

AGENDA ITEM 10

APPENDIX I

BEAULY – DENNY RESTORATION MONITORING UPDATE DECEMBER 2017

Beauly Denny 400kV Overhead Line

Restoration Monitoring Update – December 2017

- Cairngorm National Park Authority (CNPA)

Background

Reinstatement and restoration of access tracks and tower compounds is important to the long-term legacy of the Beauly Denny project and Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission (SHE Transmission) are fully committed to ongoing monitoring, and where necessary, intervention to ensure we meet our statutory obligations in this regard.

Year two of the monitoring programme developed by SHE Transmission and agreed with the CNPA and SNH was completed this autumn and a summary report for the National Park: “Beauly to Denny Replacement Transmission Line Restoration Monitoring 2017”, has been prepared.

In addition, on 26th October SHE Transmission met with representatives of the CNPA and SNH to discuss the status of restoration. During this site visit a number of areas were identified where reinstatement is progressing well along with other areas further monitoring and consideration is required. These sites are identified in the summary report.

Summary of Monitoring Year 2

Of the sites monitored throughout the CNPA area, 41% are assessed as being in Good or Excellent condition for revegetation and a further 20% are showing demonstrable improvement. The remaining sites showed limited improvement over the course of the year. These differences are usually based on soil type and aspect, as well as the composition of adjacent vegetation communities.

Further monitoring of these affected locations is expected to show a year on year increase in the percentage coverage and a change in the species composition as natural succession occurs.

It is worth noting that grazing pressure from sheep and deer is considered to be hampering the progress of revegetation in certain areas, and therefore the rate of restoration on some sites.

Future Activities

Following the findings of the 2017 monitoring programme, it is recommended that the majority of sites be allowed to re-vegetate naturally. This will help ensure that a good semi-natural plant community develops which is typical of the adjacent plant communities.

However, it is evident from the monitoring results that a number of sites may require assistance in order to stimulate revegetation and restoration should there be no demonstrable improvement in future years.

To help inform appropriate methods for future assistance SHE Transmission is proposing to undertake a suite of trials in selected areas where restoration is currently 'sparse' and showing limited improvement. It is anticipated that these trials will not only inform future intervention, as appropriate, but also provide a positive contribution to the selected areas in their own right. The trials will be designed around the following principles and implemented in Spring 2018:

- Coverage of 3 separate spans (combined length between 700-1000m, dependant on agreement of individual spans)
- Trial methods to cover combinations of:
 - Stock fencing
 - Deer fencing
 - Seeding with an appropriate upland mix
- 'Pre' and 'post trial' monitoring and reporting

The detailed methodology and specific trial locations will be further refined in January and February (in consultation with the relevant landowners and the CNPA) and implemented in March/April 2018. It is currently anticipated the trial areas will focus on spans around Dalwhinnie and Drumochter, subject to landowner agreement.

The results of the first year of the trials will be incorporated into the Year 3 Monitoring Report with the trial remaining in place for a further year where required. Recommendations made as to success of the different methods and areas identified where further intervention may be required will also be discussed.