendix I: Photo 3**) within a poorly drained depression with waterlogged ground and adjacent to the Burn of Day were considered equivalent to NVC MG10 *Holcus lanatus – Juncus effusus rush-pasture* and the Functional Wetland Typology's (FWT)[49] 'Marshy Grassland' classification.

Due to the location of both areas of Holcus Juncus grassland at the bottom of slopes/depressions, and the proximity of the Burn of Day to the grassland in the northwest, these areas were both considered to be predominantly surface water fed. However, the prevalence of rush throughout these areas may suggest that groundwater is a significant influencing factor within these areas as per SEPA guidance[50].

3.5 Invasive and Non-native Species (INNS)

The NESBReC data search identified 46 records of grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) within 2 km of the site. Several records of grey squirrel were located within 50 m of the site. Other INNS species returned from the data search included 83 records of giant hogweed, 119 records of Himalayan balsam, 13 records of Himalayan knotweed (*Persicaria wallichii*), 180 records of Japanese knotweed, 33 records of Rhododendron and three records of white butterbur (*Petasites albus*).

[49] SNIFFER (2009) *WFD95: A Functional Wetland Typology for Scotland*. Available at: https://notcoul.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/SnifferWFD95_FunctionalWetlandTypologyGWDTE_NVC.pdf (Accessed June 2026).
[50] Scottish Environment Protection Agency (2017) *Land Use Planning System SEPA Guidance Note 31*. Available at: https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/land/planning/guidance-and-advice-notes/ (Accessed June 2026).

The following INNS were identified during the survey:

- Rhododendron on the northwest OnTDA boundary on the edge of Fetteresso Forest, and in the centre of the OnTDA adjacent to the A957 (**Appendix I; Photo 21**);
- Garden/hybrid bluebell in scrub and grassland near the coast in the east (**Appendix I: Photo 22**);
- Buddleia (*Buddleja davidii*) adjacent to the railway line in the east of the OnTDA, in the centre of the OnTDA adjacent to the A957, and 50 m outwith the OnTDA in the east adjacent to a road connecting to the B979 (**Appendix I: Photo 23**);
- Japanese rose was identified within the mixed scrub near the east OnTDA boundary (**Appendix I: Photo 24**);
- Sea buckthorn that had been introduced as a shrub was planted within the modified grassland in the east of the OnTDA (**Appendix I: Photo 25**);
- Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster* spp.) was identified in the centre of the OnTDA on the south boundary, on a field edge; and
- Montbretia (*Crocosmia* × *crocosmiiflora*) was identified in scrub in the west of the OnTDA near Fetteresso Forest.

INNS are of negative importance to the site. The INNS Survey Plan can be found in **Appendix K** and Photographs in **Appendix I**.

3.6 Faunal Species and Species Groups

The Faunal Survey Plan can be found in **Appendix L** and the Photographs in **Appendix I**.

3.6.1 Disclaimer

Faunal species are inherently mobile and may move between preferred habitats both within and across years. As such, the survey undertaken represents a snapshot of field signs recorded within the survey area in April 2026.

3.6.2 Bats

Records of Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) and Parti-coloured bat (*Vespertilio murinus*) were returned from the data search within 2 km of the site boundary. Multiple records of common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle were returned within or adjacent to the site.

3.6.2.1 Buildings and Structures

The stone outbuildings and ruins on the south edge of the forest (TN1 within **Appendix H: Habitat Survey Plan**) in the west contained potential roost features (PRFs) via gaps in stonework and mortar (**Appendix I: Photo 26**). The field outbuilding in the west (TN4 within **Appendix H: Habitat Survey Plan**) contained PRFs via gaps between wooden fascia (**Appendix I: Photo 28**). The sheds in the landfall in the east (TN 3) contained PRFs via gaps between wooden fascia. The railway shed in the east (TN2) contained PRFs via gaps between wooden boards and fascia (**Appendix I: Photo 17**). A railway bridge in the east contained PRFs via gaps in stonework (**Appendix I: Photo 27**, TN 7 within **Appendix H: Habitat Survey Plan**). These buildings and the bridge were, therefore, assessed as offering low potential to host roosting bats in reference to **Table 2-2 *'A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year'***.

3.6.2.2 Trees

Three standing deadwood trees within Fetteresso Forest (Trees 1, 2 and 3 on the Faunal Survey plan) contained woodpecker holes that have the potential to act as PRFs for bats. To the south east of Fetteresso, there is a beech tree just outside the OnTDA boundary, with a large stem cavity (Tree 11), on the edge of a property, beside an unnamed road. Two trees in the centre of the site on a field boundary (Trees 12 and 13) contained PRFs via dead branches and suspected stem cavities.

There are various trees within and adjacent to the landfall site boundary (**Appendix I: Photo 29**, Trees 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 on the survey plan) with a variety of features bats could use. These trees were, therefore, assessed as 'PRF' as per **Table 2-3**: "*A tree with at least one PRF present"*.

3.6.2.3 Habitats

The woodland rides, clearings and edges, rough grassland, scrub, hedgerow, lines of trees and burn within the site boundary offer suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats. There is connectivity to additional suitable habitat beyond the site boundary through areas of woodland, watercourses, scrub and lines of trees. However, the dense coniferous plantation woodland and areas of open arable fields are considered to offer comparatively limited commuting, foraging and roosing opportunities for bats.

Therefore, the areas of open woodland, woodland edges/tracks, scrub, wet grassland, burns, rough grassland, hedgerows and lines of trees were assessed as being of high quality habitat with reference to **Table 2-2**: *'Continuous high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge'*.

The arable farmland, pasture, plantation woodland, modified grassland and coastal habitats were assessed as moderate quality habitat with reference to **Table 2-2**: '*Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens'*.

All UK bat species are European Protected Species (EPS) and are, therefore, of international importance.

3.6.3 Otters

The desk study returned 27 records of otter, with the closest record located approximately 50 m north of the OnTDA, along Limpet Burn.

No field signs of otter were identified within the areas of the site surveyed to date. However, it is considered likely that watercourses within the site that are yet to be surveyed may support otter activity.

The Burn of Day, located within Fetteresso Forest, provides some foraging and commuting habitat for otter, and maintains ecological connectivity with more extensive habitat beyond the site boundary including Cowie Water to the north. Adjacent woodland and scrub habitats may offer suitable resting and sheltering opportunities for otter. In addition, drainage ditches associated with field margins and access tracks and roads may provide limited foraging habitat, where they are hydrologically connected to larger watercourses.

Otter is an EPS species and is considered to be of international importance.

3.6.4 Water Vole

The desk study returned seven records of water vole, with the nearest record located approximately 1 km north of the red-line boundary along Burn of Monboys.

No field evidence of water vole was identified within the surveyed areas of the site.

The Burn of Day, located within the west part of the survey boundary may provide foraging habitat for water vole, with suitable food sources, including rushes, present along sections of the burn. However, the burn is generally shallow and overshaded, and the absence of suitably sloping banks limits opportunities for burrow creation, nevertheless, connectivity is maintained with adjacent watercourses beyond the site boundary to the north. In accordance with criteria outlined in **Table 2-4**. the burn was assessed as being of suitable but poor quality. While the species may occur within the wider area, the habitat available within the site is considered sub-optimal and unlikely to support a significant population.

The Burn of Baulk and associated ditch are considered to offer Good to Optimal suitability with steep sided earthy banks for burrowing, permanent water and bankside vegetation.

The ditches to the south of the slug road were considered to be poor but suitable due to fluctuating water levels and lack of continuous bankside vegetation.

The ditch within landfall had no water at the time of survey and lacked connectivity with other watercourses. There were shallow slopes and arable crops planted right up to and on the banks of the ditch. It is considered to be of negligible suitability to water vole.

Water vole is protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA and is, therefore, considered to be of national (UK) importance.

3.6.5 Red Squirrel

The desk study returned 285 records of red squirrel, with multiple records located within the site.

Evidence of red squirrel activity was recorded during the survey, comprising foraged conifer cones within the conifer woodland in the western part of the site (**Appendix I: Photo 30**). No dreys were identified.

The coniferous woodland, broadleaved lines of trees, scrub and hedgerows on site provide suitable foraging habitat and sheltered commuting routes for red squirrel. The coniferous woodland also offers potential for drey-building habitat, particularly within semi-mature and mature stands. In addition, the site is well connected to suitable habitat beyond the site boundary, particularly to the north and west, through a network of woodland, hedgerows, and scrub habitats.

Red squirrel is protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA and is, therefore, considered to be of national (UK) importance.

3.6.6 Pine Marten

The desk study returned 33 records of pine marten with four records returned from inside the red-line boundary.

Three suspected pine marten scats were recorded within more open areas of the coniferous plantation woodland in the western part of the site (**Appendix I: Photo 31**). Two additional suspected pine marten scats were recorded on field boundaries near broadleaved woodland and lines of trees in agricultural land in the centre of the site.

The coniferous woodland and scrub present within the site provide suitable foraging habitat, sheltered commuting routes, and potential den creation habitat for pine marten. These habitats also facilitate ecological connectivity to extensive areas of coniferous woodland located to the west and northwest of the site, which offer additional foraging, commuting, and denning habitat for the species.

Pine marten is protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA and is, therefore, considered to be of national (UK) importance.

3.6.7 Badger

The desk study returned 86 records of badger within 2 km of the site with multiple records returned from within the site and adjacent to the red-line boundary.

Field evidence of badger was recorded during the survey, as detailed in the Confidential Badger Annex in **Appendix M**.

Suitable badger habitat for primary and secondary foraging exists on site, as well as for sett creation. There is good ecological connectivity to additional badger habitat outwith the site to the north, south and west.

Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and, therefore, are of national (UK) importance.

3.6.8 Wildcat

A desk-based study returned two historical records of wildcat sightings from 2009 and 2013, with the closest being located 130 m north of the site boundary. The reliability of these sightings could not be verified based on the information provided by NESBReC. Currently, there are no known populations of wildcat recorded within in the area of search.

No field evidence of wildcat was recorded during the survey.

The woodland habitat in the western part of the site, together with the extensive adjoining woodland, provides potentially suitable denning habitat, including opportunities associated with tree-root systems. The site and surrounding landscape also contain areas of woodland edge habitat that may offer additional denning opportunities, while scrub habitat and recently felled woodland are likely to support prey species suitable for wildcat. Overall, the site and the wider habitat network offer habitat features that could be utilised by dispersing individuals; however, in the absence of confirmed local populations and any field evidence, the likelihood of wildcat presence is considered low.

Wildcats are an EPS and are of international importance.

3.6.9 West European Hedgehog

The desk study returned 23 records of West European hedgehog, but no records were located within the red-line boundary. The closest record was located approximately 370 m south of the boundary, located within Stonehaven.

The grazed pastureland in the western and eastern parts of the site, together with the vegetated field margins and areas of mown grassland in the east, provide suitable foraging habitat for hedgehog. Areas of scrub located within the central and western parts of the site offer potential sheltering habitat and opportunities for hibernation. Four wood/brash piles were also identified outwith the centre of the site within 50 m of the south boundary, which could offer additional hibernation and sheltering habitat for hedgehog.

The site is also well connected to additional suitable habitat in the surrounding landscape, including further areas of grassland, deciduous woodland, scrub, and suburban gardens, which may facilitate the movement of hedgehogs between habitats and support the local population.

West European Hedgehog is listed as vulnerable on the IUCN GB Redlist and is therefore considered to be of national (UK) importance.

3.6.10 Brown Hare

Six records of brown hare were returned from the desk study, with the closest record being located approximately 10 m west of the site boundary.

A brown hare was observed during the field survey in farmland/pasture in the western part of the survey site.

The mixed arable and pastureland with vegetated margins throughout the site offers suitable foraging and resting habitat for brown hare, with rough grassland on field margins in the east offering sheltering and breeding habitat for the species.

Brown hare are partially protected during the closed season (1 February – 30 September) under Schedule 5 of the WCA and are, therefore, considered to be of national (UK) importance.

3.6.11 Reptiles

One record of an adder (*Vipera berus*) was returned from the desk study as well as ten records of common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*). The record of the adder was located approximately 1.7 km north-west of the site boundary, whilst the two records of common lizard were located within Fetteresso Forest in the west of the site.

During the field survey three common lizards were sighted in felled woodland and alongside tracks in Fetteresso Forest in the west of the site.

The rough grassland and scrub in the east of the site, together with the felled woodland in the west, provide suitable foraging and refuge habitat for reptiles. Tree stumps within the felled areas offer potential basking sites. Vegetated drystone walls in the east of the site and rock piles (**Appendix I: Photo 32**) recorded in the eastern, central and western areas provide suitable basking and hibernation habitat for reptiles, as do wood/brash piles located outwith the centre of the site within 50 m to the south. However, the adjacent arable land is considered sub-optimal for reptiles. Forestry tracks within the western part of the site may also provide suitable basking habitat and facilitate movement through the landscape. In contrast, the intensively managed farmland and dense conifer plantation woodland offer limited suitability for reptiles.

In accordance with the criteria outlined in **Section 2.2.14**, the more open areas of coniferous woodland, rough grassland, scrub, felled woodland, and forestry tracks in the western part of the site were assessed as providing moderate to high-quality reptile habitat, capable of potentially supporting a 'good' population. Conversely, the arable land, improved grassland, and dense conifer plantation woodland were assessed as being of low suitability for reptiles and is unlikely to support 'good' populations of reptiles.

Adder and common lizard are partially protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA and are therefore, considered to be of national (UK) importance.

3.6.12 Amphibians

Two records of common toad (*Bufo bufo*) were returned from the desk study, with the closest record located approximately 20 m east of the site boundary.

During the field survey, one juvenile common frog (*Rana temporaria*) was sighted on a track in felled woodland in the west, with tadpoles also sighted in small temporary pools within Fetteresso Forest (**Appendix I: Photo 33**).

No permanent ponds were present within the surveyed areas of the site or within a 50 m buffer, however, small temporary pools were located in boggy clearings within the woodland in the east of the survey site providing possible breeding habitat for amphibians. The wet grassland in the northwest offers foraging and commuting opportunities for amphibians, with additional terrestrial habitat present in grassland and woodland.

Common toad is a SBL species and is, therefore, considered to be of national (Scotland) importance. All other amphibian species found naturally in Scotland are considered of site importance.

3.6.13 Invertebrates

The landfall section and the eastern section of the cable route fall within a B-line corridor, indicating that the area forms part of a network identified as having the potential to enhance connectivity between existing pollinator habitat within the region, where habitat creation and enhancement measures are desirable. The site does not fall within an Important Invertebrate Area (IIA).

The desk study returned 190 records of invertebrates within 2 km of the survey site. Two species returned from the data search are listed on the SBL, the Northern brown argus (*Aricia artaxerxes*) and the bordered brown lacewing (*Megalomus hirtus*).

Invertebrate species recorded during the field survey comprised peacock butterfly (*Aglais io*), white-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus lucorum*), small tortoiseshell butterfly (*Aglais urticae*), 7-spot ladybird (*Coccinella septempunctata*), red-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus lapidaries*) and wood ant (*Formica* spp.).

The coastal grassland in the east of the site within landfall and adjacent areas offers suitable foraging and breeding habitat for the Northern brown argus, which is an SBL-listed species. The Garron Point SSSI on the eastern site boundary is also designated for this species. The grassland, scrub and woodland habitats within the site offer a range of habitats for invertebrates sheltering, foraging and basking.

The coastal grassland in the east of the site is considered to be of national (Scotland) importance for invertebrates due to the presence of an SBL species with suitable habitat and ecological connection to an SSSI designated for this species.

The remainder of the OnTDA is considered to be suitable for hosting common and widespread invertebrate species and the assemblage is therefore of site importance.

3.6.14 Birds

The desk study identified 97 bird species within 2 km of the survey site, with those of relevance to the site detailed below in **Table 3-4**.

Table 3-4: Relevant Bird Species Within 2 km of Site

Common name	Latin name	SBL	Designation[51]
Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*	No	BOCC – Red list
Herring Gull	*Larus argentatus*	Yes	BOCC – Red list
Grey Partridge	*Perdix perdix*	Yes	BOCC – Red list
House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	Yes	BOCC – Red list
Tree Sparrow	*Passer montanus*	Yes	BOCC – Red list
Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*	Yes	BOCC – Red list
Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*	Yes	BOCC – Red list
Velvet Scoter	*Melanitta fusca*	Yes	BOCC – Red list
Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	No	BOCC – Red list
Black-headed Gull	*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*	No	BOCC – Amber list
Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	Yes	BOCC – Amber list
Dunnock	*Prunella modularis*	No	BOCC – Amber list
Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	No	BOCC – Amber list
Song Thrush	*Turdus philomelos*	No	BOCC – Amber list
Light-bellied Brent Goose	*Branta bernicla hrota*	No	BOCC – Amber list

Bird species identified on site during the field survey are detailed in **Table 3-5** below.

Table 3-5: Bird Species Identified On-site During Survey

Common name	Latin name	SBL	Designation
European Greenfinch	*Chloris chloris*	No	BOCC – Red list
Grey Partridge	*Perdix perdix*	Yes	BOCC – Red list
Herring Gull	*Larus argentatus*	Yes	BOCC – Red list
Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*	Yes	BOCC – Red list
Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*	Yes	BOCC – Red list
Woodpigeon	*Columba palumbus*	No	BOCC – Amber list
Wren	*Troglodytes troglodytes*	No	BOCC – Amber list
Common Eider	*Somateria mollissima*	No	BOCC – Amber list

[51] Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) information available at: https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/publications/bocc-5-a5-4pp-single-pages.pdf.
Red-list criteria: Globally threatened, historical decline in the breeding population, severe breeding population decline over 25 years/longer term, severe non-breeding population decline over 25 years/longer term, severe breeding range decline over 25 years/longer term, severe non-breeding range decline over 25 years.
Amber-list criteria: Threatened in Europe, historical decline – recovery, moderate breeding population decline over 25 years/longer term, moderate non-breeding population decline over 25 years/longer term, moderate breeding range decline over 25 years/longer term, moderate non-breeding range decline over 25 years, breeding/non-breeding rarity, breeding/non-breeding localisation, breeding/non-breeding international importance.
Green list criteria: naturally occurring species with self-sustaining populations meeting none of the criteria for BOCC Amber or Red list species.

Common name	Latin name	SBL	Designation
Common Redshank	*Tringa totanus*	No	BOCC – Amber list
Dunnock	*Prunella modularis*	No	BOCC – Amber list
Eurasian Oystercatcher	*Haematopus ostralegus*	No	BOCC – Amber list
Blackbird	*Turdus merula*	No	BOCC – Green list
Carrion Crow	*Corvus corone*	No	BOCC – Green list
Chaffinch	*Fringilla coelebs*	No	BOCC – Green list
Chiffchaff	*Phylloscopus collybita*	No	BOCC – Green list
Coal Tit	*Periparus ater*	No	BOCC – Green list
Goldcrest	*Regulus regulus*	No	BOCC – Green list
Goldfinch	*Carduelis carduelis*	No	BOCC – Green list
Great Tit	*Parus major*	No	BOCC – Green list
Grey Heron	*Ardea cinerea*	No	BOCC – Green list
Robin	*Erithacus europaeus*	No	BOCC – Green list

Seven inactive bird nests, suspected to be corvid, woodpigeon or woodpecker, were identified in trees within the site in the east and west within Fetteresso Forest (**Appendix I: Photo 34**). Nine similar additional nests were identified outwith the site within 50 m of the site boundary. A large number of barn owl pellets were observed within the stone outbuilding on the woodland edge in the west of the site, adjacent to Fetteresso Forest (**Appendix I: Photo 35**), though a suitable nesting place was not observed at this location due to an open roof space and thin beams of the roofing of the building.

The woodland, scrub, grassland, arable land, hedgerows and lines of trees on site offer foraging and nesting opportunities for a range of bird species. The arable crops offer foraging and nesting opportunities for farmland birds and over-wintering foraging resources for species such as geese and swans. A population of nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*) is known to occur within the local area, and suitable habitat for this species is present both within the site and in the surrounding area, including areas of young conifer woodland and heathland. In addition, more mature plantation woodland within the site, together with areas of open hill ground in the wider survey area, provide suitable breeding, foraging and hunting habitat for a range of raptor species.

Annex 1 birds are of international importance, whilst Schedule 1 birds or birds on the red list are of national (UK) importance. Birds on SBL are of national (Scotland) importance, those on the amber list are of regional importance and green listed birds are of local importance in line with Birds of Conservation Concern list.

All wild bird species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

3.6.15 Fish

No records of fish were returned from the desk study.

No impassable barriers to fish passage[52] are located within the survey area or on the Burn of Day. The Burn of Day flows into Cowie Water, which has passable obstacles to fish passage in Stonehaven. The Stonehaven and District Angling Association notes[53] that sea trout/brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) and Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) are present within Cowie Water, of which the Burn of Day is a tributary.

The substrate in the Burn of Day comprised pebbles and grit with occasional cobbles, and sediment in the western extent where it flows through grassland. The water depth was perceived to be approximately 5 – 20 cm with a channel width of 0.5 – 2 m. This provides suitable foraging and residing habitat for salmonids and European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), however, low water levels may limit species residence. The Burn of Day provides connectivity to Cowie Water approximately 1.6 km north of the site boundary from where the burn leaves the site. Therefore, it is possible that fish species could utilise the burn habitat within the site.

Atlantic salmon are listed on the IUCN Red List for Great Britain[54] as endangered, therefore, they are of national (UK) importance. European eel are listed as critically endangered on the global IUCN Red List[55], therefore, they are of international importance. Sea trout/brown trout, brook lamprey, river lamprey, and sea lamprey are all listed as priority species on the SBL, therefore, they are of national (Scotland) importance.

3.6.16 Freshwater Pearl Mussel

No records of freshwater pearl mussel were returned from the desk study.

The field survey identified that the Burn of Day provides limited suitable habitat for freshwater pearl mussel. Extensive sedimentation within the western extent of the survey area reduces the availability of suitable substrate, and the shallow, slow-flowing nature of the watercourse is unlikely to provide well-oxygenated aquatic conditions required to support freshwater pearl mussels.

Freshwater pearl mussel is listed as endangered on the global IUCN Red List[56], therefore, it is of international importance.

[52] SEPA WMS (2026) Obstacles to Fish Passage. Available at: https://marine.gov.scot/?q=maps/1746 (Accessed April 2026)
[53] Stonehaven & District Angling Association. Available at: https://www.stonehavenangling.com/information.html (Accessed April 2026)
[54] IUCN (2026). Red List of Threatened Species. Available at: https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/213546282/213546288 (Accessed June 2026)
[55] IUCN (2026). Red List of Threatened Species. Available at: https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/60344/152845178 (Accessed June 2026)
[56] IUCN (2026). Red List of Threatened Species. Available at: https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/12799/128686456 (Accessed June 2026)

3.7 Baseline Summary

A summary of findings for Important Ecological Features (IEFs) considered within this assessment and their level of geographical importance is provided in **Table 3-6** to **Table 3-8** below.

Table 3-6: IEFs relevant to the Bellrock Project – Designated Sites

Important Ecological Feature	Present Within the Site	Connected to the Site / Impact pathway	Geographic Level of Importance
Garron Point SSSI	No	Yes	National (UK)
Garron Point SAC	No	No	International
Fowlsheugh SSSI	No	Yes	National (UK)
Fowlsheugh SPA	No	Yes	International
Loch of Lumgair SSSI	No	No	National (UK)
Red Moss of Netherley SSSI	No	No	National (UK)
Red Moss of Netherley SAC	No	No	International
Loch of Skene SSSI	No	Yes	National (UK)
Loch of Skene SPA / RAMSAR	No	Yes	International
Muchalls to Stonehaven Bay LNCS	Yes	Yes	County
Mergie LNCS	No	No	County
Elfhill LNCS	No	No	County
Downie Point to Todhead Coast LNCS	No	No	County
Fetteresso LNCS	No	No	County

Table 3-7: IEFs relevant to the Bellrock Project - Habitats

Important Ecological Feature	Condition Assessment	Geographic Level of Importance
Bracken	N/A	Site
Other neutral grassland	Poor / Moderate	Site
Holcus Juncus neutral grassland	Moderate	Regional
Modified grassland	Poor	Site
Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Moderate	Regional
Other broadleaved woodland	Poor	Regional
Other woodland - mixed	Poor	Site
Other coniferous woodland	Poor	Site
Other native hedgerow	Moderate	Regional
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	Poor	Site
Gorse scrub	Moderate	Regional
Mixed scrub	Poor	Regional
Willow scrub	Poor	Regional
Arable and horticulture	N/A	Site
Cereal crops	N/A	Site

Important Ecological Feature	Condition Assessment	Geographic Level of Importance
Non-cereal crops	N/A	Site
Developed land with a sealed surface	N/A	Negligible
Buildings	N/A	Site
Built linear features	N/A	Negligible
Soft rock sea cliff	Moderate - Good	Regional
Other rivers and streams	Poor – Fairly Good	Site - Regional
Splash zone with lichens	Good	Regional
Other littoral rock	Good	Regional
Beach	Good	Regional

Table 3-8: IEFs relevant to the Bellrock Project – Protected and Notable Species

Important Ecological Feature	Evidence found within the Survey Area	Suitable Habitat within the Survey Area	Geographic Level of Importance
Ash	Yes	Yes	National (Scotland)
INNS	Yes	Yes	Negative
Bats	No	Yes	International
Otter	No	Yes	International
Water vole	No	Yes	National (UK)
Red squirrel	Yes	Yes	National (UK)
Pine marten	Yes	Yes	National (UK)
Badger	Yes	Yes	National (UK)
Wildcat	No	Yes	International
West European hedgehog	No	Yes	National (UK)
Brown hare	Yes	Yes	National (UK)
Reptiles	Yes	Yes	National (UK)
Amphibians	Yes	Yes	National (Scotland) / Site
Invertebrates	Yes	Yes	National (Scotland) / Site
Birds	Yes	Yes	National (UK) / National (Scotland) / Local Importance
Fish	No	Yes	International / National (UK) / National (Scotland)
Freshwater pearl mussel	No	No	National (UK)

4 FURTHER SURVEY AND LICENSING

The following recommendations for further survey and assessment are required to inform an OnTDA Environmental Impact Assessment.

4.1 Further Survey Work

Ecological data is generally valid for 12-18 months. It is not envisaged that habitats or their suitability for protected species will change significantly within that timeframe. It is, however recommended that if a period of 18 months or more has passed between surveys being conducted and planning being submitted, that findings are reviewed and update surveys are considered to ensure baseline data remains valid.

4.1.1 Habitats

4.1.1.1 Biodiversity Net Gain

Planning Advice from Aberdeenshire Council[57] strongly encourages the use of the Biodiversity Metric for all major development, therefore, a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment should be undertaken to document resulting net gains or losses across the site. This calculation will be informed by the habitat condition assessments undertaken during the PEA survey.

4.1.1.2 National Vegetation Classification (NVC)

On-site habitats identified as potential Annex 1, SBL Priority, GWDTE and Priority Peatlands will be subjected to a NVC survey to confirm status and inform any required mitigation measures.

4.1.2 Protected Species

4.1.2.1 Bats

Suitable habitat of moderate and high quality for bats is present within the survey site, therefore, automatic static detector surveys and night-time bat walkover surveys are recommended to assess the presence and habitat use of bats on site to inform impact assessment and potential mitigation measures.

[57] Aberdeenshire Council (2025) *Planning pre-application advice*. Available at: https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications/pre-application-advice/ (Accessed January 2025)

Aerial inspection surveys of PRF trees within the site and within a 30 m buffer are also recommended to confirm PRF suitability and determine the presence of roosting bat populations.

Two buildings and a bridge structure within the site were assessed as offering low potential to host roosting bats. If works are required within 30 m of these buildings, then a bat activity survey during the main bat activity season (May to August inclusive) is recommended to determine the presence and likely absence of roosting bats.

4.1.2.2 Red Squirrel

Suitable habitat for red squirrel is extensive in the west of the survey site and squirrel foraging signs were recorded during field surveys. Therefore, a targeted red squirrel survey is recommended within Fetteresso Forest to inform an impact assessment and possible mitigation measures and requirements.

4.1.2.3 Pine Marten

Suitable pine marten habitat is present in Fetteresso Forest and suspected pine marten field evidence was recorded during survey, therefore, a targeted survey for pine marten is recommended, to inform an impact assessment and possible mitigation measures.

4.1.2.4 Reptiles

Suitable habitat for reptiles of moderate quality was present on the site and reptiles were sighted during the survey. Therefore, a reptile survey of these areas of suitable habitat is recommended to assess the reptile species and their abundance within the survey site.

4.1.2.5 Birds

Suitable habitat for a range of bird species is present within the site, therefore, breeding bird surveys, raptor surveys and nightjar surveys are recommended to determine breeding habitat, occupancy and locations and possible territories within the survey OnTDA.

4.1.2.6 Otter, Water Vole and Fish Habitat Assessment

Suitable habitat for otter, water vole and fish exists within watercourses of the survey site. Targeted surveys for these species are, therefore, recommended within the survey site and within watercourses up to 200 m up and downstream of waterbodies to confirm habitat suitability, identify field evidence of these species and inform impact assessment and possible mitigation measures.

4.1.2.7 Invertebrates

Given the site's proximity to Garron Point SSSI, which is designated for Northern brown argus, the presence of nearby records and suitable habitat within the site, it is recommended that targeted Northern brown argus surveys are conducted to confirm presence within the landfall area and to inform impact assessment and mitigation if required.

APPENDICES

A SITE LOCATION PLAN

[Figures within this report have been redacted, and will be presented within the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Environmental Impact Assessment Report]

B SUMMARY OF PROTECTED SPECIES LEGISLATION

European Protected Species (all bats, wildcat, otter and natterjack toad)

European Protected Species (EPS) are protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (the "Habitat Regulations") as amended. Under this legislation it is an offence to deliberately or recklessly:

- Capture, injure or kill such an animal;
- Harass an animal or group of animals;
- Disturb an animal while it is occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection;
- Disturb an animal while it is rearing or otherwise caring for its young;
- Obstruct access to a breeding site or resting place, or otherwise deny an animal use of a breeding site or resting place;
- Disturb an animal in a manner or in circumstances likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species;
- Disturb an animal in a manner or in circumstances likely to impair its ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or rear or otherwise care for its young;
- Disturb an animal while it is migrating or hibernating;
- Take or destroy its eggs; and
- Possess, control, transport, sell or exchange specimens of any animal listed on Annex IV of the Habitats Directive. This applies to living or dead specimens and to their derivatives.

It is an offence of strict liability to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal. These sites and places are protected even when the animal is not present.

A licence may be issued to permit the otherwise unlawful activities listed above if these three tests are satisfied:

- There must be a licensable purpose which includes 'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment';
- There is 'no satisfactory alternative'; and
- The derogation (i.e. any permission/licence granted) is 'not detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range'.

Red Squirrel/Pine Marten/Fresh Water Pearl Mussel

These species are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Subject to certain exceptions, it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- Kill, injure or take (capture) an individual;
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which they use for shelter or protection;
- Disturb an individual while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose; or to
- Possess or control, sell, offer for sale or possess or transport for the purpose of sale any live or dead animal or any derivative of such an animal.

Knowingly causing or permitting any of the above acts to be carried out is also an offence.

In some cases, licenses may be issued by NatureScot to enable certain otherwise illegal activities to take place for social, economic or environmental reasons (including development) as long as:

- The licensed activity will contribute to significant social, economic or environmental benefit;
- There is no satisfactory alternative; and
- There will be no significant negative impact on the conservation status of the species.

Water Vole

Water voles are partially protected under Schedule 5, Part 4 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to 'intentionally or recklessly':

- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which a water vole uses for shelter or protection; or to
- Disturb a water vole while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

Knowingly causing or permitting any of the above acts to be carried out is also an offence.

In some cases, licenses may be issued by NatureScot to enable certain otherwise illegal activities to take place for social, economic or environmental reasons (including development) as long as:

- The licensed activity will contribute to significant social, economic or environmental benefit;
- There is no satisfactory alternative; and
- There will be no significant negative impact on the conservation status of the species.

Badger

Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act (1992) (as amended). Offences under the Act include:

- Wilfully taking, injuring or killing a badger;
- Cruelty to a badger;
- Intentional or reckless interference with a badger sett;
- Sale or possession of a badger; and
- Marking or ringing of a badger.

Interfering with a badger sett includes:

- damaging or destroying a sett or any part of it;
- obstructing access to a sett;
- disturbing a badger while it is in a sett; and
- causing or allowing a dog to enter a badger sett.

Where an offence is committed the individual (as well as the body corporate, Scottish partnership or, as the case may be, unincorporated association) is guilty of the offence and is liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.

Licences can only permit someone to 'interfere' with a badger sett for the purpose of development. A licence cannot permit the removal, translocation or killing of badgers for the purpose of development.

Interference primarily means anything that might:

- disturb any badger in a sett; and
- damage or block the tunnels that radiate from a sett's entrances.

Licences aren't generally issued during the breeding season (30 November to 1 July). Activities that necessarily involve disturbance should be scheduled to take place outside of this period.

Brown Hare

Brown hares are partially protected under Schedule 5A of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take an individual within the closed season. The closed season for brown hare is 1 February to 30 September.

Birds

All wild bird species in the UK are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), with species listed on Schedules A1, 1 and 1A afforded additional protection.

For any wild bird species, it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- kill, injure or take a bird;
- take, damage, destroy or interfere with a nest of any bird while it is in use or being built;
- obstruct or prevent any bird from using its nest;
- take or destroy an egg of any bird;
- possess or control a living or dead wild bird; and
- possess or control an egg of a wild bird (or any such derivatives).

For any wild bird species listed on Schedule 1, it is an offence to disturb:

- any bird while it is building a nest;
- any bird while it is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young;
- any bird while lekking; and
- the dependent young of any bird.

For any wild bird species listed on Schedule 1A, it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly harass any bird.

For any wild bird species listed on Schedule A1, it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly take, damage, destroy or interfere at any time with a nest habitually used by any bird.

Licences cannot be issued for the purpose of development in relation to any of the above offences.

Reptiles

Common lizards, slow worms and adders are partially protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under the legislation you are not permitted to intentionally or recklessly permit or cause the killing and injury of individuals.

Licences permitting otherwise unlawful acts in relation to the above are not available for development purposes.

Invertebrates

Marsh fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) is protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended). This makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- kill, injure, or take a protected invertebrate;
- damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which such an invertebrate uses for shelter or protection; and
- disturb such an invertebrate when it is occupying a structure or place for shelter or protection.

Knowingly causing or permitting any of the above acts to be carried out is also an offence.

In some cases licenses may be issued by NatureScot to enable certain otherwise illegal activities to take place for social, economic or environmental reasons (including development) as long as:

- the licensed activity will contribute to significant social, economic or environmental benefit;
- there is no satisfactory alternative; and
- there will be no significant negative impact on the conservation status of the species.

Fish

Atlantic salmon is protected under Annex II and V of the EC Habitats Directive, and the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003. Atlantic salmon are also listed as a SBL priority species.

River lamprey, sea lamprey and brook lamprey are protected under Annexes II and V of the EU Habitats Directive, Appendix III of the Bern Convention, and are SBL priority list species (marine part of life cycle for river lamprey).

Like many other freshwater fish, brown/sea (anadromous form) trout are protected from certain methods and seasons of exploitation, however, do not receive extensive protection within conservation legislation. Brown/sea trout are, however, listed as a SBL priority species.

It is an offence to fish for or take eel under the Freshwater Fish Conservation (Prohibition on Fishing for Eels) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 except without a licence granted by Scottish Ministers. Eels are also listed in Appendix II of CITES and listed as a SBL priority species.

Invasive Non-Native Species (Plants)

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to plant, or otherwise cause to grow, any plant in the wild at a location outside its native range.

'Native range' is defined in the 1981 Act as, "the locality to which the animal or plant of that type is indigenous, and does not refer to any locality to which that type of animal or plant has been imported (whether intentionally or otherwise) by any person."

The Scottish Governments Non-natives Code of Practice[58] defines 'in the wild'. Just about everywhere is wild except for:

- arable and horticultural land;
- improved pasture;
- settlements; and
- private and public gardens.

In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to obtain a licence from NatureScot to permit the above offence.

[58] https://www.gov.scot/publications/non-native-species-code-practice/

C GEOGRAPHICAL LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE OF ECOLOGICAL FEATURES

Level of Importance	Sites	Habitats	Species
International	Designated, candidate or proposed Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites; UNESCO (Ecological) World Heritage Sites; UNESCO Biosphere Reserves; Biogenetic Reserves.	A viable area of habitat included in Annex I of the EC Habitats Directive; a habitat area that is critical for a part of the life cycle of an internationally important species.	A European Protected Species; an IUCN Red Data Book species that is globally Vulnerable, Endangered or Critically Endangered; a Category A internationally important bryophyte assemblage[59].
National (UK)	Sites of Special Scientific Interest; National Nature Reserves; Marine Conservation Zones (UK offshore).	An area of habitat fulfilling the criteria for designation as an SSSI or MCZ; a habitat area that is critical for a part of the life cycle of a nationally important species.	An IUCN Red Data Book species that is Vulnerable, Endangered or Critically Endangered in the UK; a species that is Rare in the UK (<15 per 10km grid square); a Schedule 5[60] (animal) or Schedule 8 (plant) species included in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; any species protected under national (UK) legislation where there is the potential for a breach of the legislation; a Category A nationally important bryophyte assemblage[61]; a species that is Vulnerable, Endangered or Critically Endangered in The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain[62].
National (Scotland)	National Parks, Marine Protected Areas, Marine Consultation Areas	Scottish Biodiversity List (SBL) Priority Habitats and ancient woodland.	SBL Priority Species and PMFs

[59] Averis, A.B.G, Genney, D.R, Hodgetts, N.G, Rothero, G.P. & Bainbridge, I.P. 2012. Bryological assessment for hydroelectric schemes in the west highlands – 2nd edition. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 449b

[60] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/schedule/5/enacted

[61] Averis, A.B.G, Genney, D.R, Hodgetts, N.G, Rothero, G.P. & Bainbridge, I.P. 2012. Bryological assessment for hydroelectric schemes in the west highlands – 2nd edition. Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 449b

[62] Cheffings, C.M. & Farrell, L. (eds), Dines, T.D., Jones, R.A., Leach, S.J., McKean, D.R., Pearman, D.A., Preston, C.D., Rumsey, F.J., Taylor, I. (2005) *The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain. Species Status No. 7*. JNCC, Peterborough. Available at: https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/cc1e96f8-b105-4dd0-bd87-4a4f60449907

Level of Importance	Sites	Habitats	Species
Regional	Regional Parks (Scotland).	Regional Local Biodiversity Action Plan habitats noted as requiring protection.	A species that is Nationally Scarce in the UK (present in 16 to 100 10 km grid squares); a species that is included in the Regional LBAP; an assemblage of regionally scarce species.
County/ Metropolitan	Local Nature Reserves; Woodland Trust Sites; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Sites; Local Wildlife Sites.	County LBAP habitats noted as requiring protection.	A species that is included in the County LBAP; an assemblage of species that are scarce at the county level.
Local	-	Semi-natural habitats that are unique or important in the local area.	Species as defined by Local Authority lists (if available).
Site	-	Common and widespread habitats not covered above.	Common and widespread species not covered above.
Negligible	-	Habitats not considered to have any importance	-
Negative	-	-	An Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) as defined by the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNSS) and supported by the GB Invasive Non-native Species Strategy (2015) or listed in NatureScot Developing with Nature Guidance.

D GEOGRAPHICAL LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE OF ORNITHOLOGICAL FEATURES

Level of Importance	Assessment Criteria		
	Legal Protection	**Conservation Status**	**Population Size**
International	Any species within Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive	Any species which is listed as Critically Endangered or Endangered on the IUCN Red List	Supporting greater than 1% of the EC population
National (UK)	Any species within Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act	Any species on the BoCC Red List	Supporting greater than 1% of the UK population
National (England)	**-**	Any species that is listed as Species of Principal Importance for Conservation; any species on the BoCC Red List	Supporting greater than 5% of the English population
National (Scotland)	-	Any species on the Scottish Biodiversity List	Supporting greater than 5% of the Scottish population
National (Ireland & Northern Ireland)	**-**	Any species on the Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2014-19 (BoCCI)	Supporting greater than 5% of the Irish population
National (Wales)	**-**	Any species in the Section 7 list of Species of Principal Importance for Conservation; Any species considered to be in decline in The State of Birds in Wales 2011 (SBW)	Supporting greater than 5% of the Welsh population
Regional	-	Any species on the BoCC Amber List	Supporting greater than 0.5% of the UK population
County	-	Any species that is listed as a Priority Species in the LBAP	Supporting greater than 0.05% of the UK population
Local	-	BoCC Green List; or species with no conservation concern; common and widespread throughout the UK	Supporting less than 0.05% of the UK population

E DESIGNATED SITES

[Figures within this report have been redacted, and will be presented within the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Environmental Impact Assessment Report]

F ANCIENT WOODLAND

[Figures within this report have been redacted, and will be presented within the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Environmental Impact Assessment Report]

G NATIVE WOODLAND

[Figures within this report have been redacted, and will be presented within the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Environmental Impact Assessment Report]

H HABITAT SURVEY PLAN

[Figures within this report have been redacted, and will be presented within the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Environmental Impact Assessment Report]

I PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1: Bracken in the east of landfall area near the coastline.



Photo 2: Other neutral grassland in the northwest of site in Fetteresso Forest.



Photo 3: Holcus Juncus neutral grassland in the west of site in Fetteresso Forest adjacent to Burn of Day.



Photo 4: Modified grassland pasture in the west of site.



Photo 5: Line of broadleaved trees in the east of site in landfall area.



Photo 6: Other coniferous plantation woodland in the northwest of site in Fetteresso Forest.



Photo 7: Other coniferous plantation woodland in the west of site in Fetteresso Forest that had been clear felled and showed regeneration.



Photo 8: Other native hedgerow on field margins in the east within landfall area.



Photo 9: Non-native and ornamental hedgerow in the west in agricultural land adjacent to Fetteresso Forest.



Photo 10: Gorse scrub in the west of site adjacent to Fetteresso Forest.

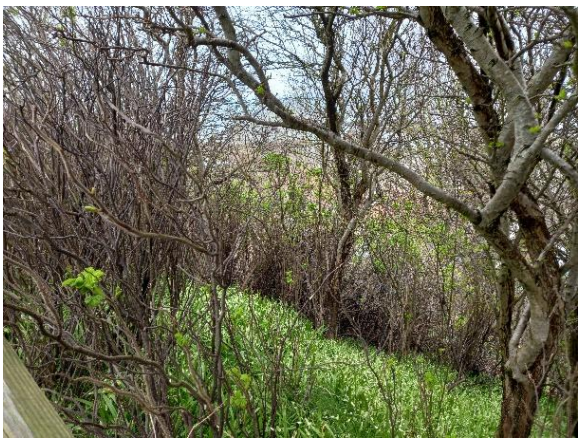


Photo 11: Mixed scrub near the coastline in the east within landfall area.



Photo 12: Willow scrub on the coastline in the east of landfall area.



Photo 13: Ploughed arable fields in the east within landfall area.



Photo 14: Fields with young cereal crops in the west of site south of Fetteresso Forest.



Photo 15: Sheds/garages by the coastline in Stonehaven in landfall area.



Photo 16: Stone outbuilding with associated ruins in the west of site bordering Fetteresso Forest.



Photo 17: Wooden shed by railway in east within landfall area.



Photo 18: Maritime cliffs and slopes in the east within landfall area.



Photo 19: Burn of Day (other rivers and streams habitat) in the west of site within Fetteresso Forest.



Photo 20: Other littoral rock on the coastline in the east in landfall area.



Photo 21: Rhododendron INNS on northwest site boundary on edge of Fetteresso Forest.



Photo 22: Garden/hybrid bluebell INNS in coastal grassland in the east within landfall area.



Photo 23: Buddleia INNS adjacent to the railway in the east within landfall area.



Photo 24: Japanese rose INNS in mixed scrub near the east site boundary in landfall area.



Photo 25: Sea buckthorn INNS in mixed scrub near the east site boundary in landfall area.

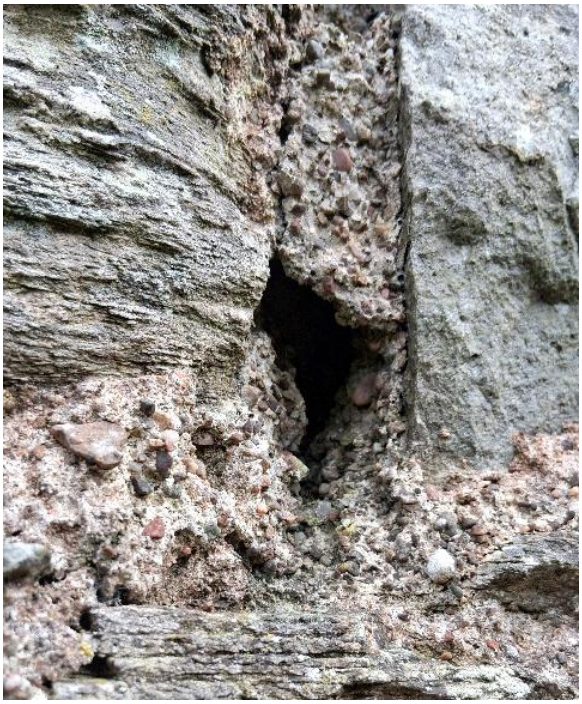


Photo 26: PRFs for bats via gaps in stonework/mortar in stone outbuilding in the west of site adjacent to Fetteresso Forest.



Photo 27: PRFs for bats via gaps in stonework in railway bridge in the east in landfall area.



Photo 28: Field outbuilding in agricultural land in west of site with PRFs for bats were present in wooden fascia.

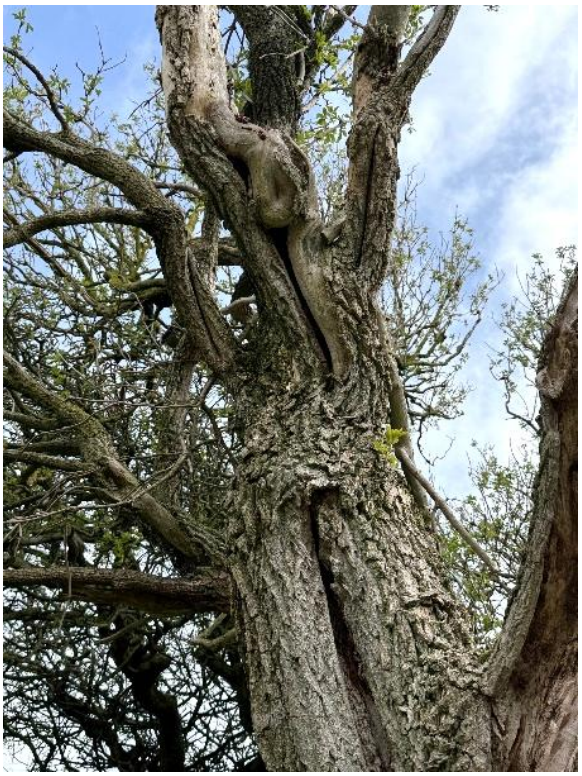


Photo 29: PRFs for bats in tree in the east in landfall area.



Photo 30: Coniferous cones with signs of squirrel foraging in forest in the west adjacent to Fetteresso Forest.



Photo 31: Scat likely to be pine marten in forest in the west within Fetteresso Forest.



Photo 32: Reptile habitat (rock pile) in the west adjacent to Fetteresso Forest.



Photo 33: Common frog tadpoles were identified in temporary pools in more open areas of Fetteresso Forest in the west of site.



Photo 34: Inactive bird nest in tree crown in the east within landfall area.



Photo 35: Barn owl pellets in stone outbuilding in the west adjacent to Fetteresso Forest.

J HABITAT CONDITION ASSESSMENTS

Condition Sheet: COASTAL Habitat Type

UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Types

Sparsely vegetated land - Coastal sand dunes
Sparsely vegetated land - Coastal vegetated shingle
Sparsely vegetated land - Maritime cliff and slopes

Habitat Description

See UKHab

On-site or off-site, site name and location		**Survey date and Surveyor name**	
Limitations (if applicable)		**Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)**	

Habitat parcel reference										
31625 241										
Grid reference										
NO 88250 87052										

Condition Assessment Criteria		**Criterion passed (Yes or No)**										**Notes (such as justification)**
A	The parcel represents a good example of its specific habitat type, with characteristic indicator species present in the typical successional stages, transitions and or mosaics, at sufficient cover and frequency to be a good example.[1] **Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition.**	Yes										
B	Vegetation structure (sward height variation, zonation) is varied and not uniform.	Yes										
C	Naturally open ground or bare surfaces are present as part of a sequence of colonisation and succession.	Yes										
D	Coastal processes needed to support the habitat are functional and are not modified by hard engineering or other forms of negative intervention.	Yes										
E	The landform reflects the interaction of coastal processes and geology, and there is a varied topography present supporting the relevant range of habitat types.	Yes										
F	There is an absence of invasive non-native species[2] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[3]). Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition[4] and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area.	No										
G	Any scrub (including bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.) present accounts for less than 10% of the area within the habitat or bare substrate matrix. Blocks of scrub or woodland, which might be desirable in their own right should be classified and mapped separately.	No										
H	Water quality and quantity (for example, seasonal fluctuations in dune slacks or seepages on cliff slopes) is sufficient to support the range of water-dependent parts of the habitat.	Yes										

Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		Yes										
Number of criteria passed		6										
Condition Assessment Result (out of 8 criteria)	**Condition Assessment Score**	**Score Achieved ×/✓**										
Passes 7 or 8 criteria including essential criterion A	Good (3)											
Passes 5 or 6 criteria; OR Passes 7 criteria excluding essential criterion A	Moderate (2)	Yes										
Passes 4 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)											

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

Notes

Footnote 1 - Professional judgement should be used alongside the UKHab description.

Footnote 2 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement.

Footnote 3 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Footnote 4 - General coastal species indicative of suboptimal condition: creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* , spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare* , curled dock *Rumex crispus* , broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* , common nettle *Urtica dioica* , bramble, white willow *Salix alba* hybrids, sea buckthorn *Hippophae rhamnoides* (only outside its restricted native range), and non-native garden plants.

Grassland species indicative of suboptimal condition: creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* , spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare* , curled dock *Rumex crispus* , broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* , common nettle *Urtica dioica* , creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* , greater plantain *Plantago major* and cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* .

Heathland species indicative of suboptimal condition: bracken *Pteridium aquilinum.*

There may be additional relevant species local to the region and or site.

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (medium, high and very high distinctiveness)

UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Types

Grassland - Lowland calcareous grassland
Grassland - Lowland dry acid grassland
Grassland - Lowland meadows
Grassland - Other lowland acid grassland
Grassland - Other neutral grassland
Grassland - Tall herb communities (H6430) [Not to be confused with the Tall forbs secondary code – see UKHab guidance for details.]
Grassland - Upland acid grassland
Grassland - Upland calcareous grassland
Grassland - Upland hay meadows
Sparsely vegetated land - Calaminarian grassland

Habitat Description

ukhab – UK Habitat Classification												
On-site or off-site, site name and location		**Survey date and Surveyor name**										
		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)										
Limitations (if applicable)		**Habitat parcel reference**										
		3110976 0	31119471	3111952 2	3111955 0	3111956 9	1, 2, 3111941 2, 9, 3111941	10, 11, 3, 3111947 1, 5, 3111960				
Condition Assessment Criteria		**Grid reference**										
		NO 80387 86677	NO 88146 87011	NO 87845 86864	NO 87543 87223	NO 87573 87082	Multiple	Multiple				
		Criterion passed (Yes or No)										**Notes (such as justification)**
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type (and relative to Footnote 3 suboptimal species which may be listed in the UKHab description).[1] **Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.**	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes				
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
C	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens[2].	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				
D	Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.) is less than 5%.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes				
E	Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition[3] and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species[4] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[5]) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	No	No	No	No	No	No	No				
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for all non-acid grassland types												
F	There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m^2 present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type (species referenced in Footnote 3 and 5 cannot contribute towards this count). **Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.**	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No				
Essential criterion for Good condition achieved (for non-acid grassland) (Yes or No)		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes				
Number of criteria passed		4	4	2	3	3	3	4				
Condition Assessment Result	**Condition Assessment Score**	**Score Achieved ×/✓**										
Acid grassland types (Result out of 5 criteria)												
Passes 5 criteria	Good (3)											
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)											
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)											
Non-acid grassland types (Result out of 6 criteria)												
Passes 5 or 6 criteria, including essential criterion A and additional criterion F.	Good (3)											
Passes 3 - 5 criteria, including essential criterion A.	Moderate (2)	Yes	Yes		Yes			Yes				
Passes 2 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 3 or 4 criteria excluding criterion A and F.	Poor (1)			Yes		Yes	Yes					

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

Notes

Footnote 1 - Professional judgement should be used alongside the UKHab description.

Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing for plant colonisation, or localised patches not exceeding 5% cover.

Footnote 3 - Species indicative of suboptimal condition for this habitat type include: creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* , spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare* , curled dock *Rumex crispus* , broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* , common nettle *Urtica dioica* , creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* , greater plantain *Plantago major* , white clover *Trifolium repens* and cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* . There may be additional relevant species local to the region and or site.

Footnote 4 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, by applying professional judgement.

Footnote 5 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)

UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type

Grassland - Modified grassland

Habitat Description

ukhab – UK Habitat Classification

On-site or off-site, site name and location		**Survey date and Surveyor name**									
		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)									
Limitations (if applicable)		**Habitat parcel reference**									
		31119495	32037851	32652112	32696129	12, 13	31109831, 31109[illegible]				
		Grid reference									
		NO 87850 86807	NO 85039 87260	NO 80762 85798	NO 83420 87351	Multiple	Multiple				

Condition Assessment Criteria												**Notes (such as justification)**
		Criterion passed (Yes or No)										
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m^2 present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). **Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.** Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m^2 (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	No	Yes	No	No	No	No					
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	No	No	No	No	No	No					
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No					
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens)[2].	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
F	Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species[3] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[4]).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
	Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)	No	Yes	No	No	No	No					
	Number of criteria passed	5	3	5	4	5	4					

Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	**Condition Assessment Score**	**Score Achieved ×/✓**									
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)										
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)										
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

Footnotes

Footnote 1 – Creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* , spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare* , curled dock *Rumex crispus* , broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* , common nettle *Urtica dioica* , creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* , greater plantain *Plantago major* , white clover *Trifolium repens* and cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* .

Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover.

Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement.

Footnote 4 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Condition sheet: HEDGEROW Habitat Types

Habitat Type

Native hedgerow
Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch
Native hedgerow with trees
Native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch
Species-rich native hedgerow
Species-rich native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch
Species-rich native hedgerow with trees
Species-rich native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch

Habitat Description

ukhab – UK Habitat Classification

On-site or off-site, site name and location		**Survey date and Surveyor name**	
Limitations (if applicable)		**Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)**	

Condition Assessment Details

A series of ten attributes, representing key physical characteristics are used for this assessment. Each attribute is assigned to one of five functional groups (A – E) and the condition of a hedgerow is assessed according to the number of attributes from these functional groups which pass or fail the 'favourable condition' criteria.

This assessment is based on the Hedgerow Survey Handbook[1] and Favourable Conservation Status document[2]. For further clarification please refer to the Hedgerow Survey Handbook.

Best practice would be to record the species, age, spacing and other key information about all trees present along a hedgerow within the 'Habitat Description' box, as well as other key features of the hedgerow.

Hedgerow favourable condition attributes

Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D and E)		**Criteria - the minimum requirements for 'favourable condition'**	**Criteria description**	**Habitat parcel reference**										**Notes (such as justification)**
				31119 413	31119 526	31119 574	31119 590	3203 7863	3203 7891	3217 6457	3269 6210	3269 6215		
				Grid reference										
				NO 88131 87225	NO 88124 87028	NO 87790 86975	NO 83321 87025	NO 8514 9	NO 8506 9	NO 8505 9	NO 8455 7	NO 8461 9		
Core groups - applicable to all hedgerow types				**Criterion passed (Yes or No)**										
A1.	Height	>1.5 m average along length	The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
A2.	Width	>1.5 m average along length	The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
B1.	Gap - hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes		

B2.	Gap - hedge canopy continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m	This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No		(32037863) Lots of small gaps ans one large one (32176457) Lots of big gaps
C1.	Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: · Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and · Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least).	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		
C2.	Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground.	The indicator species used are nettles *Urtica* spp., cleavers *Galium aparine* and docks *Rumex* spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No		(32176457) Lots of nettle and cleavers
D1.	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[3]) and recently introduced species.	Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website[4], as well as the BSBI website[5] where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora'[6] contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website[7].	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
D2.	Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No		
Additional group - applicable to hedgerows with trees only															
E1.	Tree class	There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient[8]), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	This criterion addresses if there are a range of age-classes or morphologies which allow for replacement of trees and provide opportunities for different species.								Yes	Yes		(32176457) Confirm mature trees some in good condition, others with significant health issues
E2.	Tree health	At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	This criterion identifies if the trees are subject to damage which compromises the survival and health of the individual specimens.								No			(32176457) Confirm

The hedgerow condition assessment generates a weighting (score) ranging from 1 - 3, which is used within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The scores for each are set out in the tables below.

Condition categories for hedgerows without trees			**Score achieved**						
Category	**Category Requirements**	**Metric Score**							
Good	No more than 2 failures in total; **AND** No more than 1 failure in any functional group.	3							

Moderate	No more than 4 failures in total; **AND** Does not fail both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and C2 = Moderate condition).	2							
Poor	Fails a total of more than 4 attributes; **OR** Fails both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	1							
	Score achieved:	7							
Condition categories for hedgerows with trees			**Score achieved**						
Category	**Category Requirements**	**Metric score**							
Good	No more than 2 failures in total; **AND** No more than 1 failure in any functional group.	3							
Moderate	No more than 5 failures in total; **AND** Does not fail both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1, C2 and E1 = Moderate condition).	2							
Poor	Fails a total of more than 5 attributes; **OR** Fails both attributes in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	1							
	Score achieved:								

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

Condition Sheet: ROCKY SHORE Habitat Type

Habitat Types

Rocky shore - High energy littoral rock
Rocky shore - Moderate energy littoral rock
Rocky shore - Low energy littoral rock
Rocky shore - Features of littoral rock
Rocky shore - High energy littoral rock - on peat, clay or chalk
Rocky shore - Moderate energy littoral rock - on peat, clay or chalk
Rocky shore - Low energy littoral rock - on peat, clay or chalk
Rocky shore - Features of littoral rock - on peat, clay or chalk

On-site or off-site, site name and location		**Survey date and Surveyor name**	
Limitations (if applicable)		**Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)**	

Habitat Description

EUNIS -Factsheet for Features of littoral rock (europa.eu)

Habitat Attributes to Record

The following information should be recorded within the condition assessment sheet:
• Description of presence of typical communities and biotopes across the full vertical extent of the shore[1];
• Description of species diversity and community composition across the full vertical extent of the shore[1];
• Observations on coastal process functioning and any human physical modifications present;
• Presence and abundance of non-native species;
• Percentage cover of algal growths that could be attributed to nutrient enrichment;
• Presence and density of non-natural structures and direct human impacts;
• Assessment of litter; and
• Water Framework Directive (WFD) classification of overlying water.

Habitat parcel reference
316255 46
Grid reference
NO 88240 86993

Condition Assessment Criteria

	Indicator	**Good (3 points)**	**Moderate (2 point)**	**Poor (1)**	**Score per indicator**	**Notes (such as justification)**
A	**Coastal processes**	Coastal processes are functioning naturally. No evidence of human physical modifications which are clearly impacting the habitat.	Artificial structures present, for example groynes that are impeding the natural movement of sediments or water, affecting up to 25% of the habitat.	Artificial structures present, for example groynes that are impeding the natural movement of sediments or water, affecting more than 25% of the habitat.	2	
B	**Presence and abundance of invasive non-native species**	Not more than one invasive non-native species is 'Occasional' on the SACFOR scale or is occupying more than 1% of the habitat. No high-risk species indicative of suboptimal condition present, see Footnote 2 for details.	No invasive non-native species are present above 'Frequent' on the SACFOR scale or they occupy between 1-10% of the habitat. No high-risk species indicative of suboptimal condition present, see Footnote 2 for details.	One or more invasive non-native species present at an 'Abundant' level on the SACFOR scale, they occupy more than 10% of the habitat or a high-risk species indicative of suboptimal condition is present – GB Non-native Species Secretariat should be notified, see Footnote 2 for details.	3	
C	**Water Quality**	No visual evidence of pollution. There are no nuisance algal growths that are likely to be attributable to nutrient enrichment. Consider seasonality of survey timing[3].	Visual evidence of low to moderate levels of pollution. elevated algal growth with increases in cover that may indicate nutrient enrichment. Consider seasonality of survey timing[3].	Visual evidence of high algal growth that is indicative of nutrient enrichment. Signs of eutrophication that would impede bird feeding. Consider seasonality of survey timing[3].		
D	**Non-natural structures and direct human impacts**	No evidence of impacts from direct human activities, or they occupy <1% of the habitat area (for example, pontoons, moorings, boats, crab tiles, bait digging or anchoring scars).	Evidence of impacts from direct human activities occupies 1-10% of the habitat area (for example, pontoons, moorings, boats, crab tiles, bait digging or anchoring scars).	Evidence of impacts from direct human activities occupies >10% of the habitat area (for example, pontoons, moorings, boats, crab tiles, bait digging or anchoring scars).	2	
E	**Litter (when examining a beach strandline, mean high water line or intertidal rocky shore)**	Following the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) beach litter survey method, the number of items of litter does not exceed 0.0036 m^{-1} min^{-1} $person^{-1}$, equivalent to up to 20 items per person per 100 m per hour. See Footnote 4 for details.	Following the MCS beach litter survey method, the number of items of litter does not exceed 0.0078 m^{-1} min^{-1} $person^{-1}$, equivalent to between 21 and 47 items of litter per person per 100 m per hour. See Footnote 4 for details.	Following the MCS beach litter survey method, the number of items of litter exceeds 0.0078 m^{-1} min^{-1} $person^{-1}$, equivalent to more than 47 items of litter per person per 100 m per hour. See Footnote 4 for details.	3	
				Total score (out of a possible 15)	13	

Condition Assessment Result	**Result Achieved**
TOTAL SCORE 12-15 (75-100%) **= GOOD CONDITION**	Yes
TOTAL SCORE 8-11 (50-75%) **= MODERATE CONDITION**	
TOTAL SCORE 5-7 (0-50%) **= POOR CONDITION**	

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

Condition Sheet: SCRUB Habitat Type

Habitat Types

Heathland and shrub - Blackthorn scrub
Heathland and shrub - Gorse scrub
Heathland and shrub - Hawthorn scrub
Heathland and shrub - Hazel scrub
Heathland and shrub - Mixed scrub
Heathland and shrub - Dunes with sea buckthorn (H2160)
Heathland and shrub - Willow scrub

Habitat Description

For Dunes with sea buckthorn see:	Dunes with sea-buckthorn (Dunes with Hippophae rhamnoides) - Special Areas of Conservation (jncc.gov.uk)											
For other scrub types see:	ukhab – UK Habitat Classification											

On-site or off-site, site name and location		**Survey date and Surveyor name**	
		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	

Limitations (if applicable)		**Habitat parcel reference**										
		31109811	31119402	31119467	31119510	32176467	32696110					
		Grid reference										
		NO 82583 86668	NO 87985 86860	NO 88087 86943	NO 87882 86805	NO 84780 87619	NO 83474 87141					

	Condition Assessment Criteria	Criterion passed (Yes or No)										Notes (such as justification)
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches its UKHab description (where in its natural range).[1] - At least 80% of scrub is native, - There are at least three native woody species[2], - No single species comprises more than 75% of the cover (except hazel *Corylus avellana* , common juniper *Juniperus communis* , sea buckthorn *Hippophae rhamnoides* (only in its restricted native range), or box *Buxus sempervirens* , which can be up to 100% cover).	No	No	No	No	No	No					(32176467) Just gorse
B	Seedlings, saplings, young shrubs and mature (or ancient or veteran[3]) shrubs are all present.	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes					(32176467) Only saplings and early mature srabds
C	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species[4] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[5]) and species indicative of suboptimal condition[6] make up less than 5% of ground cover.	No	No	No	No	Yes	No					
D	The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or forbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No					
E	There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes					
	Number of criteria passed	3	3	1	2	2	2					

Condition Assessment Result (out of 5 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ×/✓									
Passes 5 criteria	Good (3)										
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)	Yes	Yes								
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

Condition Sheet: WOODLAND Habitat Type

UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Types

Woodland and forest - Lowland beech and yew woodland
Woodland and forest - Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
Woodland and forest - Native pine woodlands
Woodland and forest - Other coniferous woodland
Woodland and forest - Other Scot's pine woodland
Woodland and forest - Other woodland; broadleaved
Woodland and forest - Other woodland; mixed
Woodland and forest - Upland birchwoods
Woodland and forest - Upland mixed ashwoods
Woodland and forest - Upland oakwood
Woodland and forest - Wet woodland

Habitat Description

ukhab – UK Habitat Classification

This condition sheet is based on the England Woodland Biodiversity Group (EWBG) Woodland Condition Survey Method, available here:

Woodland Wildlife Toolkit (sylva.org.uk)

IMPORTANT: This biodiversity metric woodland condition assessment must be used to assess woodland being input into the biodiversity metric. The outputs of this condition assessment are not equivalent to, nor are they comparable with the scores from the EWBG condition assessment, because the EWBG assessment has been adapted for the biodiversity metric, including the removal of EWBG Indicator 7 (Proportion of favourable land cover around woodland) and Indicator 14 (Size of woodland), and minor changes to other indicators.

On-site or off-site, site name and location		**Survey date and Surveyor name**		**Habitat parcel reference**									
				31099642	31099653	31099676	31119378	31119380	32696218	32037896	32652120	32696149	32696166
Limitations (if applicable)		**Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)**		**Grid reference**									
				NO 81359 88039	NO 81587 87722	NO 81092 87518	NO 80953 86485	NO 80835 86499	NO 84635 87481	NO 85278 87450	NO 80788 85903	NO 83820 87558	NO 83977 87398

Condition Assessment Criteria

	Indicator	**Good (3 points)**	**Moderate (2 points)**	**Poor (1 point)**	**Score per indicator**										**Notes (such as justification)**
A	**Age distribution of trees**	Three age-classes[1] present.	Two age-classes[1] present.	One age-class[1] present.	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	(32037875) Mature and semi mature (32037896) Semi-
B	**Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage**	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland[2].	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in less than 40% of whole woodland[2].	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland[2].	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	
C	**Invasive plant species**	No invasive species[3] present in woodland.	Rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum* or cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* not present, and other invasive species[3] <10% cover.	Rhododendron or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species[3] ≥10% cover.	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
D	**Number of native tree species**	Five or more native tree or shrub species[4] found across woodland parcel.	Three to four native tree or shrub species[4] found across woodland parcel.	Two or less native tree or shrub species[4] across woodland parcel.	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	
E	**Cover of native tree and shrub species**	>80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native[5].	50 - 80% of canopy trees and 50 - 80% of understory shrubs are native[5].	<50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native[5].	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	
F	**Open space within woodland**	10 - 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space[6]. Unless woodland is <10ha, in which case 0 - 20% temporary open space is permitted[7].	21 - 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space[6].	<10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space[6]. But if woodland <10ha has <10% temporary open space, please see Good category[7].	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	
G	**Woodland regeneration**	All three classes present in woodland[8]; trees 4 - 7 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth.	One or two classes only present in woodland[8].	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland[8].	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	

H	**Tree health**	Tree mortality 10% or less, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback[9].	11% to 25% tree mortality and or crown dieback or low-risk pest or disease present[9].	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high-risk pest or disease present[9].	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	
I	**Vegetation and ground flora**	Recognisable NVC plant community[10] at ground layer present, strongly characterised by ancient woodland flora specialists.	Recognisable woodland NVC plant community[10] at ground layer present.	No recognisable woodland NVC plant community[10] at ground layer present.	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	
J	**Woodland vertical structure**	Three or more storeys across all survey plots, or a complex woodland[11].	Two storeys across all survey plots[11].	One or less storey across all survey plots[11].	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	
K	**Veteran trees**	Two or more veteran trees[12] per hectare.	One veteran tree[12] per hectare.	No veteran trees[12] present in woodland.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	
L	**Amount of deadwood**	50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities[13].	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities[13].	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities[13].	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
M	**Woodland disturbance**	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident[14].	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area, and or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground[14].	1 hectare or more of nutrient enrichment, and or 20% or more of woodland area has damaged ground[14].	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	2	2	
				Total Score (out of a possible 39)	21	24	21	21	21	20	25	20	25	26	

Condition Assessment Result	**Condition Assessment Score**	**Result Achieved**										
Total score >32 (33 to 39)	Good (3)											
Total score 26 to 32	Moderate (2)										Yes	
Total score <26 (13 to 25)	Poor (1)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

Condition Sheet: DITCH Habitat Type

Habitat Type

Watercourses - Ditches

Habitat Description

See the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide.

On-site or off-site, site name and location	Bellrock Burn of Baulk (Ditch) and Redcloak Ditch	**Survey date and Surveyor name**	10/6/26 - SF
Limitations (if applicable)		**Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)**	

Habitat parcel reference										
321764 87	3E+07									
Grid reference										
NO 84788 87311	NO 80162 86124									

	Condition Assessment Criteria	**Criterion passed (Yes or No)**										**Notes (such as justification)**
A	The ditch is of good water quality, with clear water (low turbidity) indicating no obvious signs of pollution.	No	Yes									
B	A range of emergent, submerged and floating-leaved plants are present. As a guide >10 species of emergent, floating or submerged plants present in a 20 m ditch length.	No	No									
C	There is less than 10% cover of filamentous algae and or duckweed *Lemna* spp. (these are signs of eutrophication).	Yes	No									
D	A fringe of aquatic marginal vegetation is present along more than 75% of the ditch.	No	Yes									
E	Physical damage is evident along less than 5% of the ditch, with examples of damage including: excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, or any other damaging management activities.	Yes	Yes									
F	Sufficient water levels are maintained - as a guide a minimum summer depth of approximately 50 cm in minor ditches and 1 m in main drains.	No	Yes									
G	Less than 10% of the ditch is heavily shaded.	No	Yes									
H	There is an absence of non-native plant and animal species[1].	Yes	Yes									
	Number of criteria passed	3	6									

Condition Assessment Result (out of 8 criteria)	**Condition Assessment Score**	**Score Achieved ×/✓**									
Passes 8 criteria	Good (3)										
Passes 6 or 7 criteria	Moderate (2)		X								
Passes 5 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	X									

Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score

Footnotes

Condition + Encroachment Reporting Sheet: RIVERS and STREAMS			
River Condition Assessment (RCA) + Encroachment results for: Priority rivers, Other rivers and streams, Canals			
Site name/location:	Bellrock	**Unique river section reference:**	BR-01 (4)
GPS of MoRPh5 midpoint	NO 80162 86124	**River section length:**	250
Rivers and streams form naturally draining networks within the wider landscape.			
RCA River Type and Habitat Description for full river section (from walkover survey)			
Burn of Baulk, a small tributary of the Carron Water, running through plantation woodland flowing west to southeast. Large sections of the watercourse were not able to be accessed due to significant treefall			
THE RESULTS OF THE 32 RCA INDICATORS FOR EACH RIVER SECTION SHOULD BE INSERTED BELOW WITH NOTES TO EXPLAIN			
Condition Assessment Criteria		**RCA Index values**	**Notes / Justification**
RCA INDEX ID	**RCA INDEX NAME**	**Insert values -4 to 0 OR 0 to 4; Highlight those >2 OR <-2**	**Explain where significant, the influence of high/low RCA indices on overall river condition**
BANK TOP			
B1	Bank top vegetation structure	3	
B2	Bank top tree feature richness	3	
B3	Bank top water-related features	0	
B4	*Bank top NNIPS cover*	0	
B5	*Bank top managed ground cover*	-2	
BANK FACE			
C1	Bank face riparian vegetation structure	1	
C2	Bank face tree feature richness	1	
C3	Bank face natural bank profile extent	1	
C4	Bank face natural bank profile richness	2	
C5	Bank face natural bank material richness	1	
C6	Bank face bare sediment extent	4	
C7	*Bank face artificial bank profile extent*	0	
C8	*Bank face reinforcement extent*	0	
C9	*Bank face reinforcement material severity*	0	
C10	*Bank face NNIPS cover*	0	
CHANNEL MARGIN			
D1	Channel margin aquatic vegetation extent	1	
D2	Channel margin aquatic morphotype richness	0	
D3	Channel margin physical feature extent	0	
D4	Channel margin physical feature richness	0	
D5	*Channel margin artificial features*	0	
CHANNEL BED			
E1	Channel aquatic morphotype richness	0	
E2	Channel bed tree features richness	2	
E3	Channel bed hydraulic features richness	1	
E4	Channel bed natural features extent	3	
E5	Channel bed natural features richness	2	
E6	Channel bed material richness	3	
E7	*Channel bed siltation*	0	
E8	*Channel bed reinforcement extent*	0	
E9	*Channel bed reinforcement severity*	0	
E10	*Channel bed artificial features severity*	-4	
E11	*Channel bed NNIPS extent*	0	
E12	*Channel bed filamentous algae extent*	0	
Overview of RCA and river section assessment			
River Condition Assessment PRELIMINARY SCORE:	**1.0121458 (Incomplete Assessment)**	**River Type and class bands:**	**F**
River Shape index:	**1.328**	**Is the river channel OVERDEEP?** *If yes, what supporting evidence is provided?*	**No**
River Condition Assessment FINAL CLASS:	**Moderate (Incomplete Assessment)**	**IS THE RCA FINAL CLASS MODIFIED ?** *If yes, why and what supporting evidence is provided?*	**No**
Summary of RCA results (and Encroachment where applicable) with recommendations for improvements			
Only 2/5 sections were able to be assessed due to extent of treefall across channel. Results provided above should not be treated as final condition score.			
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve the river condition score			

Condition + Encroachment Reporting Sheet: RIVERS and STREAMS			
River Condition Assessment (RCA) + Encroachment results for: Priority rivers, Other rivers and streams, Canals			
Site name/location:	Bellrock	**Unique river section reference:**	BR-02
GPS of MoRPh5 midpoint	NO 79845 86806	**River section length:**	400
Rivers and streams form naturally draining networks within the wider landscape.			
RCA River Type and Habitat Description for full river section (from walkover survey)			
Burn of Day, a small tributary of the Cowie Water, running through plantation woodland flowing west to east, where it meets a wetland within the site boundary			
THE RESULTS OF THE 32 RCA INDICATORS FOR EACH RIVER SECTION SHOULD BE INSERTED BELOW WITH NOTES TO EXPLAIN			
Condition Assessment Criteria		**RCA Index values**	**Notes / Justification**
RCA INDEX ID	**RCA INDEX NAME**	**Insert values -4 to 0 OR 0 to 4; Highlight those >2 OR <-2**	**Explain where significant, the influence of high/low RCA indices on overall river condition**
BANK TOP			
B1	Bank top vegetation structure	2	
B2	Bank top tree feature richness	3	
B3	Bank top water-related features	0	
B4	*Bank top NNIPS cover*	0	
B5	*Bank top managed ground cover*	-2	
BANK FACE			
C1	Bank face riparian vegetation structure	2	
C2	Bank face tree feature richness	1	
C3	Bank face natural bank profile extent	2	
C4	Bank face natural bank profile richness	1	
C5	Bank face natural bank material richness	1	
C6	Bank face bare sediment extent	2	
C7	*Bank face artificial bank profile extent*	0	
C8	*Bank face reinforcement extent*	0	
C9	*Bank face reinforcement material severity*	0	
C10	*Bank face NNIPS cover*	0	
CHANNEL MARGIN			
D1	Channel margin aquatic vegetation extent	3	
D2	Channel margin aquatic morphotype richness	1	
D3	Channel margin physical feature extent	0	
D4	Channel margin physical feature richness	0	
D5	*Channel margin artificial features*	0	
CHANNEL BED			
E1	Channel aquatic morphotype richness	2	
E2	Channel bed tree features richness	2	
E3	Channel bed hydraulic features richness	2	
E4	Channel bed natural features extent	3	
E5	Channel bed natural features richness	2	
E6	Channel bed material richness	4	
E7	*Channel bed siltation*	-1	
E8	*Channel bed reinforcement extent*	0	
E9	*Channel bed reinforcement severity*	0	
E10	*Channel bed artificial features severity*	0	
E11	*Channel bed NNIPS extent*	0	
E12	*Channel bed filamentous algae extent*	0	
Overview of RCA and river section assessment			
River Condition Assessment PRELIMINARY SCORE:	**1.5060729**	**River Type and class bands:**	**F**
River Shape index:	**0.6075949**	**Is the river channel OVERDEEP?** *If yes, what supporting evidence is provided?*	**No**
River Condition Assessment FINAL CLASS:	**Fairly Good**	**IS THE RCA FINAL CLASS MODIFIED ?** *If yes, why and what supporting evidence is provided?*	**No**
Summary of RCA results (and Encroachment where applicable) with recommendations for improvements			
Silt and plantation cover negatively impacting biodivesity of watercourse. Healthy for channel bed material and naturral feature richness and aquatic marginal vegetation. While the plantation is negatively impacting biodiversity, individual trees			
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve the river condition score			
Try to reduce silt input & frequency along channel. Increase natural habitats along bank top habitats.			

K INNS SURVEY PLAN

[Figures within this report have been redacted, and will be presented within the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Environmental Impact Assessment Report]

L FAUNAL SURVEY PLAN

[Figures within this report have been redacted, and will be presented within the Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area Environmental Impact Assessment Report]

M CONFIDENTIAL BADGER ANNEX

[Confidential Annex M has been redacted from this version of the report]



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Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm

Onshore Transmission Development Area

Scoping Report – Volume 1

Appendix D - Wintering Bird Survey at Cowie Landfall Area of Search 2026/2026 Technical Report

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Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm

Wintering Bird Survey at Cowie Landfall Area of Search 2025/2026 Technical Report



Coast at Cowie Winter Bird Survey Area, 21 November 2025

Author: Digger Jackson

August 2026

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1 Introduction

1 This report presents the results of a wintering bird survey centred on the landfall Area of Search for the Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm (the Bellrock Project) located by Cowie on the coast of Aberdeenshire, Scotland. The wintering bird survey was undertaken by Atlantic Ecology Limited between October 2025 and March 2026. The wintering bird survey was commissioned by Haskoning UK Limited on behalf of Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm Limited. The purpose of the wintering bird survey was to provide quantitative baseline ornithological survey information for the autumn and winter period (i.e., the non-breeding season for most birds) to inform the Bellrock Offshore Transmission Development Area (OfTDA) and Bellrock Onshore Transmission Development Area (OnTDA) Environmental Impact Assessments.

2 The wintering bird survey targeted bird species utilising coastal habitats, inshore marine waters and adjacent farmland including shorebirds and seabirds. All the marine mammal species observed during the course of the survey were also recorded. The scientific names of all species referred to in the report are present in **Appendix C: List of Species.**

2 Survey Aims

3 The aims of the wintering bird survey were:

- To undertake surveys on a twice-monthly basis, from October 2025 to March 2026, of the landfall area of search at Cowie plus a 500 m buffer, the 'Survey Area' (**Figure 1 (Appendix B)**), with one survey count undertaken during the high tide part of the tidal cycle and the other during the low tide period.
- To quantify and map all shorebird and waterbird species (e.g., waders, wildfowl and seabirds) within the Survey Area.
- To record raptor species, raven and farmland bird species of high conservation importance (defined as UK Red List species according to the most recent UK Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) assessment[1]) encountered during the wintering bird survey.

4 During the bird surveys, all incidental observations of marine mammals were also recorded, and these observations are detailed in this report.

3 Survey Area and Habitats

5 The boundaries of the Survey Area are broadly based on the landfall area of search at Cowie plus a 500 m buffer (**Figure 1 (Appendix B**). The northern boundary of the Survey Area corresponds to the A90 road as areas to the north of the A90 were excluded from the area of search and, therefore, are not considered to be relevant. The western boundary of the Survey Area was drawn to exclude built-up parts of Stonehaven town centre.

[1] BoCC is the periodic assessment of conservation priority of UK bird species. 'Green List' species have a favourable UK conservation status, 'Amber List' species have a moderately unfavourable status and Red List species have a strongly unfavourable status (Stanbury *et al*., 2021).

6 The Survey Area has a wide range of coastal and inshore marine habitats as listed below:

- The sea;
- Intertidal rocky coast with rock pools;
- Rock and vegetated coastal cliffs;
- Shingle and sand beaches;
- Farmland (comprising cereal and pasture fields with surrounding walls and hedges);
- Golf course;
- Buildings and gardens;
- Woodland and scrub vegetation; and
- Roads and associated verges.

7 The Survey Area includes the sea out to approximately 1 km from the coast (MHWS). The marine sections of the Survey Area contain both rocky and soft seabed habitats, and water depths of up to approximately 20 m.

4 Survey Effort and Conditions

8 The survey visits were undertaken at twice-monthly intervals between October 2025 and March 2026, with one of the monthly visits timed to target the low tide period and the other visit targeting the high tide period. During the non-breeding months, it is common for some bird species to move between different locations. Therefore, the range of bird species using the Survey Area and their associated abundances were expected to vary through the autumn and winter. Many coastal birds, especially wader and gull species, use intertidal habitats for some or all of their foraging. Therefore, it was also to be expected that the spatial use of the Survey Area by these species would show changes in relation to the tidal cycle. The programme of multiple survey visits spread through the autumn and winter months and equally targeting high and low tide conditions was designed to provide a representative data set to quantify the bird species distribution and abundance in the Survey Area.

9 Local weather forecast information and tide tables were consulted ahead of all survey visits. Survey work avoided days with poor visibility (e.g. fog) or with persistent rain or snow, or gale force winds. Visits were also timed such that it was possible to complete counts during conditions of good daylight, essentially the period between sunrise and sunset. The timings and weather conditions for each survey visit are summarised in **Table 1**.

10 The high tide period was defined as the period two hours before and two hours after the predicted time of a high tide. The low tide period was defined as the period two hours before and two hours after the predicted time of a low tide.

Table 1. Dates, times and weather conditions of wintering bird survey visits

Date	Tide state	Survey start time	Tide time	Tide height (m)	Temp (°C)	Wind force[1] and direction	Rain	Visibility	Sea state[2]
05/10/2025	High	12:12	12:54	3.4	13	F2-3 NW	None	Very good	1 - 2
23/10/2025	Low	08:34	09:03	0.8	7	F1-3 NW	None	Very good	1 - 2
10/11/2025	High	15:42	16:36	4.0	10	F3 S	None	Very good	3
21/11/2025	Low	07:59	07:40	1.0	-3	F1-2 W	None	Very good	1 - 2
08/12/2025	High	15:17	15:31	4.3	7	F2-4 SW>SE	None	Very good	1 - 2
14/12/2025	Low	13:25	15:15	1.9	10	F5 S	drizzle	Good	5
20/01/2026	Low	08:57	08:05	1.2	7	F3 SSE	drizzle	Poor (1km)	3
30/01/2026	High	10:55	11:09	3.5	3	F6 SE	Light showers	Good	6
13/02/2026	High	10:00	10:30	3.4	2	F2 NW	None	Very good	3
19/02/2026	Low	09:00	08:17	0.9	3	F5 SE	None	Very good	5 - 6
06/03/2026	Low	08:24	08:58	0.9	2	F2 NNW	None	Very good	1
19/03/2026	High	13:30	13:29	4.4	14	F1 SE	None	Very good	1

Notes:

[1] Wind force rated on Beaufort Scale, ranging from 0 (calm) to 12 (hurricane)

[2] Sea state rated on Douglas Sea Scale, ranging from 0 (calm-glassy) to 9 (phenomenal)

5 Methods

5.1 Field methodology

11 The survey broadly adopted the field methods used for the national Wetland and Estuary Bird Survey coordinated by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) (Gilbert *et al*., 1998), but with improvements to the precision of spatial recording (see below).

12 On each survey date, a count was undertaken of the target bird species within the Survey Area. The target bird species were all wildfowl, seabird, wader, raptor and raven species. In addition, farmland bird species listed on the UK BoCC Red List were also recorded (**Table 1**). Other farmland and woodland bird species were not recorded. Birds that were only seen flying through the Survey Area and not

interacting with it (e.g. not foraging) were not recorded. Although incidental to the aim of the survey, the opportunity was taken to record all marine mammal species seen whilst undertaking the bird counts.

13 Counts were undertaken from a series of vantage points along the coastline that provided good views across the Survey Area (**Figure 1, Appendix B**). The vantage points were spaced approximately 300 m apart. Additional counts of geese, wader and gull species using farmland habitats inland from the coast and in parts not visible from the coastal vantage points were obtained by scanning these areas from a vehicle parked in farm gateways and other safe access places along public roads and farm tracks.

14 Counts were made with the aid of a tripod-mounted 25-60x spotting scope; this allowed birds up to at least 1 km away to be detected, identified and quantified. The number and behaviour of birds observed within the Survey Area were recorded on a bespoke recording form using the British Trust for Ornithology species codes (see **Appendix C: List of Species**). Additional information was noted for each record concerning the birds' behaviour (e.g. feeding, roosting) and gross habitat (e.g., sea, beach, tide edge, cliffs, farmland). To facilitate the recording of where birds were observed, the Survey Area was divided into a grid of 200 m x 200 m squares based on the Ordnance Survey British National Grid (**Figure 2 (Appendix B)**). Each 200 m grid cell was referred to by an individual identifier code (or 'address') based on the cell's position north to south (indicated by numbers 1-16) and west to east (indicated by letters A-Q) in the grid. The appropriate 200 m square for a record was identified with the aid of a large-scale aerial image of the Survey Area, overlaid with a labelled grid (**Figure 2 (Appendix B)**). If a bird was using a notable habitat feature within the 200 m grid cells, such as a particular skerry, cliff face or freshwater feature, this was noted so that these records could be more accurately mapped. Some areas were visible from more than one vantage point; therefore, great care was taken to ensure that the same individuals were not recorded more than once during any single count session. Care was also taken not to disturb birds.

15 The surveys were undertaken by Digger Jackson and Karen Yearsley of Atlantic Ecology Limited who have over fifty years of combined experience in undertaking wetland and coastal bird surveys in Scotland, both professionally and in a voluntary capacity for the national monthly WeBS counts.

5.2 Limitations

16 In some circumstances some species were potentially under recorded. The species likely to have been affected by under recording and the reasons for this are discussed below.

17 In dull conditions purple sandpipers and turnstones feeding in low tide conditions on the extensive intertidal rocky shore habitat were generally hard to detect due to their small size, dark colouration and undemonstrative behaviour. Therefore, for these two species, it is possible that some of the low-tide surveys under recorded the actual number of birds present. These species were not likely to be under recorded in high tide conditions, when they aggregate into communal roosts with other species and the area of intertidal habitat is much reduced.

18 Surface diving seabirds, in particular relatively small dark-coloured species that spend a good proportion of their time diving underwater, can be hard to detect unless sea conditions are relatively calm (i.e., below sea state 4) and there is good light. Even in favourable observation conditions, there

was potential for auk species such as common guillemot and razorbill to be under recorded if they were more than approximately 600 m out from the shore.

19 On three occasions sea conditions exceeded sea state 3 (14th December, 30th January and 19th February), increasing the potential for under recording surface diving seabirds which is more challenging in higher sea states. On these surveys it is likely that auk species, red-throated diver, European shag and cormorant on the sea surface were under recorded, especially in parts of the Survey Area that are more than 500 m from the vantage points. The same potential for under recording in conditions of higher sea states also affected marine mammal species.

20 There was potential for under recording of small farmland passerine species at distances greater than approximately 200 m from the walking route taken along the coast to access the vantage points used for recording other bird species (**Figure 1 (Appendix B)**). For this reason it is likely there was under recording of small passerine species using the farmland within the Survey Area that is further inland (in particular north of the railway).

21 No practical difficulty was experienced preventing double counting within a count session because the numbers of birds present were generally low with most birds in flocks, and because the birds tended not to redistribute to any great extent in the short period of time between counting from one vantage point and the next.

5.3 Data management and analysis

22 Count data from each survey visit was entered into a bespoke Excel spreadsheet database set up to mimic the layout of the field recording form. Data quality checking included using data field validation routines, the automated conversion of codes to their corresponding species name or behaviour description and visual checks of field forms against data on screen.

23 Excel pivot table routines were used to produce summary statistics of the total numbers of a species present in the Survey Area for each survey visit. Summary metrics were derived for the following:

- The total count for each survey visit;
- Mean total count for all survey visits;
- Peak count across all survey visits (peak total count for any one survey visit);
- Mean total count for all survey visits during high tide period; and
- Mean total count for all survey visits during low tide period.

24 Dot maps were produced to illustrate the utilisation of the Survey Area by species. The 200 m grid cell identifier code (i.e., the grid cell address) for each record was converted into a grid reference value corresponding to the centre of the 200 m grid cell. GIS software (QGIS Geographic Information System (Version 3.22) was used to produce species maps showing distribution and abundance across the Survey Area (**Appendix B**). In the species distribution maps, the individual records of a species (i.e., the map dots) within a grid cell were arranged to avoid or minimise overlap, and to ensure they were in habitat-appropriate locations. For the species whose behaviour was likely to be influenced by tide state (e.g., waders, gulls, cormorant, shag, and some wildfowl species) the species maps distinguish between high tide records and low tide records.

6 Results

6.1 Birds overview

25 The total number of each species recorded in the Survey Area on each survey visit is presented in **Table A.1 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**.

26 The mean and peak numbers of each species recorded across all survey visits are presented in **Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**. The estimated locations of where birds were seen are mapped in **Figures 3 to 24 (Appendix B)**. In these map figures the record's dot size varies according to the number of individuals observed, as detailed in the figure legend. The species distribution maps show that spatial use of the Survey Area varied between species, with differences reflecting habitat preferences.

27 The survey recorded a wide range of bird species within the Survey Area, with a total of 40 species observed (this total excludes non-target species). The species recorded include seven wader species, 13 seabird species, four raptor species, and five red-listed farmland bird species. The majority of species were recorded multiple times through the survey period, but some were irregularly present, being recorded on only one or two occasions. There was a large variation in abundance between species. A few of the most common species were regularly present in numbers exceeding 100 individuals, but most species were typically present in smaller numbers (10-100), and for some others only one or two individuals were typically recorded on a survey visit. In the species accounts below, 'low numbers' is defined as ten or less individuals, 'moderate numbers' as 11 to 100 individuals and 'high numbers' as greater than 100 individuals.

28 The following sections present results for species in more detail in terms of their abundance and distribution. Additional information on the habitat uses and the behaviour of commonly occurring species is also presented. In the species summary accounts below, mean counts are rounded to the nearest integer (mean values are presented to one decimal place in **Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**).

29 In the accounts below, birds are generally referred to as wintering. However, this should not be taken to imply that the birds were necessarily resident in the vicinity of the Survey Area through the winter period. Where this is likely to be broadly the case for most species, some species (especially some seabird species) are known to move between sites throughout the winter, for example in response to changing weather conditions (Wernham *et al*., 2002). The survey period included October and March, times of year when many species are migrating (Wernham *et al*., 2002). Thus, for some species, it is likely that some or all the individuals recorded in these months were passage birds that wintered elsewhere. These passage species included gannet, Sandwich tern, dunlin, teal, whooper swan and pink-footed goose (all of which were only recorded in October), and kittiwake and red-throated diver (observations of these two species peaked in October and March). By February and March, some resident species exhibited breeding behaviour such as song flights and nest building, and this is noted in the accounts where relevant.

6.2 Wader and heron species

30 The Survey Area supported five species of wintering waders that were regularly present (i.e., recorded on at least two-thirds of the survey dates) in generally moderate numbers (**Table A.1** and **Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**). The peak and mean counts of these species were as follows:

- Oystercatcher, peak count 167 birds and mean count 70 birds;
- Curlew, peak count 36 birds and mean count 16 birds;
- Redshank, peak count 87 birds and mean count 39 birds;
- Turnstone, peak count 65 birds and mean count 20 birds; and
- Purple sandpiper, peak count 64 birds and mean count 17 birds.

31 These five wader species mainly used the intertidal rocky shore habitat for feeding during the low tide period, in particular along the stretch of coast from Cowie north to Craigeven Bay. The distribution maps for these species (**Figures 3** to **7** respectively **(Appendix B)**) show differences in the distribution between high and low tide conditions, reflecting the availability of low-tide intertidal feeding habitat and the use of high tide roosts.

32 Curlews and oystercatchers also used coastal farmland habitat, and to a smaller extent the grassland of Stonehaven golf course, for feeding (during both low and high tide periods) (**Figure 3** and **Figure 4 (Appendix B)**). Despite there being extensive areas of farmland within the Survey Area further inland, almost all records of curlew and oystercatcher feeding on farmland were of birds using the large cereal field between the coast and Cowie House (**Figure 3** and **Figure 4 (Appendix B)**). At the time of the survey, this field was cereal stubble under-sown with grass.

33 The five regularly occurring wader species showed a strong tendency to spend the high tide period resting at communal roost sites. Most of the individuals present in the Survey Area shared the same regular high tide roost located in Craigeven Bay. There were also smaller high tide roost gatherings noted on the rocks just north of Cowie. The numbers of waders recorded in the low-tide period counts tended to be lower than the numbers counted in high-tide period counts (**Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**). This suggests that individuals from local feeding areas outside the Survey Area sometimes move into the Survey Area to roost over the high tide period. Purple sandpiper and turnstone, feeding on the extensive intertidal rocky shore areas during low tide conditions, were generally hard to detect. Therefore, it is possible that some of the low-tide period counts of these two species underestimated the actual number of birds present.

34 The reduction in numbers of some wader species (e.g. redshank and oystercatcher) in March compared to earlier in the winter was likely caused by some wintering birds departing and moving to their breeding grounds.

35 The Survey Area has negligible importance for other wader species. The only other species recorded were a single ringed plover observed in February and a group of four dunlin observed in October **(Table A.1 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**). Ringed plover and dunlin are both relatively common wintering species in the wider region, and in winter they are mainly found on beach and intertidal mud flat habitats respectively.

36 Grey heron was the only heron species encountered and was regularly present in small numbers. The peak count was eight birds, and the mean count was three birds. Like the wintering wader species, grey herons were mainly observed along the rocky shore habitat which they used for both feeding and roosting (**Figure 8 (Appendix B)**). During some high tide periods, grey herons were seen roosting communally close to the high tide wader roost site at Craigeven Bay, with a peak roost count of seven birds.

6.3 Wildfowl species

37 The only duck species that was regularly observed in the Survey Area in moderate numbers were eider and mallard (**Table A.1 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**).

38 Mallard mainly occurred in the sheltered parts of the intertidal rocky coast habitat between Cowie and Craigeven Bay (**Figure 10 (Appendix B)**). The mean number of mallards observed was 33 and the peak count was 70 birds (**Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**). The reduction in numbers of mallard in March compared to earlier in the winter was likely caused by wintering birds departing and moving to their breeding grounds.

39 Eiders were mainly observed at sea, with records well distributed in the coastal waters within approximately 500 m from the coast (**Figure 11 (Appendix B)**). Eiders were also sometimes seen resting on rocks close to the tide edges. The areas around Craigeven Bay and Garron Point, located in the northern part of the Survey Area, were particularly favoured by eider (**Figure 11 (Appendix B)**). The mean number of eiders counted was 18 birds and the peak count was 55 birds (**Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**).

40 Long-tailed ducks were recorded on three of the survey visits only, with between one and 25 birds observed (**Table A.1** and **Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**). All the long-tailed ducks observed were on the sea in Stonehaven Bay (**Figure 12 (Appendix B)**).

41 Five other duck species were irregularly present (most were recorded on only one occasion), namely teal, wigeon, goldeneye, red-breasted merganser and goosander (**Table A.1**, **Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)** and **Figure 12 (Appendix B)**).

42 Whooper swans were recorded within the Survey Area on one occasion only, on the 5th of October survey visit. On this date, 15 birds flew in to rest at sea in Stonehaven Bay (**Table A.1**, **Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)** and **Figure 12 (Appendix B)**). Given the date and location, these were likely to be passage birds resting on their southerly autumn migration.

43 No geese species were recorded within the Survey Area. However, migrating skeins of pink-footed geese totalling several hundred birds were seen flying south over the Survey Area during the October survey visits.

6.4 Seabird species

44 The Project Survey Area supported nine species of wintering seabird and all of these were regularly present (i.e., recorded on at least two-thirds of the survey dates) in low to moderate numbers (**Table A.1** and **Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**). These are as follows:

- Red-throated diver;
- Cormorant;
- European shag;
- Common guillemot;
- Razorbill;
- Herring gull;
- Great black-backed gull;
- Common gull; and
- Black-headed gull.

45 Red-throated divers were present in small numbers throughout the survey period, with a peak count of eight birds, and mean count four birds (**Table A.1** and **Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**). Although no red-throated divers were seen on two survey dates (14 December and 30 January) this is likely to reflect the difficulty of detecting this species during high sea states (see **Table 1**) rather than their absence.

46 Records of red-throated diver were rather evenly distributed at sea, with most records being between approximately 200 m and 600 m out from the coast (**Figure 13 (Appendix B)**).

47 Cormorants used the Survey Area throughout the survey period with a peak count of 19 birds and a mean count eight birds (**Table A.1** and **Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**). The numbers of individuals present were notably lower during the winter months compared to October and March (**Table A.1 (Appendix A)**). Records of cormorants were distributed along the coast and on sea up to approximately 400 m out from the shoreline (**Figure 14 (Appendix B)**). Cormorants foraged in inshore waters and roosted on rocks and skerries along the shoreline. In **Figure 14** (**Appendix B**), all the dots plotted on the rocks (shaded beige) were roosting, whereas all those plotted at sea (shaded blue) were foraging birds.

48 European shags were observed within the Survey Area throughout the survey period with a peak count of 46 birds and a mean count 12 birds (**Table A.1** and **Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**). The numbers present were notably higher during October (peak of 46 birds) compared to all the other survey months (peak of 14 birds) (**Table A.1 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**). Records of shags were distributed all along the coast and inshore waters up to 600 m out from the coast (**Figure 15 (Appendix B)**). The greatest concentrations were observed in Stonehaven Bay and off Cowie. The great majority (12%, n=66) of shag records were of foraging birds at sea. In **Figure 15** (**Appendix B**) these records are plotted on the sea (shaded blue). The other records were of birds roosting on rocks, including a flock of 24 birds; in **Figure 15** (**Appendix B**) these records are plotted on the rock habitat (shaded beige).

49 Common guillemot and razorbill were both present in small to moderate numbers throughout the survey period (**Table A.1** and **Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**). Both species exhibited broadly similar trends in occurrence, habitat choice, and behaviour. In the case of common guillemot, the peak count was 40 birds, and the mean count was 10 birds. For razorbill the peak count was 88 birds, and the mean count was 15 birds.

50 It is likely that common guillemot and razorbill were undercounted on survey dates with relatively high sea states (i.e., above sea state 3) due to the difficultly of detecting these species when the sea

is not relatively calm (see **Table 1**). Records of both species were widely spread across the marine parts of the Survey Area up to approximately 800 m out from the coast (**Figure 16** and **Figure 17 (Appendix B)**). For common guillemot, a notable concentration of records was observed in the vicinity of Garron Point, located towards the northern end of the Survey Area.

51 Common guillemot and razorbill are both relatively small in size species which are dark in colour. As a result, detecting and reliably identifying them becomes increasingly difficult with increasing distance from a surveyor's vantage point. Given that both species are known to forage in waters of all depths, it is considered likely that the lack of records beyond approximately one km out from the coast reflects under detection rather than avoidance.

52 Four species of gulls were commonly recorded within the Survey Area: herring gull, common gull and black-headed gull and great black-backed gull, with the first three species being the most abundant.

53 The peak and mean counts of these gull species were as follows:

- Herring gull, peak count 740 birds, and mean count 171 birds;
- Common gull, peak count 705 birds, and mean count 119 birds;
- Black-headed gull, peak count 353 birds, and mean count 67 birds; and
- Great black-backed gull, peak count 28 birds, and mean count seven birds.

54 These four gull species were observed widely across the Survey Area, foraging and resting at sea and along the coastal habitats. Herring gulls (**Figure 18 (Appendix B)**), common gulls (**Figure 20 (Appendix B)**), and black-headed gulls (**Figure 21 (Appendix B)**) showed a particular association with Stonehaven Bay and the rocky shore at Cowie. Great black-backed gulls were mainly recorded on rocky headland and skerries (**Figure 19 (Appendix B)**).

55 The numbers of herring gull, common gull and black-headed gull were greatest in counts undertaken in the afternoon shortly before dusk when these species formed large overnight roost gatherings in Stonehaven Bay. Large numbers of individuals were observed flying into Stonehaven Bay from remote day-time foraging areas. The actual numbers of gulls roosting in Stonehaven Bay on these occasions could not be accurately determined as individuals continued to fly in and join the roost after it was too dark to count and reliably identify them. Therefore, it is likely that the counts underestimated to a certain degree the total number of gulls at Stonehaven Bay.

56 A fifth species of gull, kittiwake, was occasionally recorded, mainly in the offshore parts of the Survey Area (i.e. more than 500 m from the coast) (**Table A.1** and **Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**). Apart from a single bird observed in January, kittiwakes were only recorded in October and March. The peak kittiwake count was 29 birds, and the mean count was three birds.

57 A single Sandwich tern was observed resting on the rocks near Cowie on the 5th of October (**Table A.1 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**).

6.5 Raptors, raven and Red List farmland bird species

58 There were relatively few sightings of raptor species during the surveys, with just four species being recorded: buzzard, sparrowhawk, peregrine and kestrel. These species were recorded irregularly and in low numbers only (**Table A.1 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**). All records were of birds in flight, either

over farmland or the coast (**Figure 22 (Appendix B)**). There was no evidence of raptors roosting or nesting on the sections of coastal cliff in the Survey Area.

59 Two ravens were regularly observed frequenting the coast in the northern half of the study area (**Table A.1 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)** and **Figure 22 (Appendix B)**). In March these ravens had an active nest on the cliffs forming the headland at the south end of Craigeven Bay.

60 Five species of BoCC Red List farmland bird species were recorded wintering in the Survey Area: linnet, yellowhammer, tree sparrow, skylark and grey partridge (**Table A.1**, **Table A.2 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)** and **Figure 23 (Appendix B)**).

61 The peak counts of these species were as follows:

- Linnet, peak count 90 birds;
- Yellowhammer, peak count 30;
- Tree sparrow, peak count approximately 30;
- Skylark, peak count one bird; and
- Grey partridge peak count two birds.

62 Almost all the records of yellowhammer, tree sparrow, skylark and grey partridge were from the large field of cereal stubble and its surrounding hedgerows that is located between Cowie House and the coast (**Figure 23 (Appendix B)**) (this is the same field that was frequented by curlew and oystercatchers). The records of linnet were more widely spread, with most being seen on the vegetated coastal cliff habitat along the southern edge of the golf course (Figure 23).

6.6 Marine mammal species

63 The records of marine mammal species observed incidentally during the survey are presented in **Table A.3 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)** and summarised below.

64 Single harbour seals and grey seals were recorded in the Survey Area swimming in the sea on four occasions (**Table A.3 (Appendix A:** Results tables**)**). The four seal sightings were all in the northern part of the Survey Area and all were within approximately 300 m of the coast (**Figure 24 (Appendix B)**).

65 Bottlenose dolphins were seen on two occasions: a pod of two individuals seen on the 5th of October, and a pod of five individuals seen on the 6th of March (**Table A.3**). Both pods were in the northern part of the Survey Area and estimated to pass within 400 m of the coast.

66 The presence of marine mammals in the Survey Area during surveys with relatively high sea states (see **Table 1**) was potentially underestimated due to reduced detectability under non favourable observation conditions.

7 Discussion

67 The range of species recorded during the Bellrock Project's survey from October 2025 to March 2026 were in line with expectations based on published literature (e.g., Balmer *et al*., 2013: Forrester and Andrews, 2007; Frost *et al*., 2026). The relatively high diversity of birds recorded reflects the wide variety of habitat types within the Survey Area, ranging from farmland, sub-urban and golf course

habitats inland, to cliffs (rock and vegetated), rocky shore and beaches along the coast, and marine habitats including sheltered bays, and the open sea.

68 There is reasonably good knowledge about the status of bird species wintering in Scotland, in terms of their geographic distribution and relative density, and in some cases, their population size (e.g. Forrester and Andrews, 2007; Balmer *et al*., 2013; Frost *et al*., 2026). Based on this information an indication of the value of the Survey Area to a species can be inferred, for example in terms of its potential importance in a local or regional geographic context (CIEEM, 2018).

69 For most of the bird species recorded, it appears that the Survey Area has potential to be of no more than local importance. However, the numbers of some species using the Survey Area, on some occasions at least, potentially approach or meet the criteria to be considered important in a regional context[2], taken here to approximate to Aberdeenshire (**Table 1**). In no case did the numbers of a species recorded meet the criteria for the Survey Area to be considered important in a national context[3].

70 The bird species observed within the Survey Area include a number of species of high conservation importance, either because they are on the BoCC UK Red List (Stanbury *et al*., 2021) or receive an enhanced level of legal protection under (e.g., Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 1 (S1) species, and EU Birds Directive Annex 1 (A1) species). In addition to the five Red List farmland bird species, other Red List species that regularly use the Survey Area are curlew, long-tailed duck, purple sandpiper, herring gull and great black-backed gull. Species with enhanced legal protection that were recorded in the Survey Area are red-throated diver (S1 and A1), peregrine (S1 and A1) and whooper swan (S1 and A1).

71 The main ornithological interests of the Survey Area are identified in **Table 2.**

[2] By convention, a site is considered to have regional importance for a species if it regularly holds 1% or more of the regional total.

[3] A site is considered to have national importance for a species if it regularly holds 1% or more of the national population total (Ramsar Resolution VI.4).

Table 2. The main ornithological interests of the Survey Area based on the results of the October 2025 to March 2026 wintering bird survey

Receptor/feature	Peak number recorded	Potential Importance of Survey Area	Comment
Wintering oystercatcher	167	Potentially regionally important	N/A
Wintering curlew	36	Potentially locally important	BoCC Red List species
Wintering redshank	87	Potentially regionally important	N/A
Wintering turnstone	65	Potentially regionally important	N/A
Wintering purple sandpiper	64	Potentially regionally important	BoCC Red List species
Mixed species high-tide wader roost at Craigeven Bay	346	Potentially regionally important	Used by curlew, oystercatcher, redshank, turnstone and purple sandpiper.
Wintering/passage red-throated diver	6 wintering 8 passage	Potentially regionally important	Schedule 1 and Annex 1 species
Wintering/passage long-tailed duck	25	Potentially regionally important	BoCC Red List species
Winter over-night gull roost in Stonehaven Bay	>2000	Potentially regionally important	N/A
Wintering farmland bird community:	>100	Potentially locally important	Five BoCC Red List species present: grey partridge, linnet, skylark yellowhammer and tree sparrow.

8 References

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Appendix A: Results tables

Table A.1. Total Numbers of Birds Observed on Each Survey Visit in the Survey Area

Survey Visit >	1	2	4	5	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Date >	5 Oct	23 Oct	10 Nov	21 Nov	8 Dec	14 Dec	20 Jan	30 Jan	13 Feb	19 Feb	6 Mar	19 Mar
Tide conditions >	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	Low	High	High	Low	Low	High
Wader species												
Oystercatcher	107	26	167	28	134	38	33	98	60	32	61	56
Ringed plover	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Purple sandpiper	0	0	14	0	14	1	6	64	7	1	38	60
Dunlin	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Curlew	8	14	32	15	36	11	6	15	31	3	5	18
Redshank	60	13	68	5	63	22	8	87	61	7	28	46
Turnstone	23	11	65	11	39	6	4	6	24	3	14	29
Grey heron	0	6	2	5	1	8	1	1	5	3	1	1
Wildfowl species												
Whooper swan	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wigeon	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Teal	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mallard	30	33	70	65	23	24	32	12	67	38	2	4
Eider	5	1	1	4	8	23	17	6	16	32	52	55
Long-tailed duck	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	9	25
Goldeneye	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red-breasted merganser	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Goosander	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Seabird species												
Red-throated diver	6	8	2	3	6	0	1	0	2	3	7	4
Fulmar	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	0	2
Gannet	17	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cormorant	17	19	4	6	3	4	5	0	6	1	13	5

Survey Visit >	1	2	4	5	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Date >	5 Oct	23 Oct	10 Nov	21 Nov	8 Dec	14 Dec	20 Jan	30 Jan	13 Feb	19 Feb	6 Mar	19 Mar
Tide conditions >	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	Low	High	High	Low	Low	High
Shag	39	46	3	6	14	4	2	3	6	8	8	10
Guillemot	14	9	3	3	3	1	40	5	14	10	1	22
Razorbill	16	20	2	2	1	0	0	0	2	0	88	43
Black-headed gull	256	5	353	60	24	100	0	1	5	1	0	0
Common gull	44	25	0	350	150	705	0	0	104	1	5	40
Herring gull	58	76	504	84	445	740	2	7	16	7	44	65
Great b-b. gull	28	10	3	16	1	2	2	3	3	2	6	4
Kittiwake	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	29
Sandwich tern	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Raptors, raven and farmland bird species												
Sparrowhawk	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Buzzard	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0
Peregrine	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Kestrel	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Raven	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	1	1
Grey partridge	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Skylark	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Linnet	65	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	90	0	20	0
Tree sparrow	0	0	0	30	0	12	0	0	10	6	0	0
Yellowhammer	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	1	30	0	2

Table A.2. Summary Metrics of Bird Abundance for the Twelve Survey Visits

Species	Mean count	Peak count	Mean of low tide counts	Mean of high tide counts
Wader species				
Oystercatcher	70.0	167	36.3	103.7
Ringed plover	0.1	1	0.0	0.2
Purple sandpiper	17.1	64	7.7	26.5
Dunlin	0.1	1	0.0	0.2
Curlew	16.2	36	9.0	23.3
Redshank	39.0	87	13.8	64.2
Turnstone	19.6	65	8.2	31.0
Grey heron	2.8	8	4.0	1.7
Wildfowl species				
Whooper swan	1.3	15	0.0	2.5
Wigeon	1.4	16	0.0	2.8
Teal	0.3	4	0.7	0.0
Mallard	33.3	70	32.3	34.3
Eider	18.3	55	21.5	15.2
Long-tailed duck	2.9	25	1.5	4.3
Goldeneye	0.1	1	0.2	0.0
Red-breasted merganser	0.2	2	0.0	0.3
Goosander	0.3	3	0.7	0.0
Seabird species				
Red-throated diver	3.5	8	3.7	3.3
Fulmar	0.6	3	0.7	0.5
Gannet	2.0	17	1.2	2.8
Cormorant	6.9	19	8.0	5.8
Shag	12.4	46	12.3	12.5
Guillemot	10.4	40	10.7	10.2
Razorbill	14.5	88	18.3	10.7
Black-headed gull	67.1	353	27.7	106.5
Common gull	118.7	705	181.0	56.3

Species	Mean count	Peak count	Mean of low tide counts	Mean of high tide counts
Herring gull	170.7	740	158.8	182.5
Great black-backed gull	6.7	28	6.3	7.0
Kittiwake	2.9	29	0.0	5.8
Sandwich tern	0.1	1	0.0	0.2
Raptors, raven and farmland bird species				
Sparrowhawk	0.3	1	0.0	0.5
Buzzard	0.4	3	0.8	0.0
Peregrine	0.1	1	0.2	0.0
Kestrel	0.1	1	0.2	0.0
Raven	0.6	2	0.7	0.5
Grey partridge	0.3	2	0.2	0.3
Skylark	0.2	1	0.2	0.2
Linnet	17.9	90	10.0	25.8
Tree sparrow	4.8	30	8.0	1.7
Yellowhammer	3.6	30	6.7	0.5

Table A.3. Total Numbers of Marine Mammals Observed on Each Survey Visit in the Survey Area

Survey Visit >	1	2	4	5	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Date >	5 Oct	23 Oct	10 Nov	12 Nov	8 Dec	14 Dec	20 Jan	30 Jan	13 Feb	19 Feb	6 Mar	19 Mar
Tide conditions >	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	Low	High	High	Low	Low	High
Bottlenose dolphin	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Common seal	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grey seal	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Appendix B: Figures

Figure 1. Location of the Cowie Survey Area

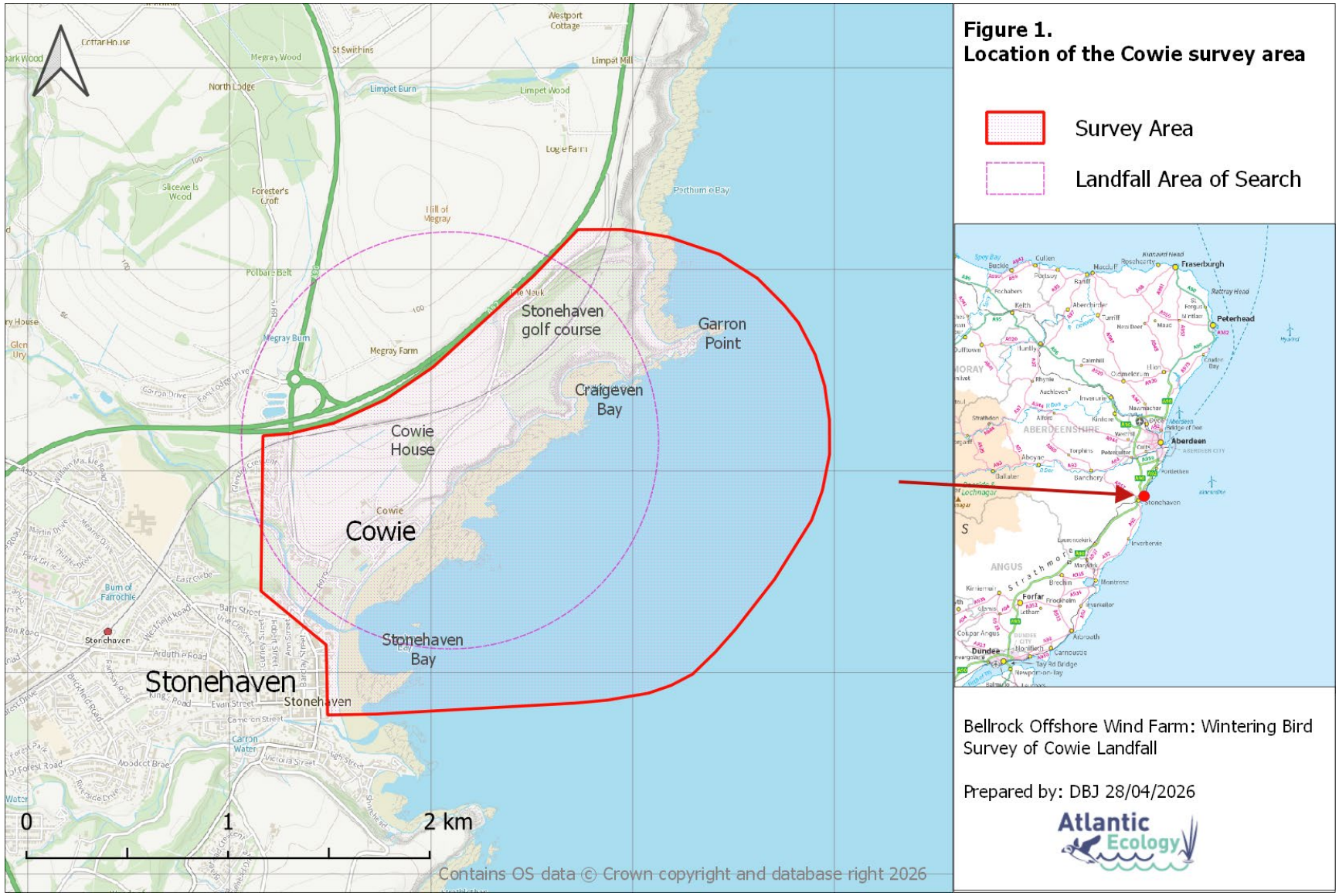


Figure 2. Cowie wintering bird Survey Area 200 x 200 meter grid superimposed on aerial image

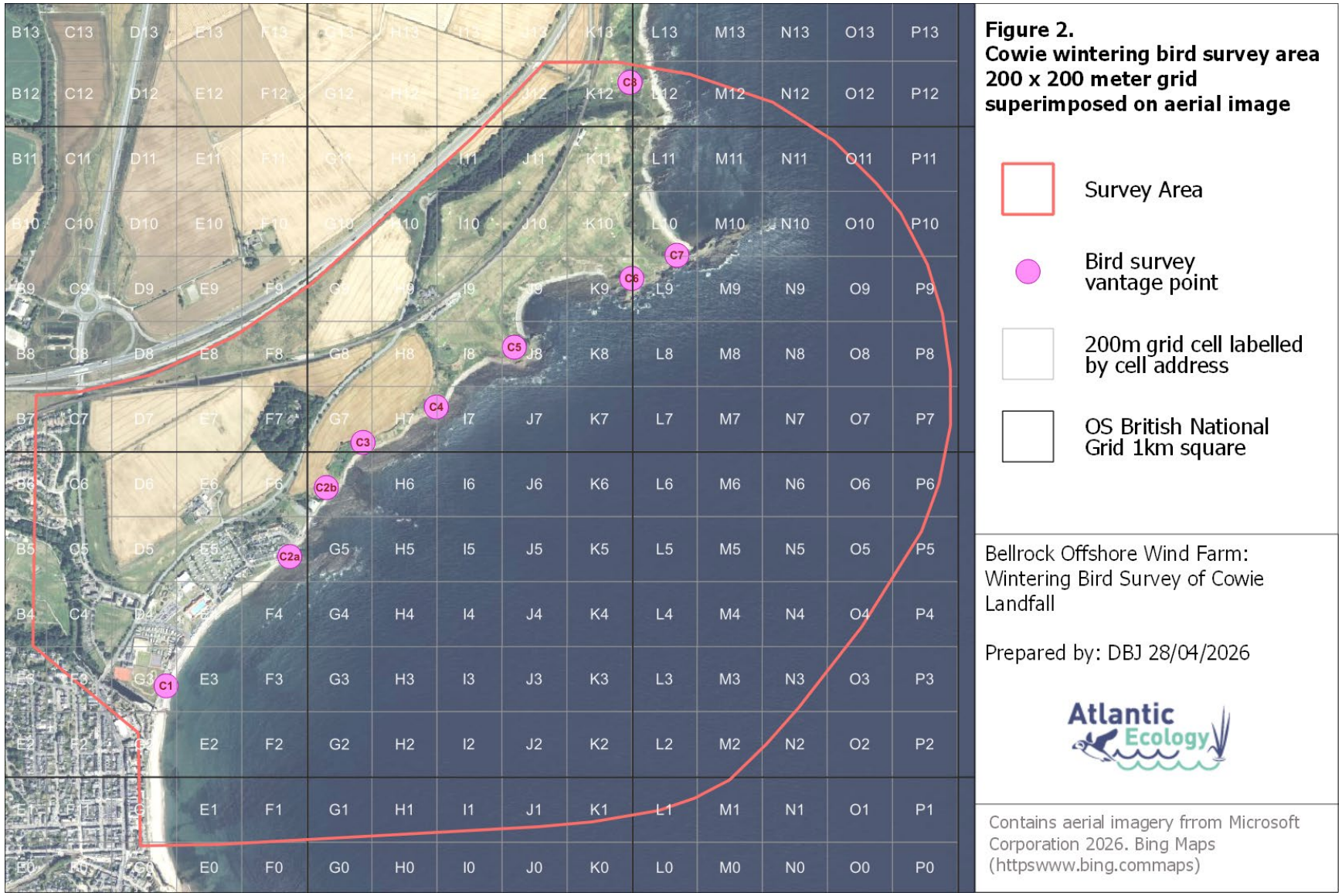


Figure 3. Distribution of oystercatchers recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

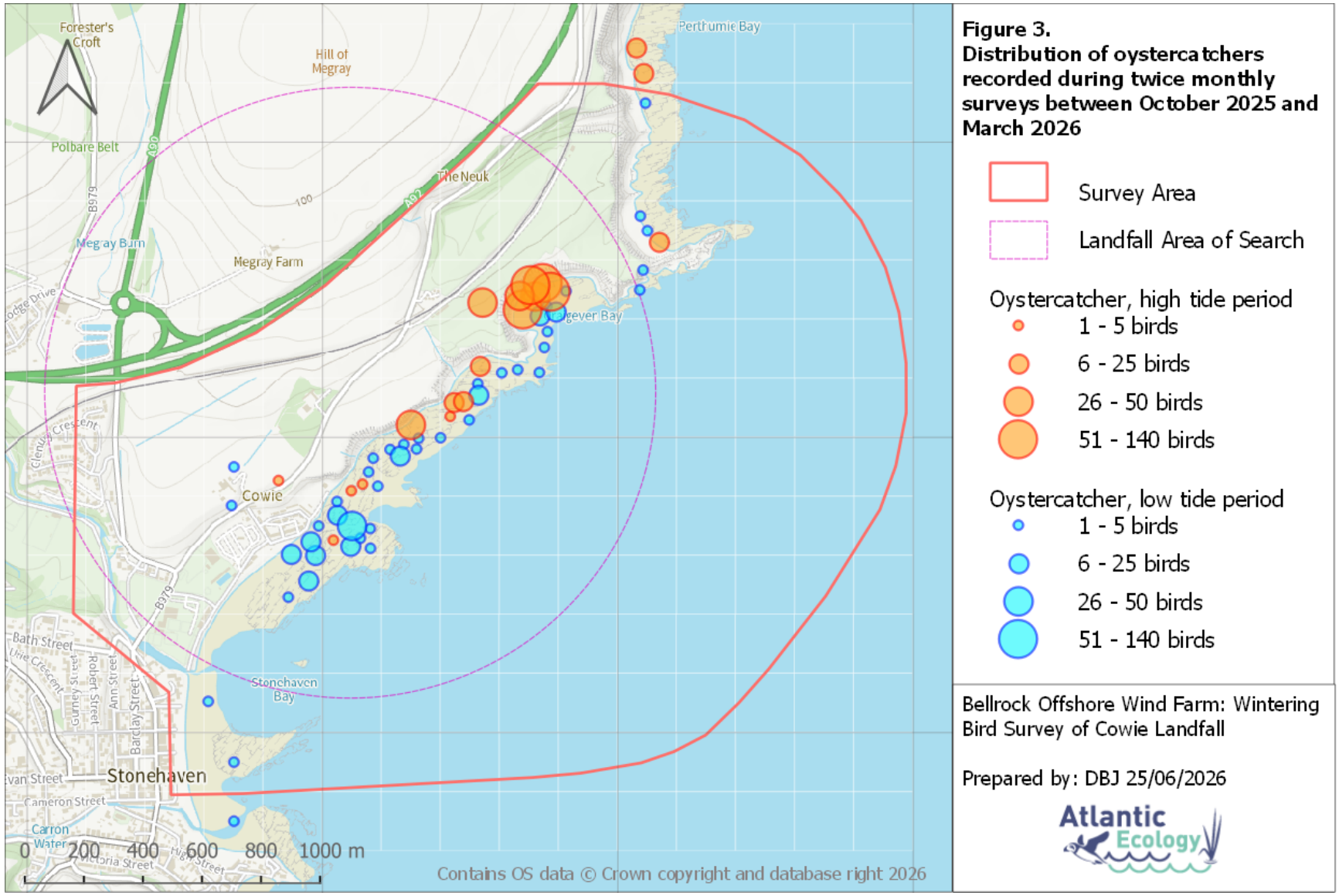


Figure 4. Distribution of curlews recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

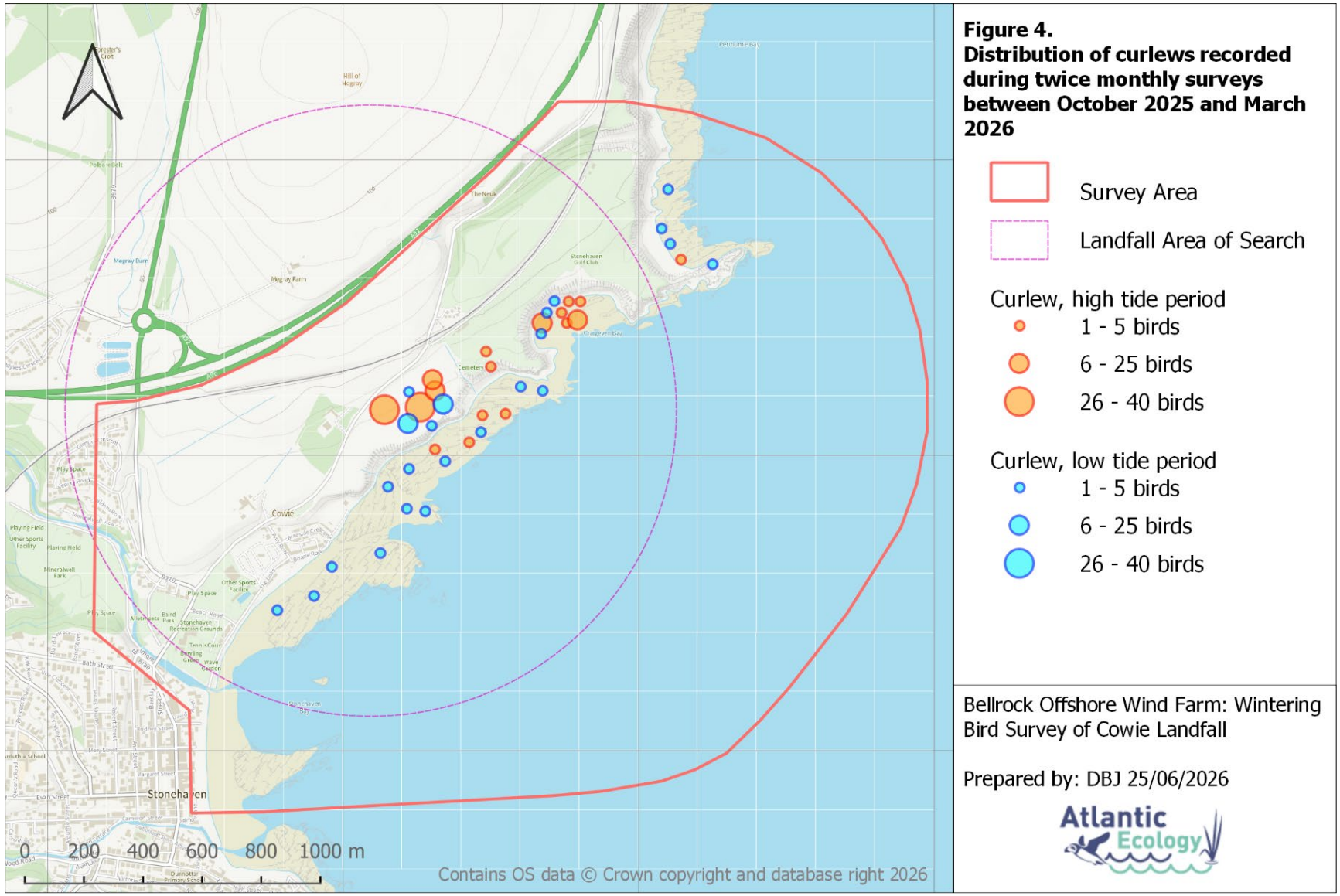


Figure 5. Distribution of redshanks recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

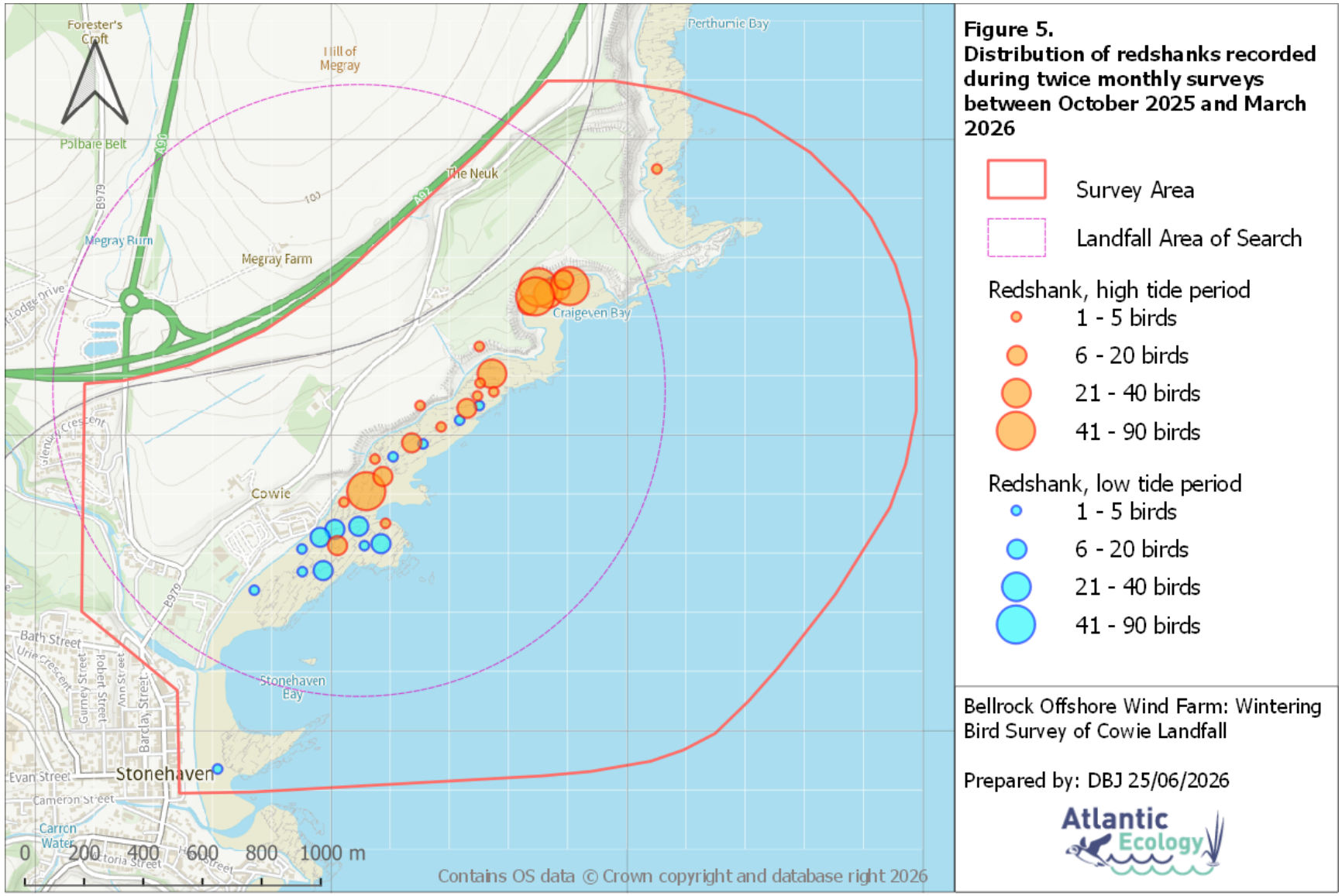


Figure 6. Distribution of turnstones recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

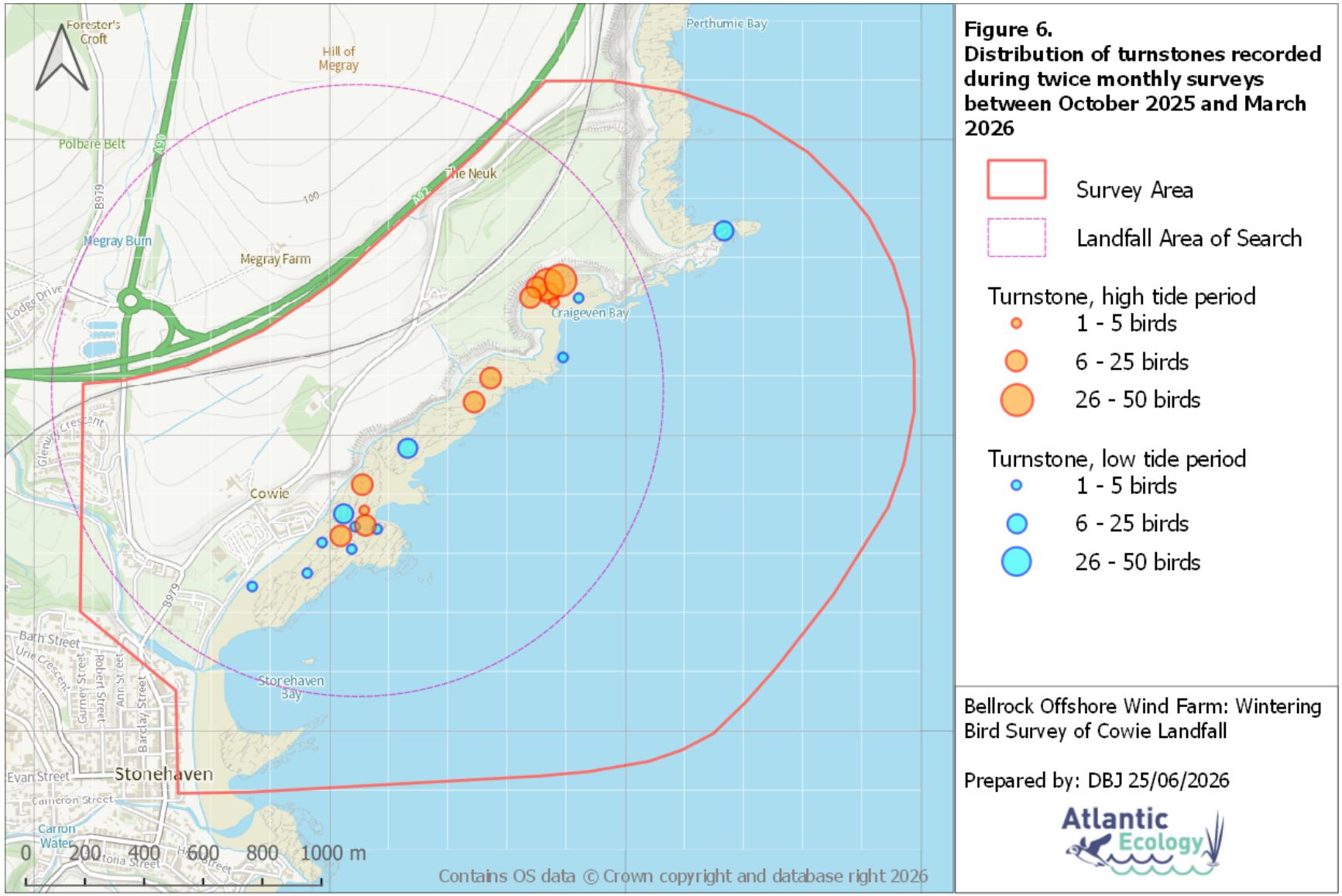


Figure 7. Distribution of purple sandpipers recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

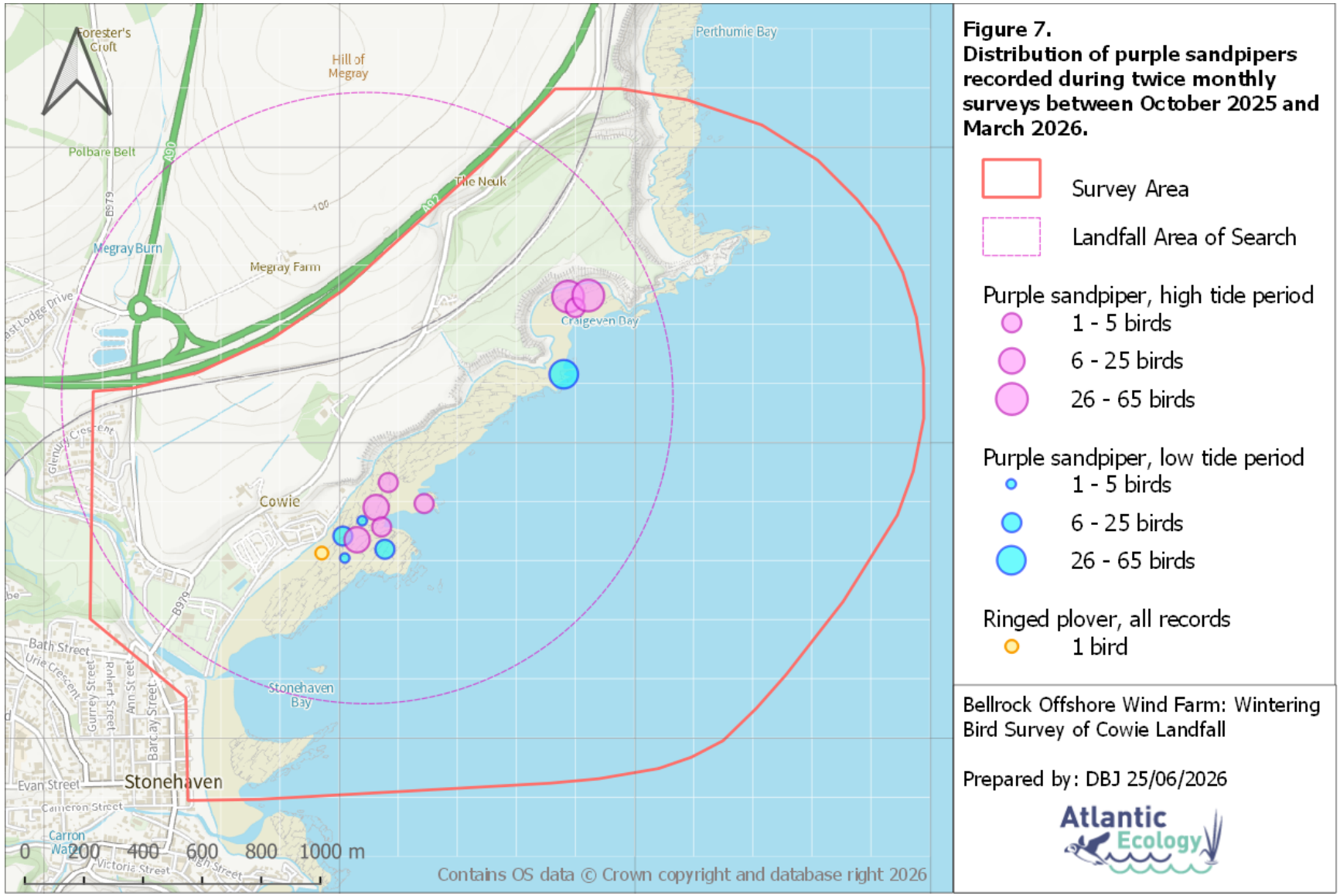


Figure 8. Distribution of grey herons recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

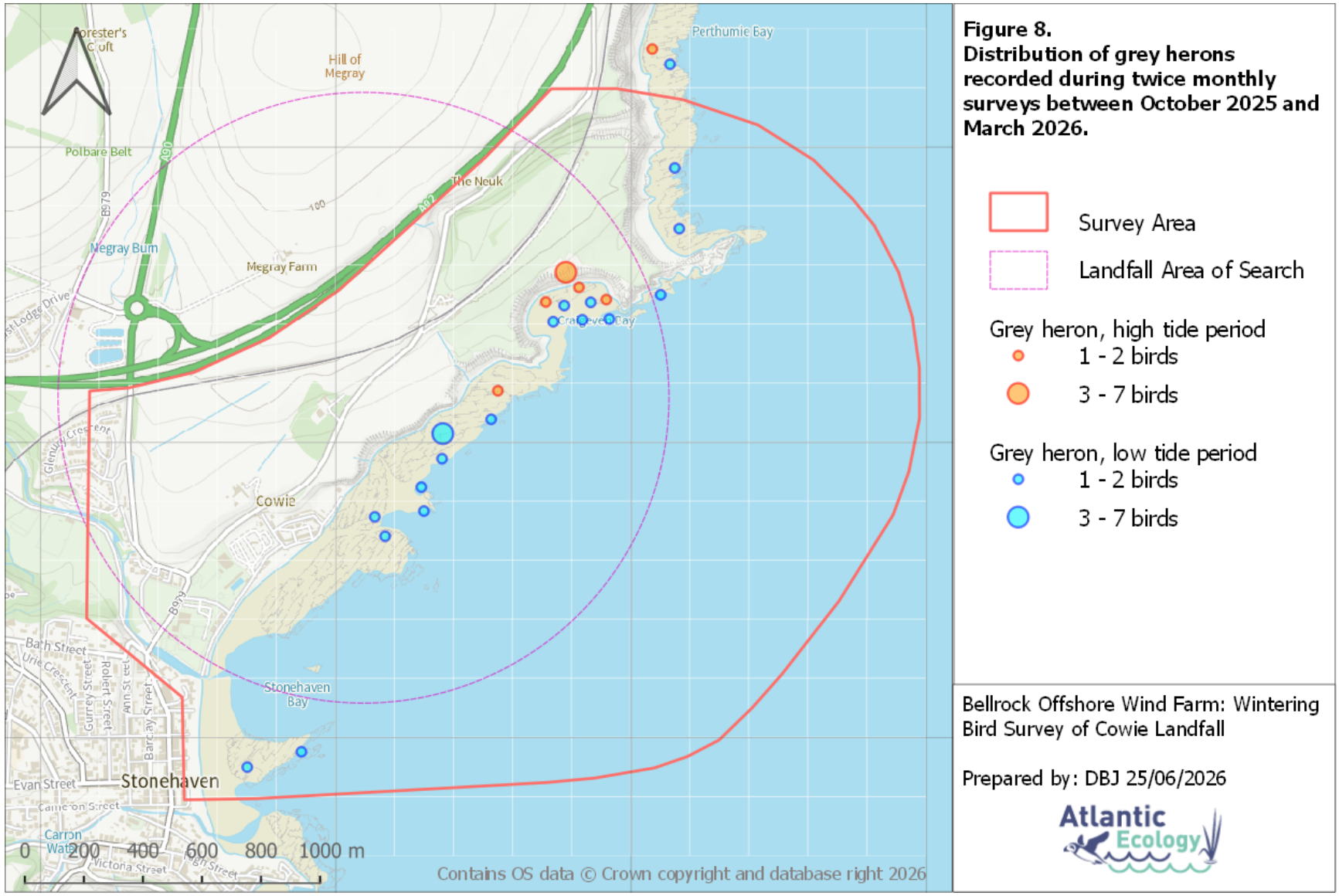


Figure 9. Distribution of wigeon and teal recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

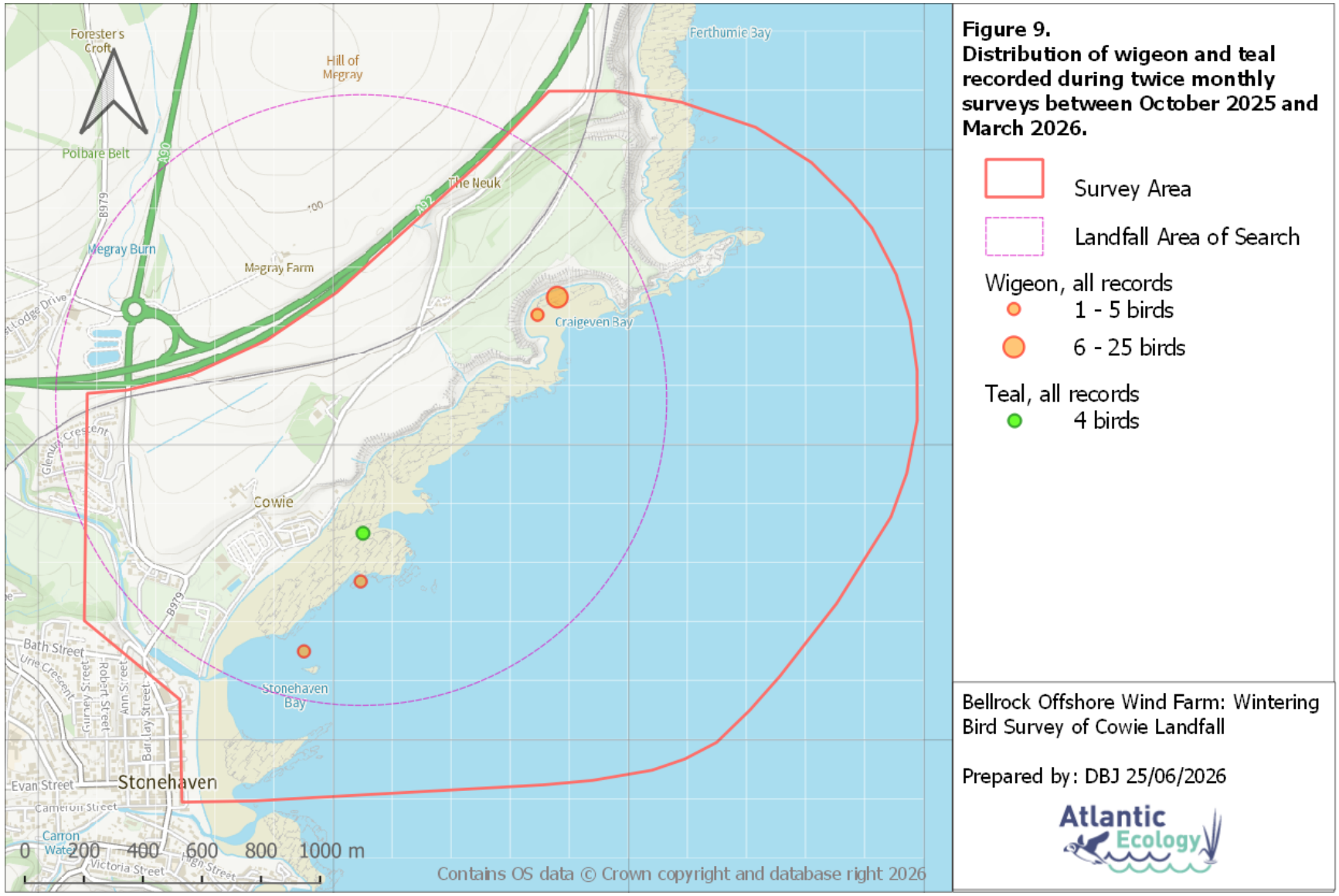


Figure 10. Distribution of mallard recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

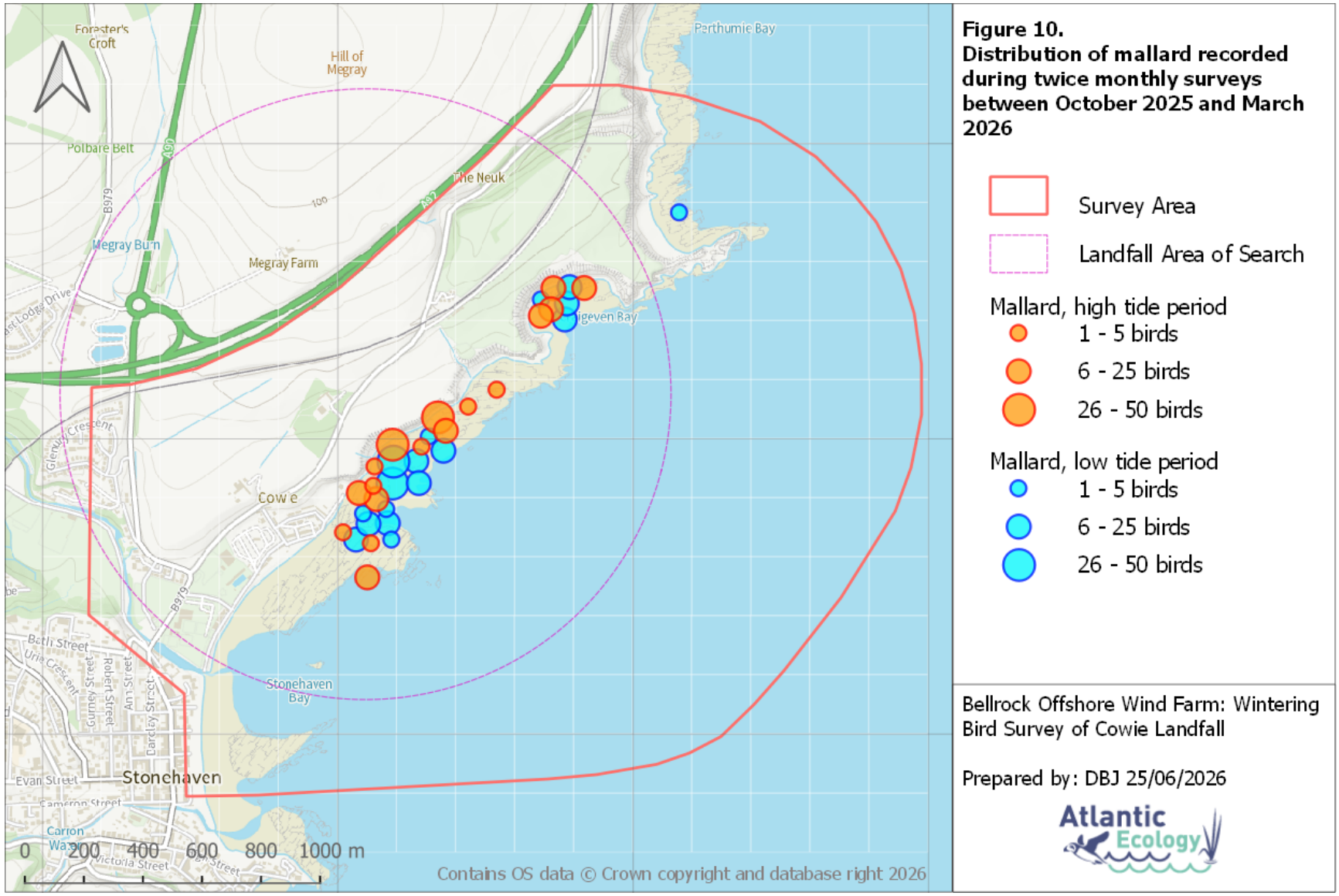


Figure 11. Distribution of eider ducks recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

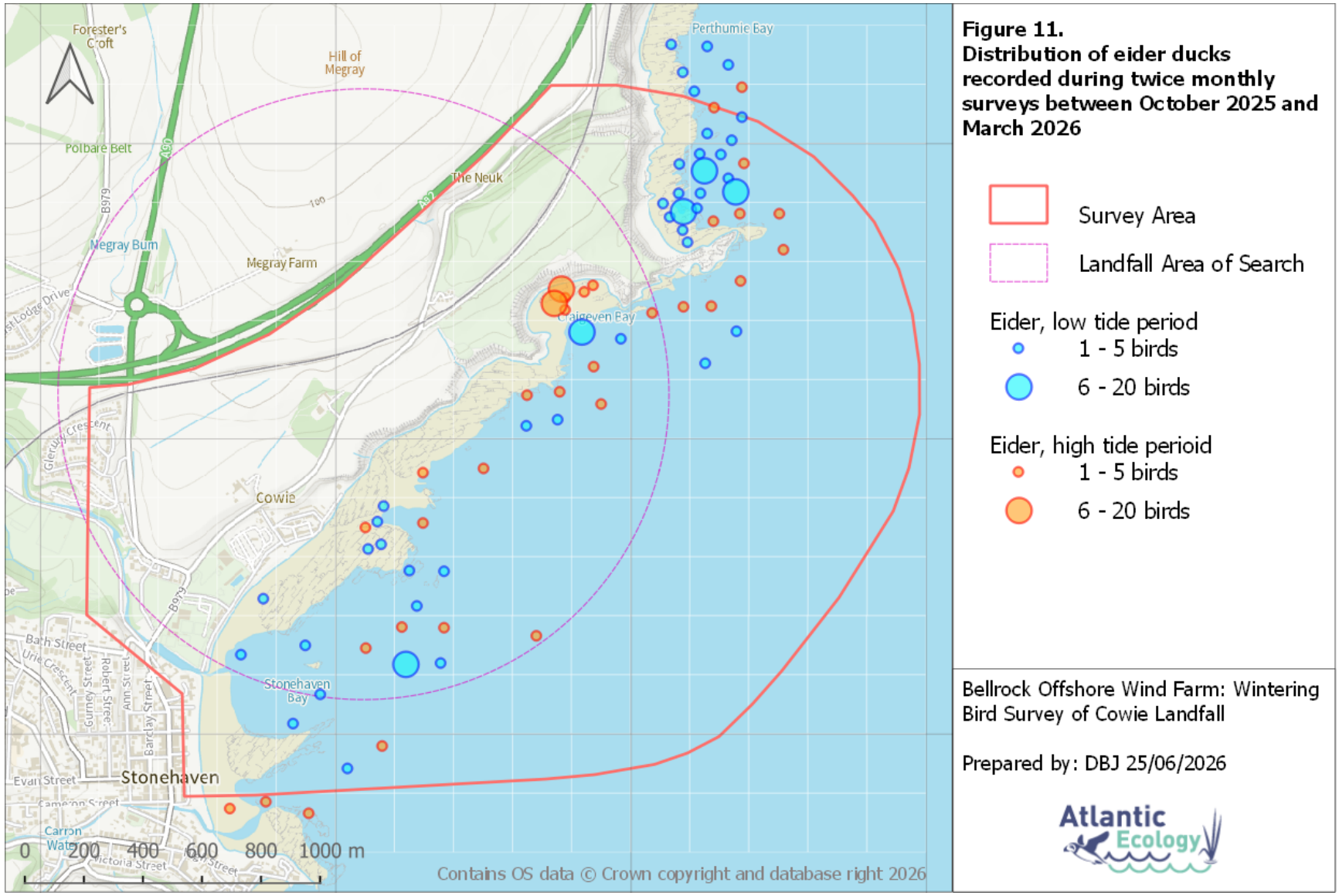


Figure 12. Distribution of other wildfowl species recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

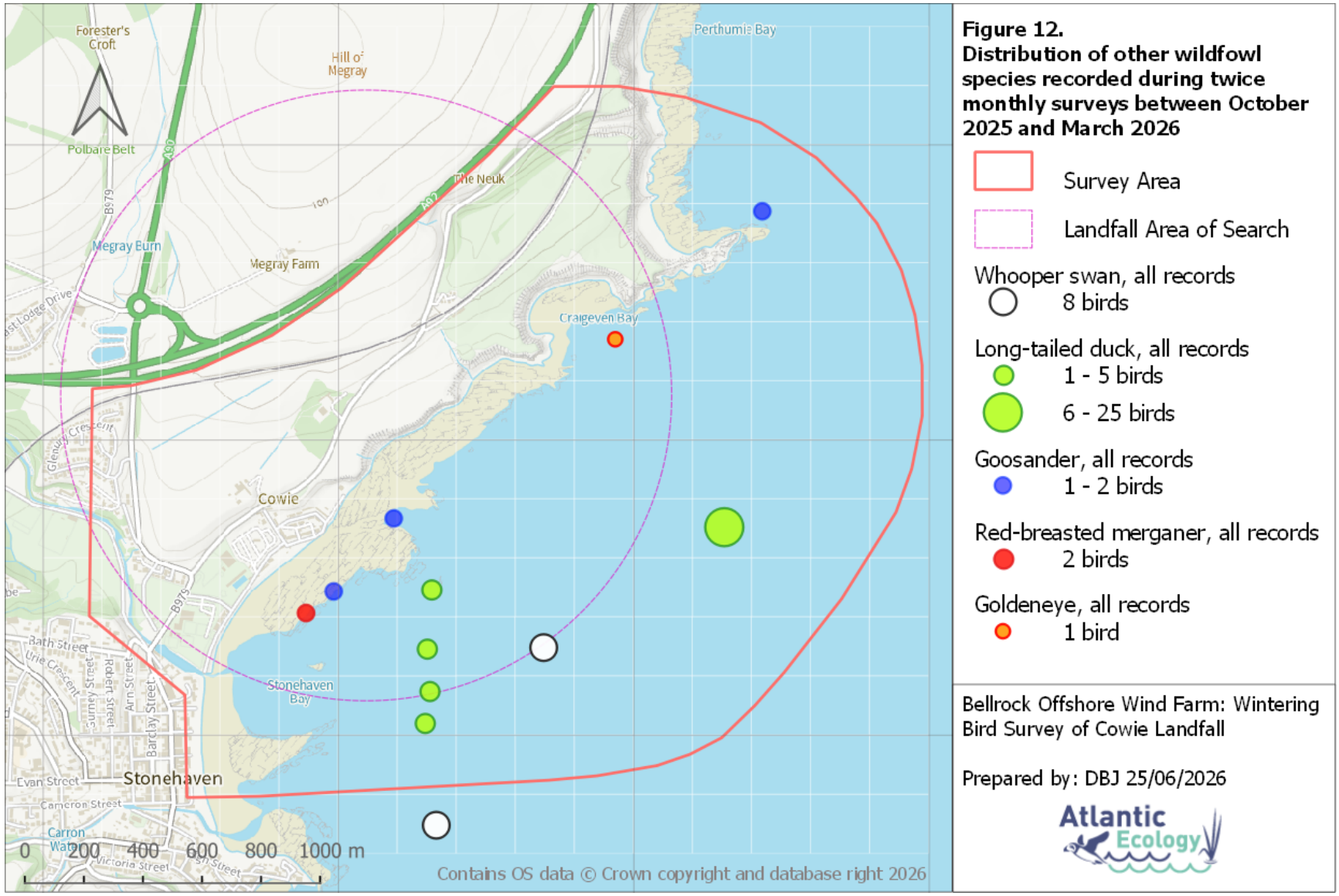


Figure 13. Distribution of red-throated divers recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

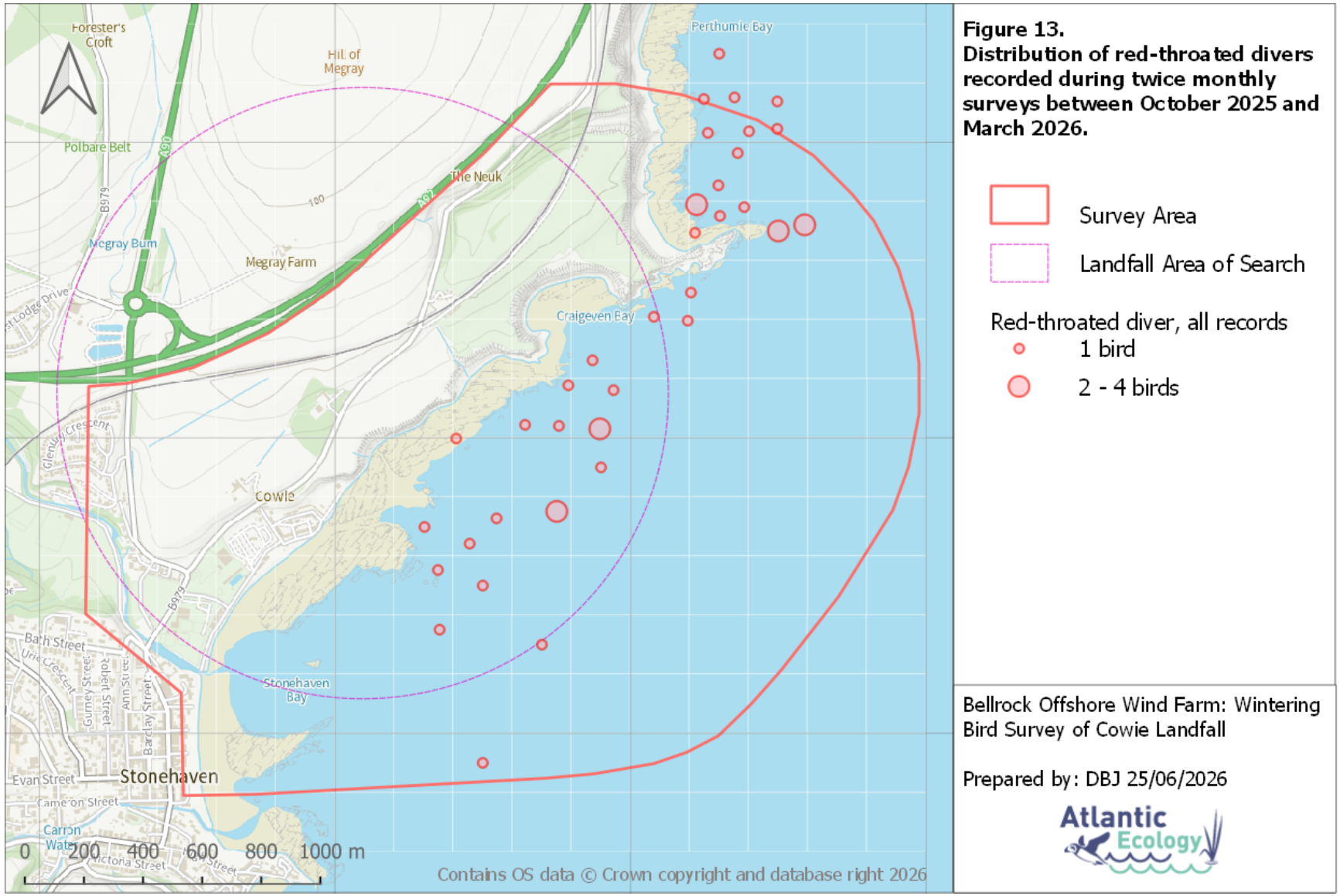


Figure 14. Distribution of cormorants recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

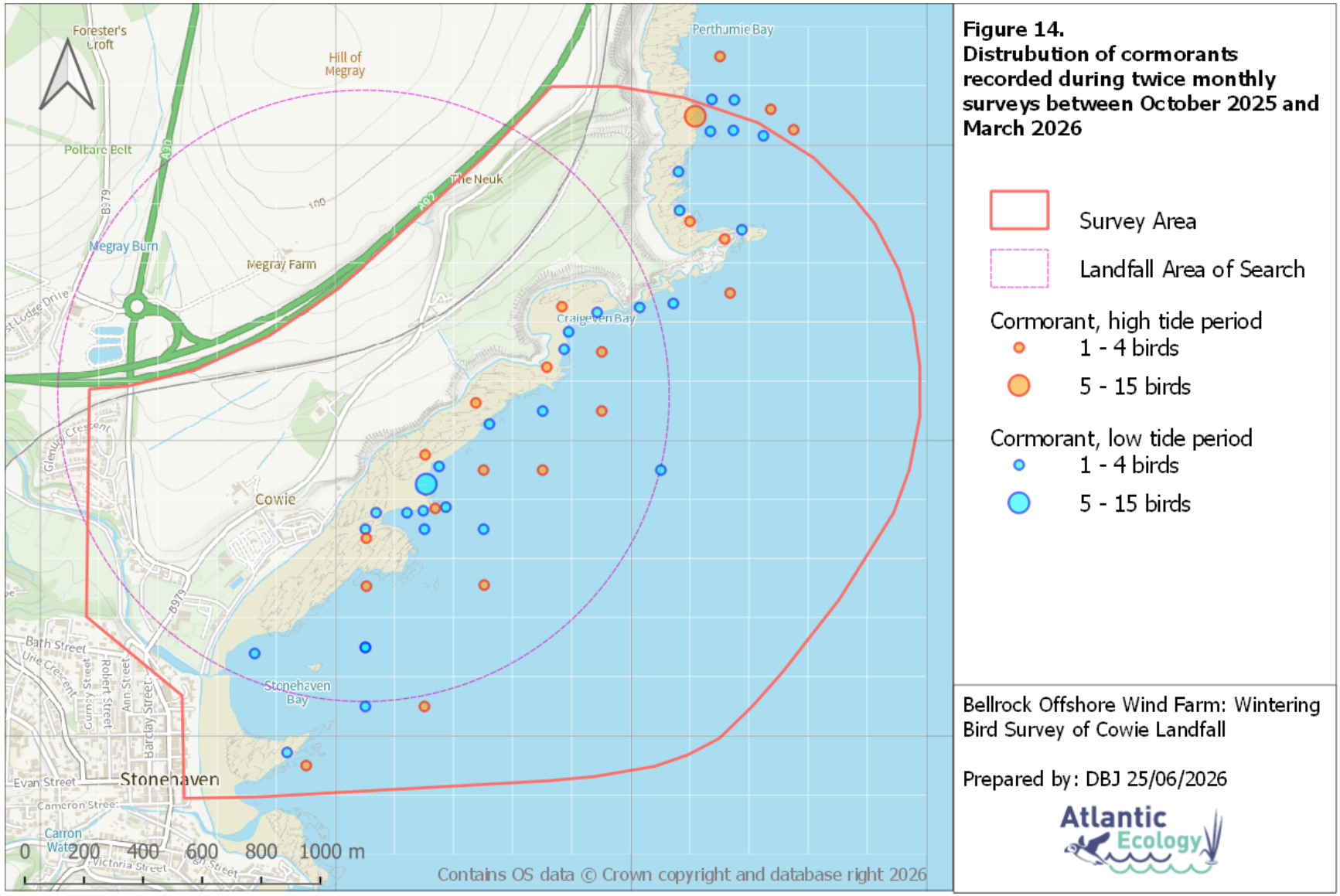


Figure 15. Distribution of European shags recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

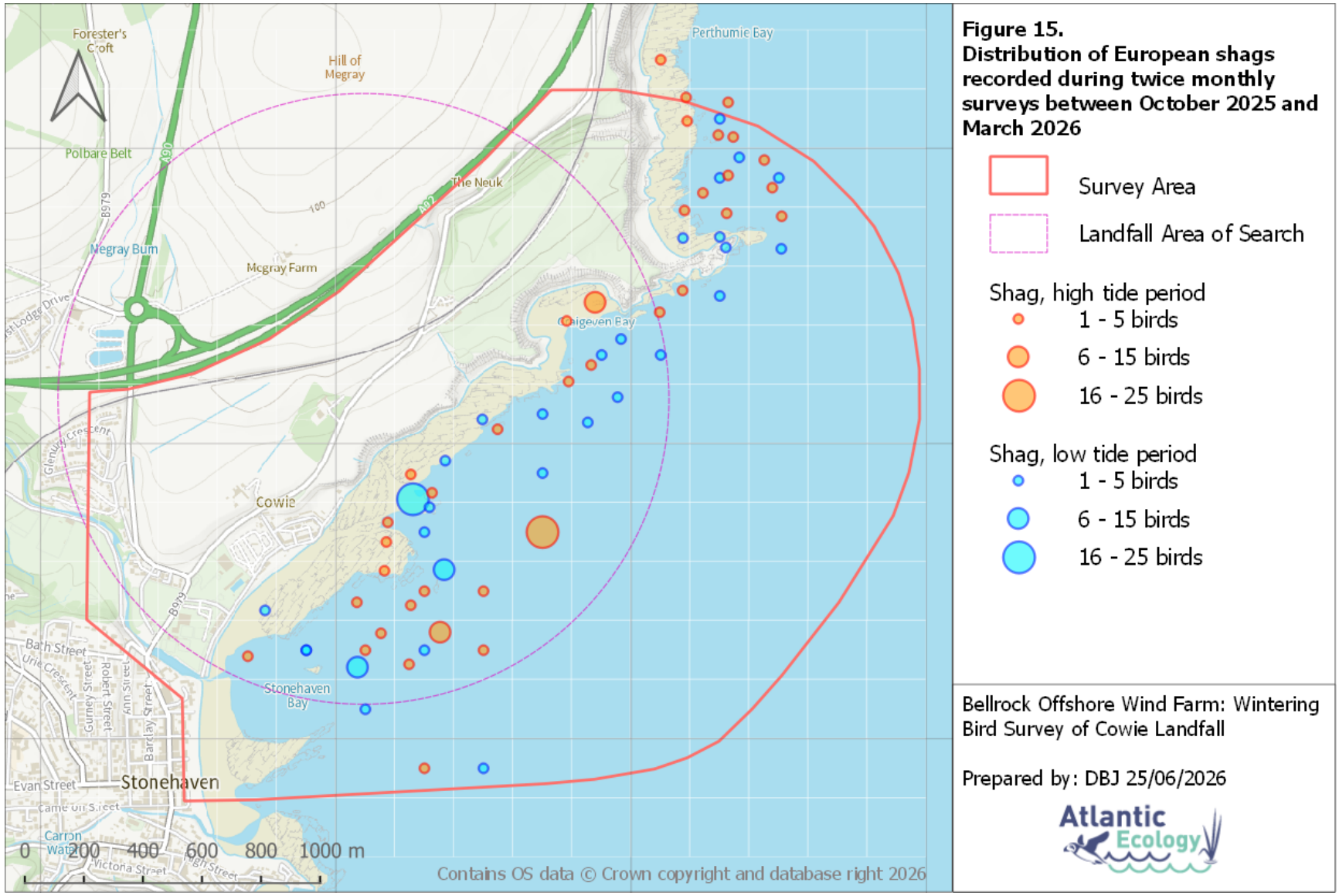


Figure 16. Distribution of common guillemots recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

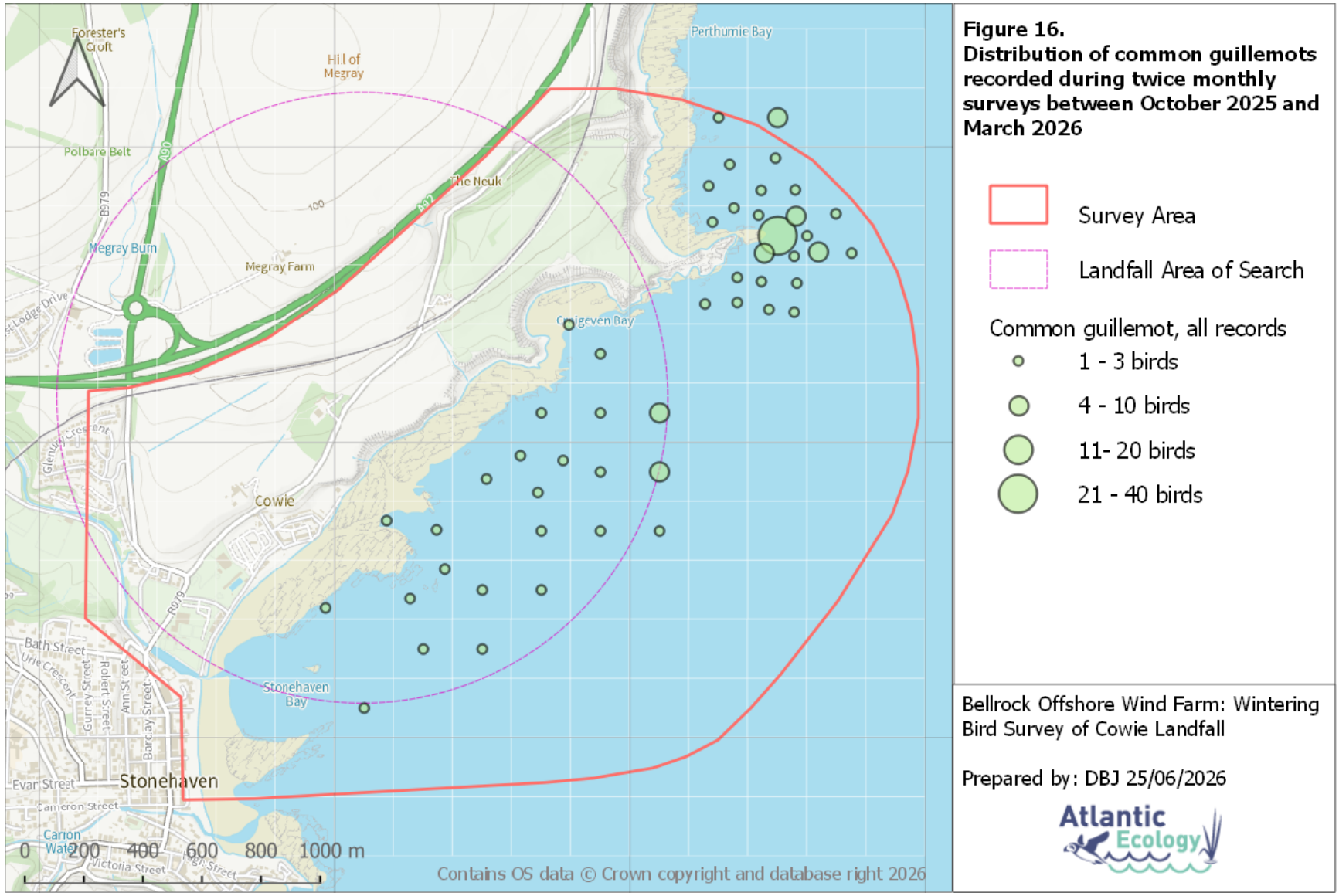


Figure 17. Distribution of razorbills recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

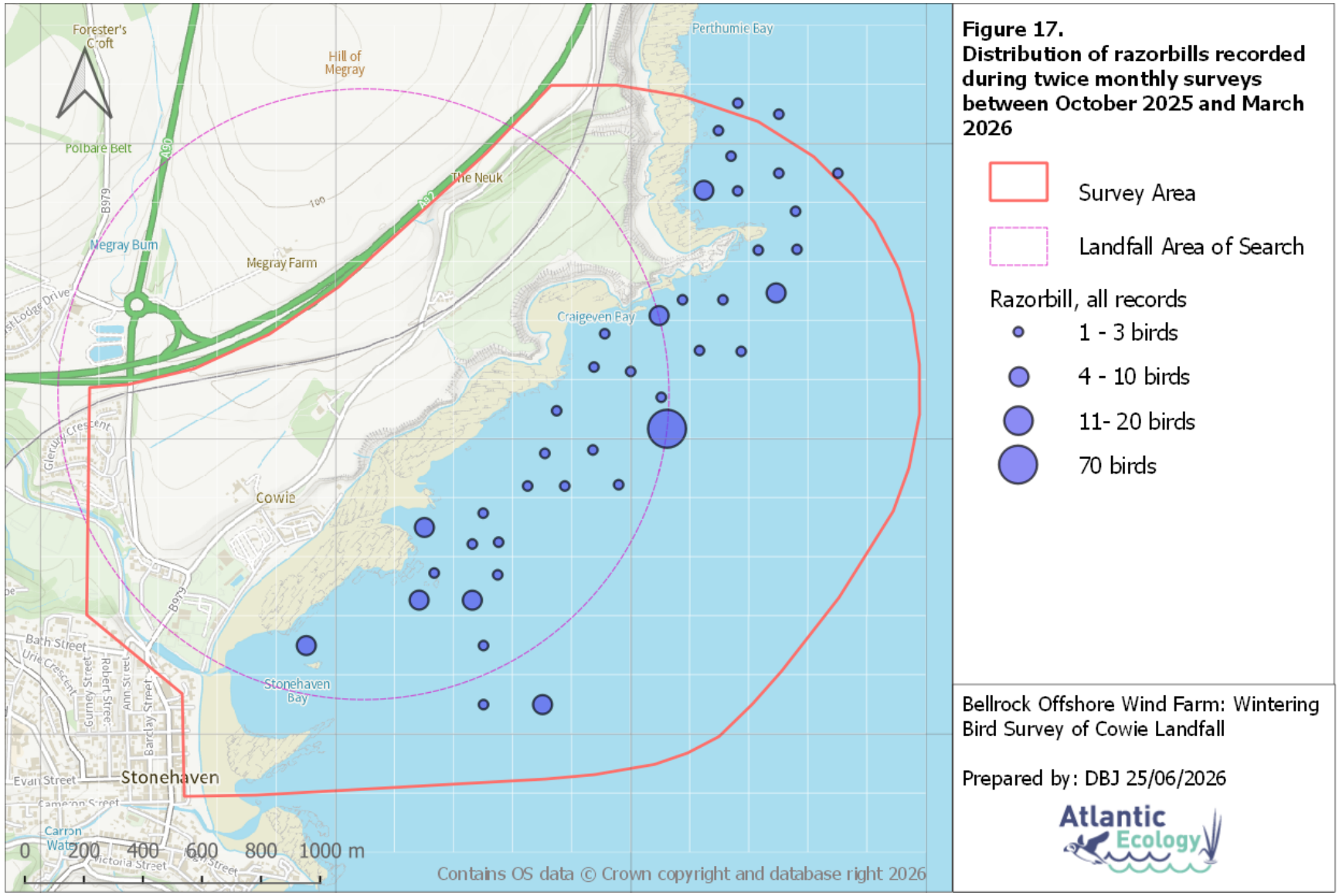


Figure 18. Distribution of herring gulls recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

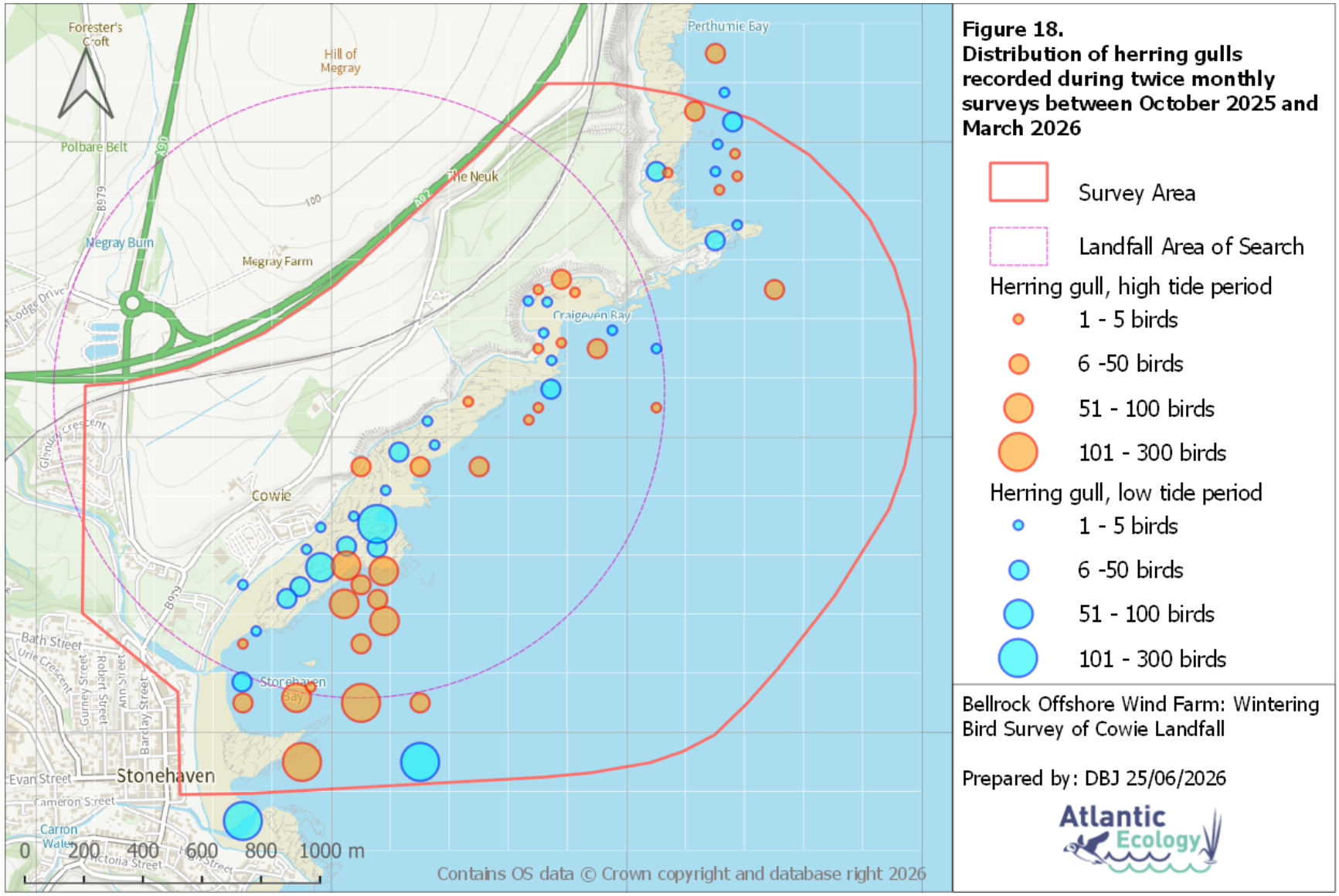


Figure 19. Distribution of great black-backed gulls recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

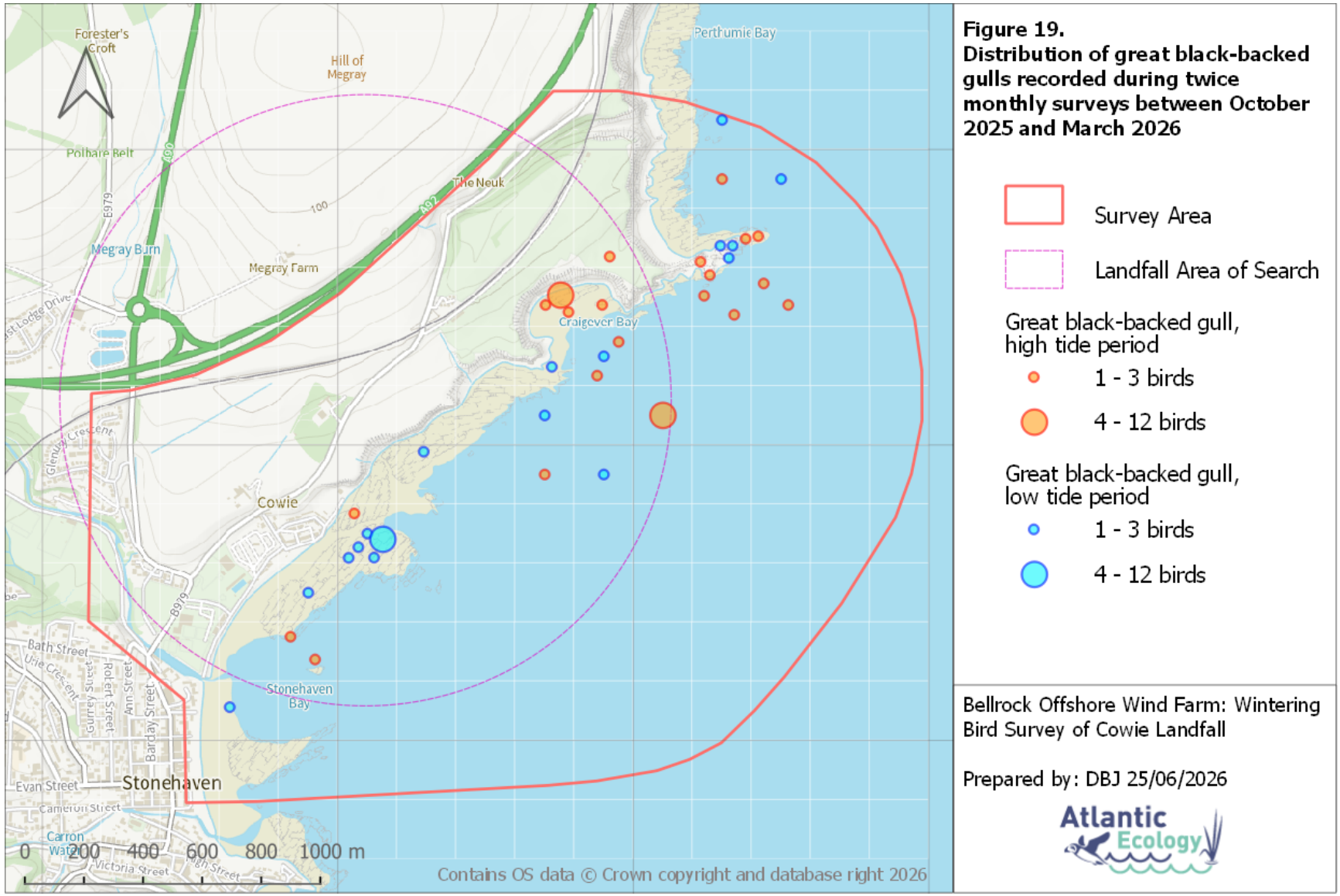


Figure 20. Distribution of common gulls recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

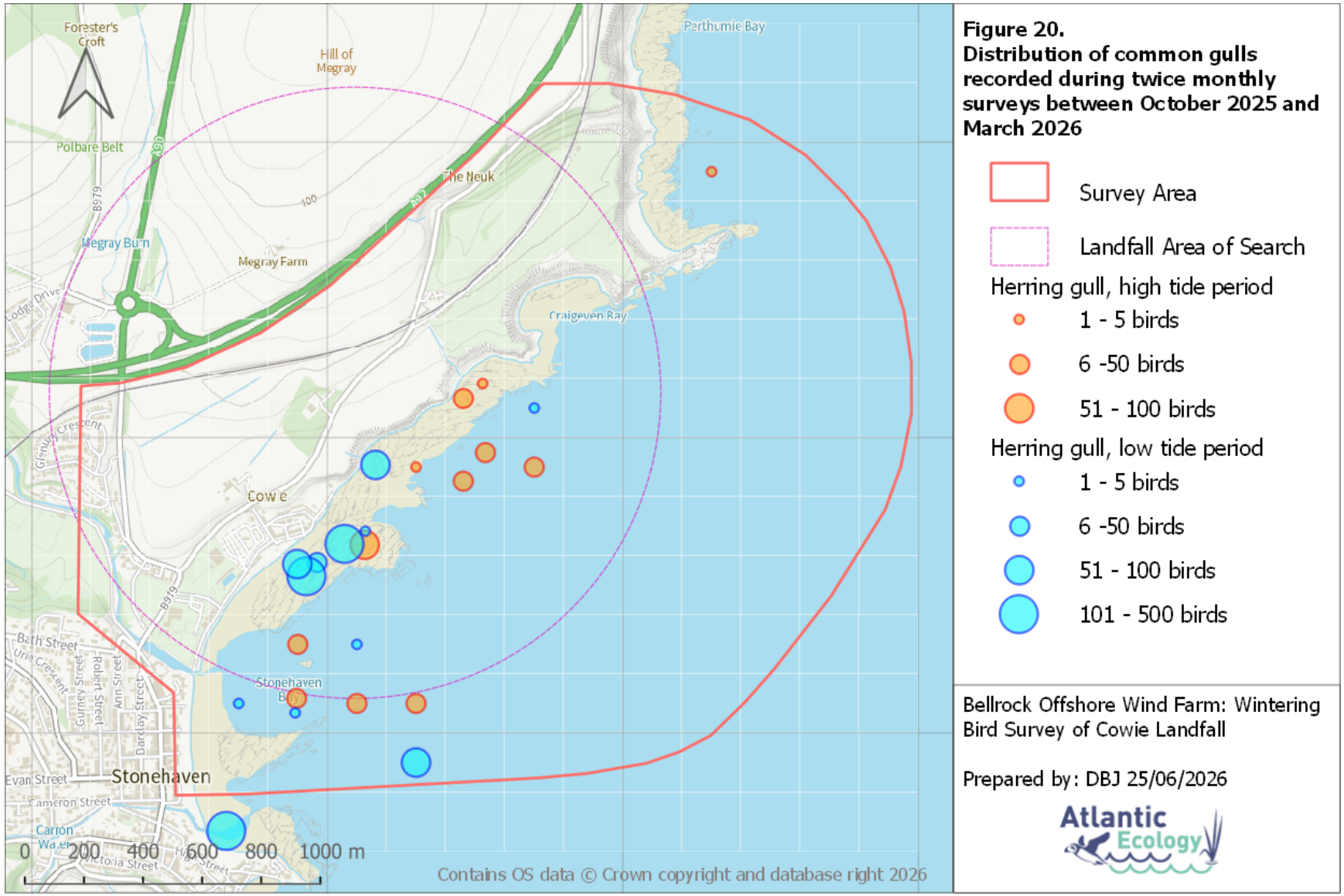


Figure 21. Distribution of black-headed gulls recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

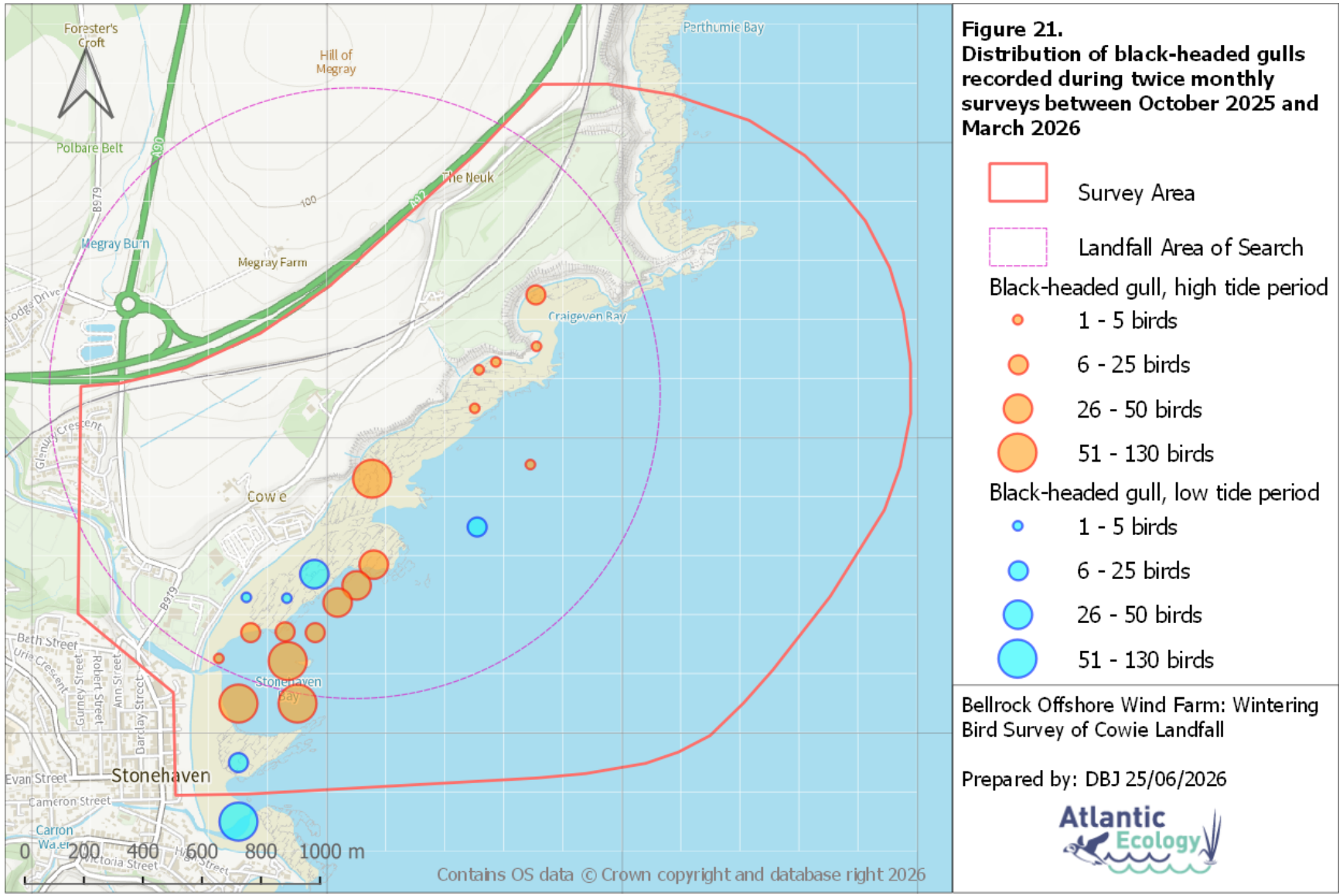


Figure 22. Distribution raptor species and raven recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

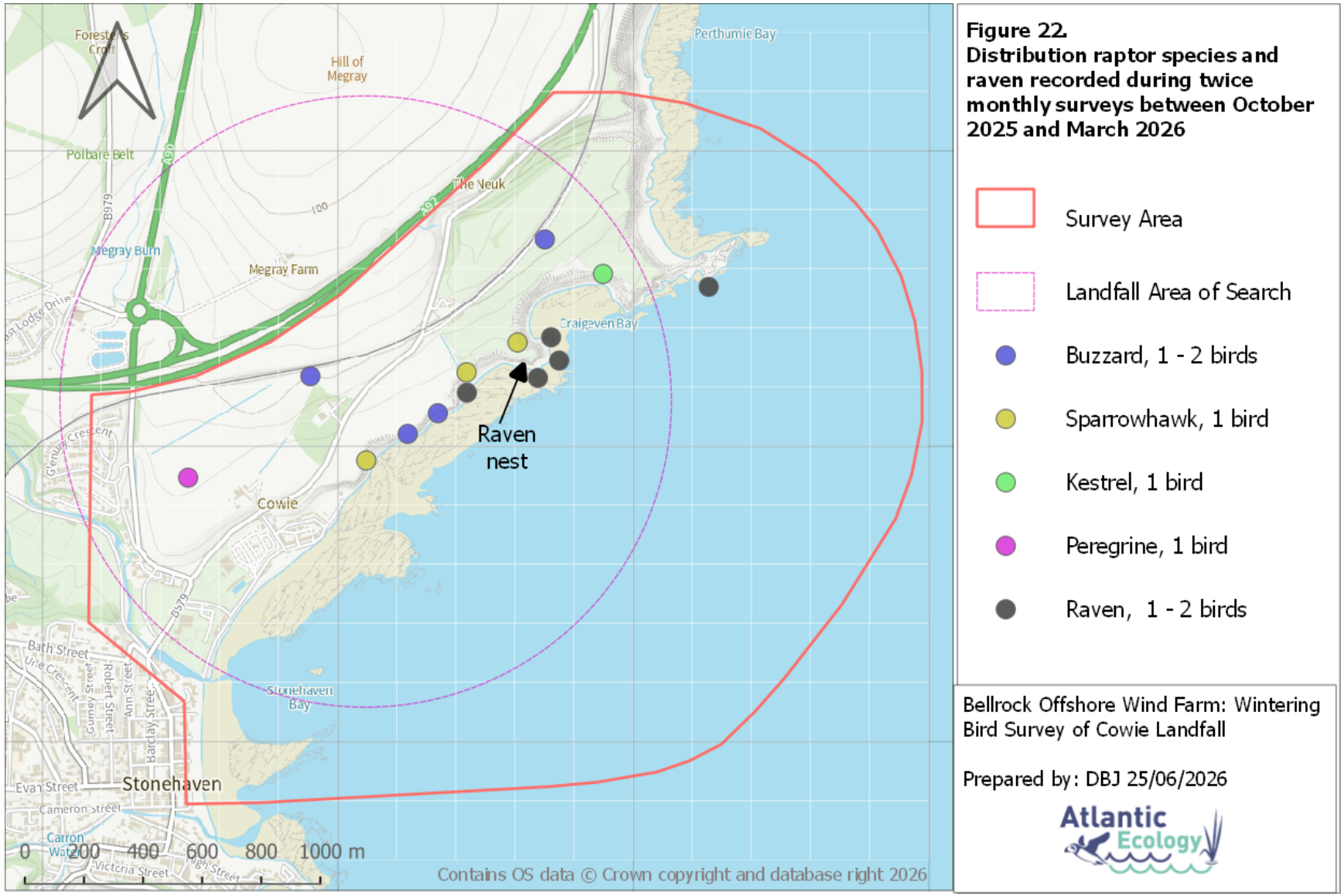


Figure 23. Distribution of Red List farmland bird species recorded during twice monthly surveys between October 2025 and March 2026

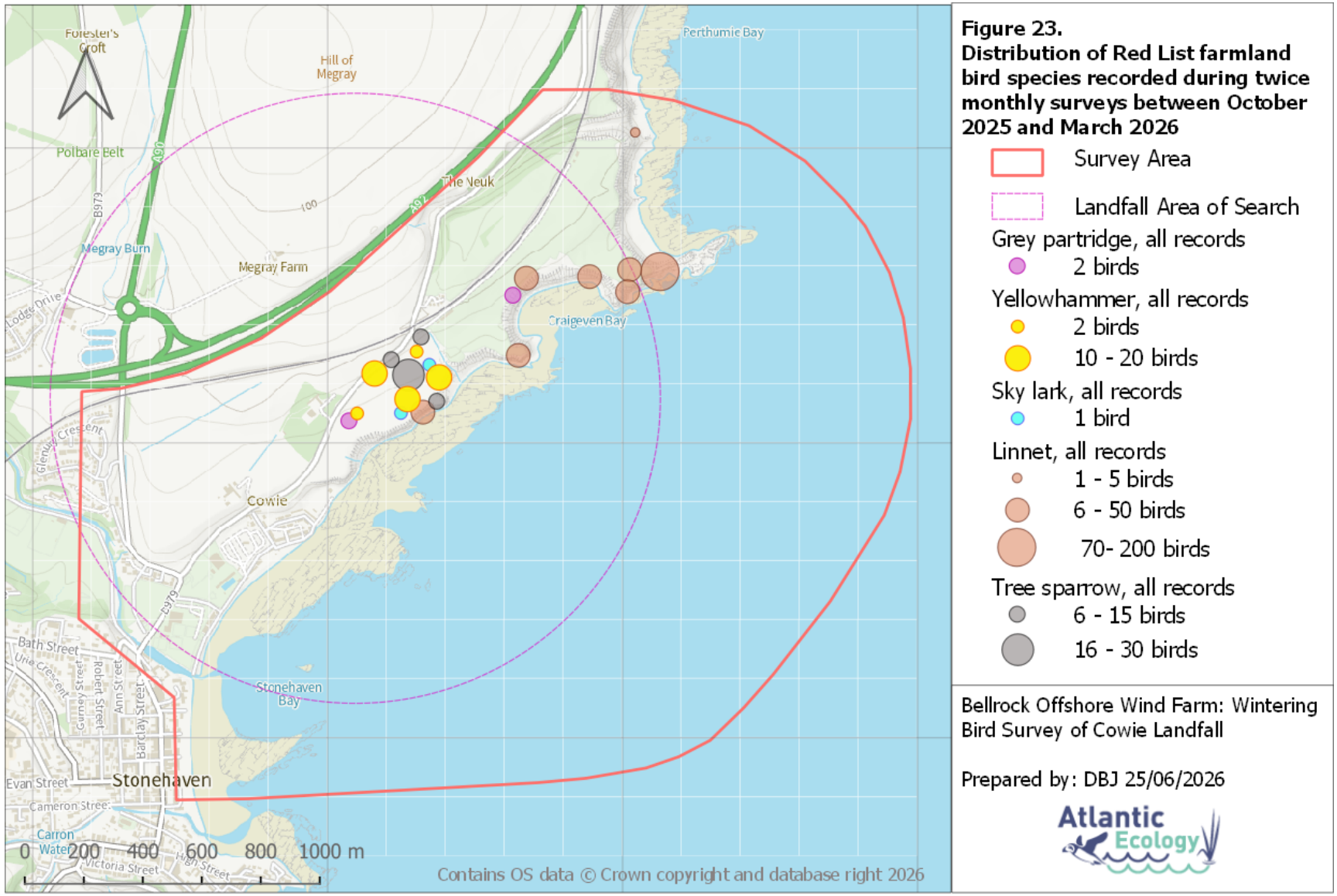
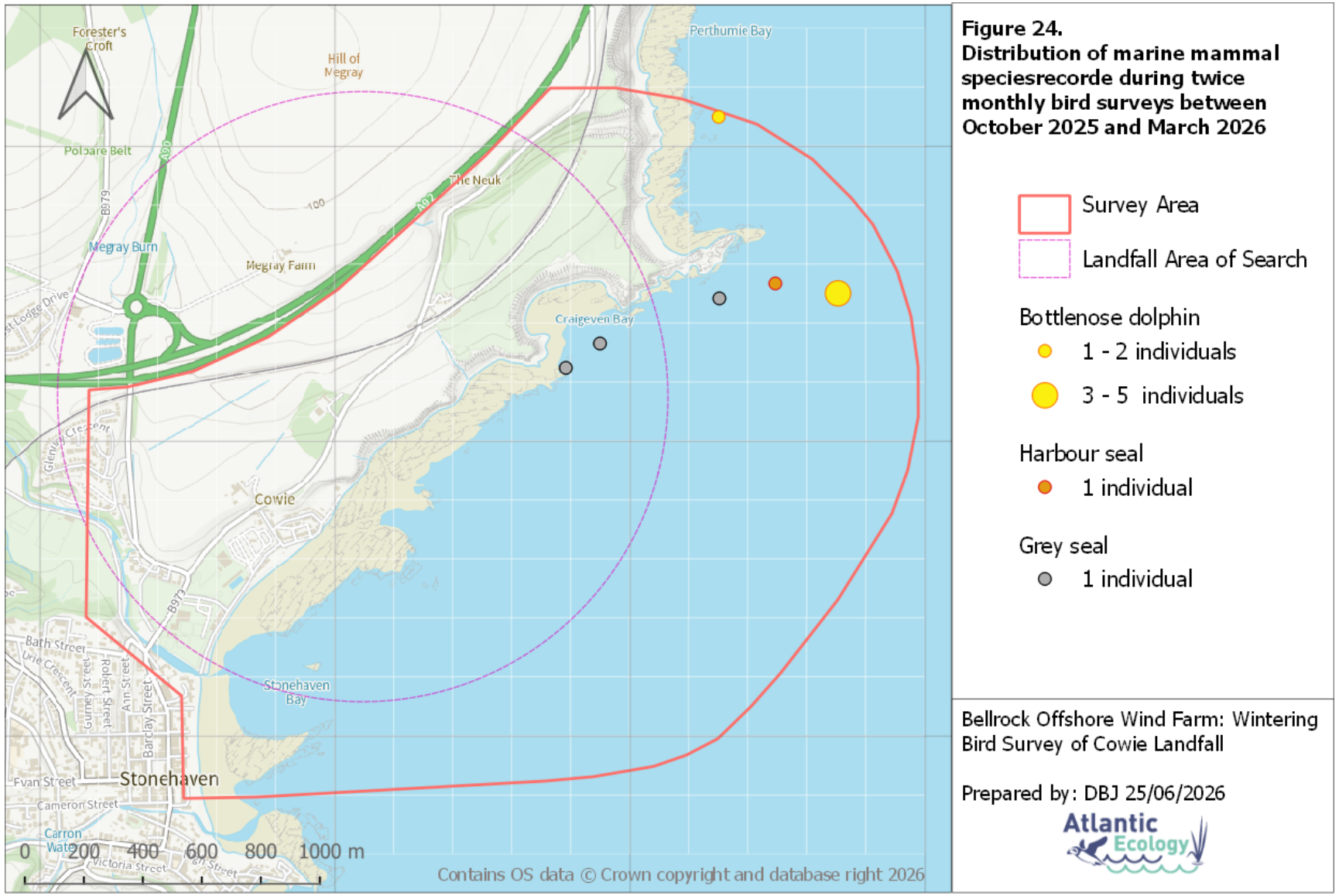


Figure 24. Distribution of marine mammal species recorded during twice monthly bird surveys between October 2025 and March 2026



Appendix C: List of Species

Group	English name	Scientific name	Species code
Birds	Red-throated diver	*Gavia stellata*	RH
	Fulmar	*Fulmarus glacialis*	F.
	Gannet	*Morus bassanus*	GX
	Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*	CA
	European shag	*Gulosus aristotelis*	SA
	Grey heron	*Ardea cinerea*	H.
	Whooper swan	*Cygnus cygnus*	WS
	Wigeon	*Mareca penelope*	WN
	Teal	*Anas crecca*	T.
	Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	MA
	Eider	*Somateria mollissima*	E.
	Long-tailed duck	*Clangula hyemalis*	LN
	Goldeneye	*Bucephala clangula*	GN
	Red-breasted merganser	*Mergus serrator*	RM
	Goosander	*Mergus merganser*	GD
	Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter nisus*	SH
	Buzzard	*Buteo buteo*	BZ
	Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	K.
	Peregrine	*Falco peregrinus*	PE
	Grey partridge	*Perdix perdix*	P.
	Oystercatcher	*Haematopus ostralegus*	OC
	Ringed plover	*Charadrius hiaticula*	RP
	Purple sandpiper	*Calidris maritima*	PS
	Dunlin	*Calidris alpina*	DN
	Curlew	*Numenius arquata*	CU
	Redshank	*Tringa totanus*	RK
	Turnstone	*Arenaria interpres*	TT
	Black-headed gull	*Larus ridibundus*	BH
	Common gull	*Larus canus*	CM
	Herring gull	*Larus argentatus*	HG
	Great black-backed gull	*Larus marinus*	GB
	Kittiwake	*Rissa tridactyla*	KI
	Sandwich tern	*Thalasseus sandvicensis*	TE
	Common guillemot	*Uria aalge*	GU
	Razorbill	*Alca torda*	RA
	Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*	S.
	Raven	*Corvus corax*	RN
	Tree sparrow	*Passer montanus*	TS
	Linnet	*Carduelis cannabina*	LI
	Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*	Y.
Mammals	Bottlenose dolphin	*Tursiops truncatus*	BND
	Harbour seal	*Phoca vitulina*	CSE
	Grey Seal	*Halichoerus grypus*	GSE



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