

Technical Appendix 13.1

Forest Landscape Appraisal

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1 Forest Landscape Appraisal

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1 Forest Landscape Appraisal

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This analysis evaluates the visual effects of the Proposed Development's northern development area 20-year felling plan, which is split into four felling phases, against the baseline felling plan. The assessment focuses on potential impacts from key viewpoints, considering key UK Forest Standard (UKFS) 5th edition landscape criteria, including visual sensitivity, importance of view, description of effect, cumulative effects, mitigation, and significance. While the Proposed Development introduces some changes to the felling sequence, the majority of the commercial forest remains intact, and phased replanting ensures long-term continuity of forest cover. This landscape assessment focuses solely on the forestry felling impacts as requested by Scottish Forestry on a site visit on the 15 December 2022. The Proposed Development Landscape and Visual assessment is located at Chapter 5.

1.2 Baseline Felling Plan

- 1.2.1 **Image 1** below illustrates the phased felling approach preceding the Proposed Development. Felling is phased over four felling phases as per the map key, with the aim, amongst other issues, of improving the age class structure and visual appearance of the forest over time.

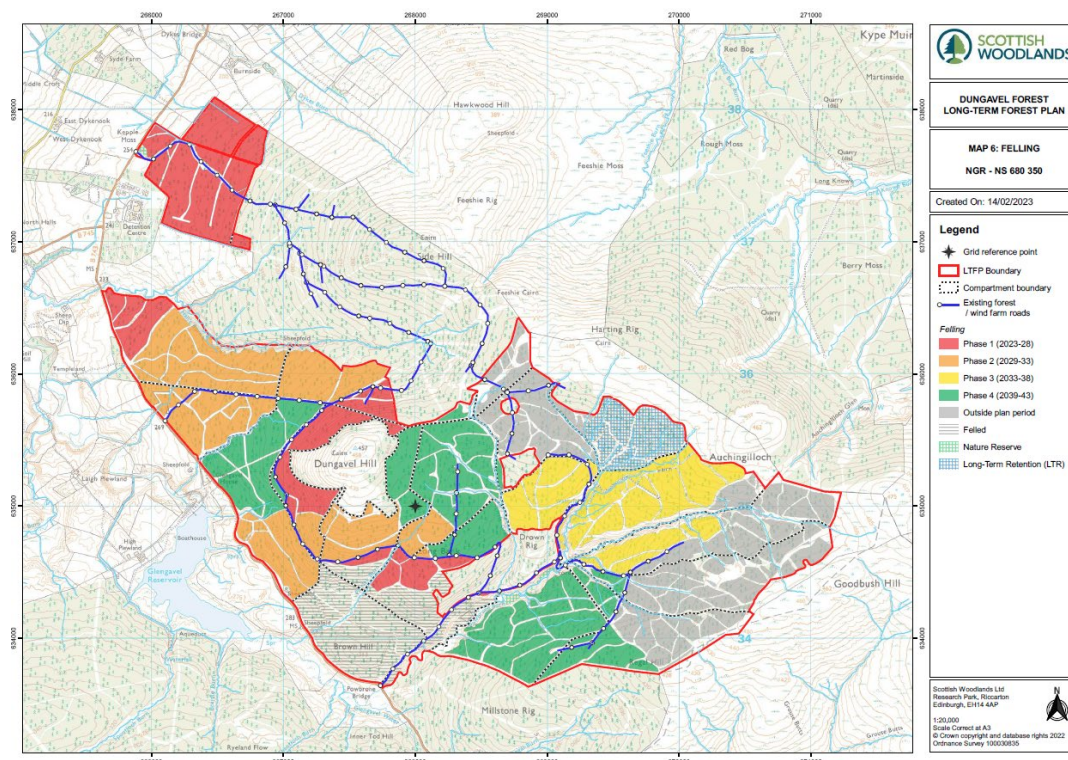


Image 1 - Baseline Felling Plan

Proposed Development Phased Felling Plan

- 1.2.2 **Image 2** below illustrates the Proposed Development phased felling approach. Felling is phased over four, five-year phases as per the map key. The plan still achieves the aim of improving the age class structure of the forest over time, however coupe shapes, sizes and phasing has been adapted to accommodate the Proposed Development infrastructure, with Phase 1 containing all of this, with felling to windfirm boundaries prioritised to ensure stability of retained coupes.

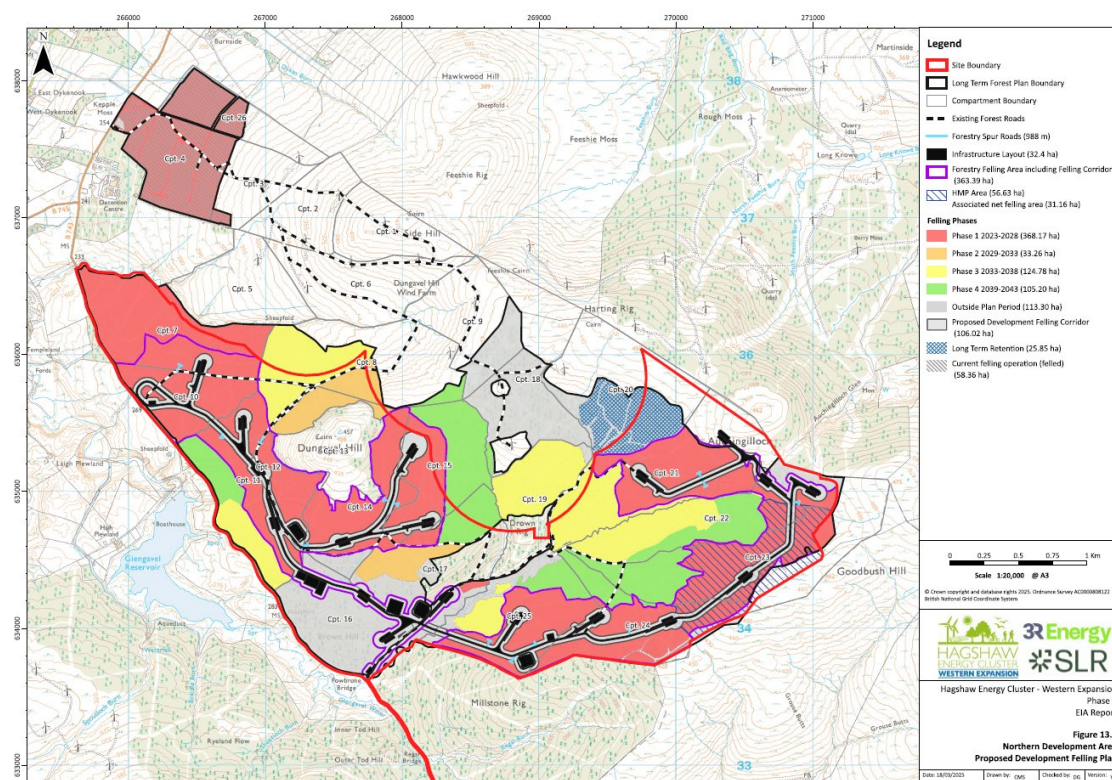


Image 2 - Proposed Development Phased Felling Plan

1.3 Key Viewpoints

All images were taken in February 2023, except Viewpoint 5 which was taken in February 2025. **Table 1** below details the grid reference of each of the four viewpoints and provides a short description of each.

Table 1 – Viewpoint Locations

Viewpoint	Grid Reference	Description
1	NS 61752 37136	This viewpoint is the most prominent and provides a long-distance, oblique view of the Proposed Development felling coupe design. Image taken from the A71, looking West-Southwest across the road.
2	NS 66623 35008	Taken from the B743 looking South-Southeast onto the proposed phase 3 felling coupe.
3	NS 67829 33501	Taken from the B743 looking North towards the Proposed Development and onto a clear fell which is replanted.
4	NS 68696 31751	This viewpoint is taken further towards Muirkirk, looking North towards the development.
5	NS 65607 36836	This viewpoint is taken from the B743 looking South southeast towards compartment 7, Dungavel Forest.



1.3.1 **Image 3** shows both the location of the key viewpoints and the direction the image was taken.

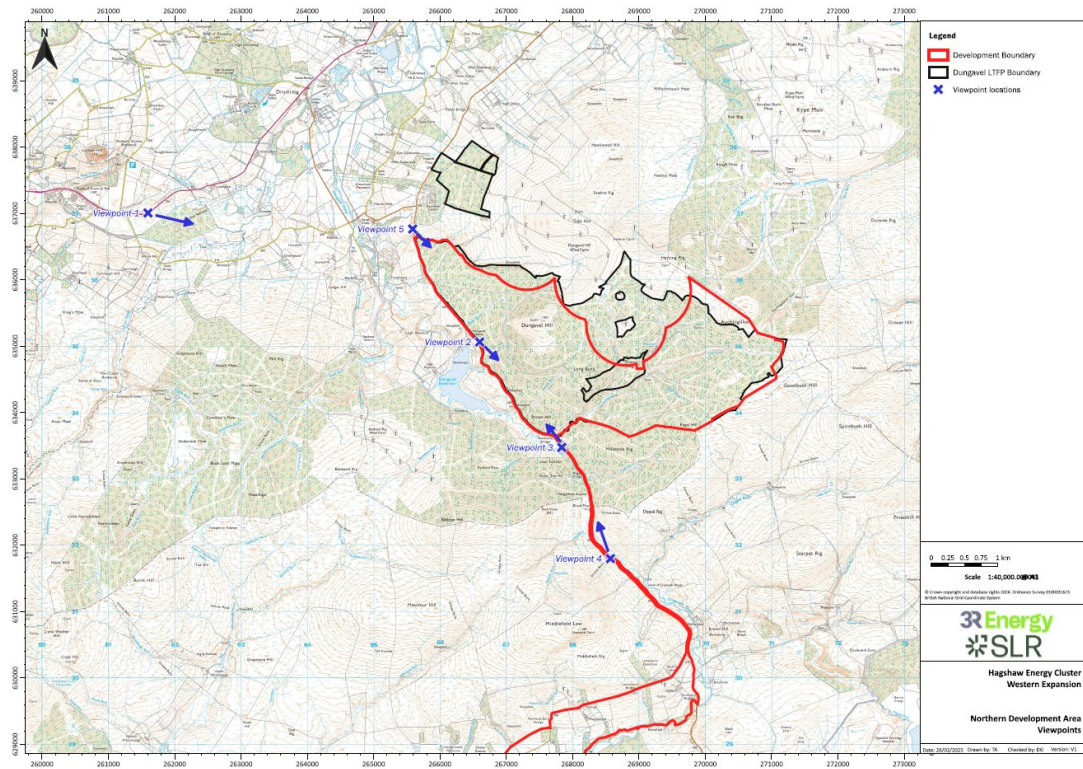


Image 3 - Viewpoint Locations



Key Viewpoint 1 – A71 (Looking Towards Dungavel Forest)

Baseline Forest Plan Phased Felling Image



Proposed Development Phased Felling Image





1.3.2 Visual Sensitivity

- **Moderate:** This viewpoint provides a distant view (over 4 km) of the forested landscape, with the rolling landscape of Dungavel Hill partially obscuring felling operations.

1.3.3 Importance of View

- **Moderate:** The A71 is a key transport route, frequently used by local residents and visitors. Views of the forest are a secondary element in a broader rural context.

1.3.4 Description of Effect

- The landscape effects at Viewpoint One include an increase in the number of felling phases from three to four, resulting in an improved visual appearance. The perceived scale of felling in Phase One remains consistent between the baseline felling plan and the Proposed Development as Phases Two and Three obscure much of the additional Phase One felling. Phase Two is approximately 65% less visible. The baseline does not have a Phase Three; however, this is introduced by the Proposed Development with felling across approximately 25% of the forest area within view. For Phase Four, visibility is approximately 25% lower than in the baseline plan. Changes in the shape of the felling phases will reduce baseline interlock between Phase One and the other three phases.

1.3.5 Cumulative Effects

- **Negligible:** The potential neighbouring forestry felling operations visible from this viewpoint are limited to small forests in the foreground which if felled would not have a significant cumulative impact on the Proposed Development felling plans.

1.3.6 Mitigation

- Retained Phase Two and Three coupes at the bottom of the slope and to the north of Dungavel Hill minimise the visibility of felling, ensuring a cohesive forest cover.
- Replanting of phase one areas will restore forest cover within five years, reducing the duration of visual impacts.

1.3.7 Significance

- **Minor adverse:** The additional visibility compared to the baseline is limited and consistent with the commercial forestry character of the landscape. Over time, the replanting of Phase One will reduce the impact to **negligible**.



Key Viewpoint 2 – B743 (Southbound from Strathaven to Muirkirk)

Baseline Forest Plan Phased Felling Image



Proposed Development Phased Felling Image





- 1.3.8 Visual Sensitivity
- **Moderate:** Views of the forest are intermittent and influenced by road alignment and the surrounding topography.
- 1.3.9 Importance of View
- **Moderate:** The B743 is a key local route, but the focus of the view along this route is primarily on the rolling landscape rather than the forest itself other than relatively short stretches.
- 1.3.10 Description of Effect
- Phase Four remains unchanged. However, Phase Two transitions into Phase Three, delaying felling by five years. This delay will retain mature stands for a longer period, restricting views of the larger Phase One area for an additional five years. By the time this occurs, the restocked trees in Phase One will be ten years old, helping to mitigate visual impacts.
- 1.3.11 Cumulative Effects
- **Moderate:** The potential neighbouring forestry felling operations visible from this viewpoint are limited to forests across the valley in the background which if felled would not have a significant cumulative impact on the Proposed Development felling plans due to the separation afforded by the agricultural land.
- 1.3.12 Mitigation
- Retained Phase 3 coupes block views of Phase One felling, preserving the overall forested character of the landscape for an extra five years.
- 1.3.13 Significance
- **Minor beneficial:** The delayed timing and reduced size of the Phase Two improves the visual outcome compared to the baseline.



Key Viewpoint 3 – B743 (Northbound from Muirkirk to Strathaven)



- 1.3.14 Visual Sensitivity
- **Negligible:** Brown Hill entirely obstructs views of the Proposed Development's felling areas, eliminating potential visual effects.
- 1.3.15 Importance of View
- **Negligible:** While the B743 is a key local route, the obstruction of views by the landform from this location minimises the importance of the forested area at Dungavel in the visual experience.
- 1.3.16 Description of Effect
- There is no visibility of the Proposed Developments felling from this viewpoint due to the rising relief of Brown Hill.
- 1.3.17 Cumulative Effects
- **Negligible:** The potential neighbouring forest felling operations visible from this viewpoint are limited to forests in the foreground which if felled would open views of the Powbrone Valley but would not significantly increase the cumulative impact on the Proposed Development felling plans due to the rising topography restricting views.
- 1.3.18 Mitigation
- None required, as the landform fully obstructs the felling area.
- 1.3.19 Significance
- **No effect:** The absence of visibility ensures no impact compared to the baseline.



Key Viewpoint 4 – B743 (Northbound from Muirkirk to Strathaven)

Baseline Forest Plan Phased Felling Image



Proposed Development Phased Felling Image





- 1.3.20 Visual Sensitivity
- **Moderate:** The viewpoint provides limited glimpses of the forest at higher elevations, with the landform of Millstone Rig partially obscuring views of the felling areas.
- 1.3.21 Importance of View
- **Moderate:** The B743 is valued for its moorland and forested views, with the visual prominence of the forest increasing at higher elevations.
- 1.3.22 Description of Effect
- Visibility of felling is **negligible** compared to the baseline, the baseline Phase Two coupe is brought forward to Phase One, resulting in a timing adjustment but no significant visual change.
- 1.3.23 Cumulative Effects
- **Potential:** If neighbouring forestry operations in the foreground were felled, the visibility of Phase One felling could increase by approximately 5%. However, the landform of Millstone Rig would continue to obscure the majority of the felling area.
- 1.3.24 Mitigation
- Replanting of Phase One areas will restore forest cover in the longer term.
- 1.3.25 Significance
- **Negligible:** The limited visibility, combined with effective mitigation and minimal cumulative impact, ensures negligible visual effects compared to the baseline.



Key Viewpoint 5 – B743 (Southbound from Strathaven to Muirkirk)

Baseline Forest Plan Phased Felling Image



Proposed Development Phased Felling Image





1.3.26 Visual Sensitivity

- **Moderate:** Views are relatively close, dominated by mature forestry crops, with occasional glimpses of higher elevations towards Dungavel Hill. Recent afforestation and fencing in neighbouring fields draw attention away from the forest, highlighting an intensively managed and evolving landscape.

1.3.27 Importance of View

- **Moderate:** The B743 is valued for its moorland and forested views, with the forest becoming more prominent at higher elevations.

1.3.28 Description of Effect

- Felling will be most noticeable from this viewpoint as sightlines open into the forest with the removal of Phase One, necessary for the construction of the Proposed Development.

1.3.29 Cumulative Effects

- Potential neighbouring forestry felling operations visible from this viewpoint are limited to forests across the valley in the distant background. If felled, these would not result in significant cumulative impacts on the Proposed Development due to the separation provided by agricultural land.

1.3.30 Mitigation

- Retaining Phase Two and Three coupes at the top of the slope will help maintain a sense of forest cover while Phase One re-establishes.
- Replanting Phase One areas will restore forest cover within five years, reducing the duration of visual impacts.

1.3.31 Significance

- **Moderate adverse:** The increased visibility of felling compared to the baseline is evident but remains in keeping with the commercial forestry character of the landscape. Over time, replanting in Phase One will help mitigate the impact, reducing it to a **Minor** level. However, the turbines will become the dominant feature in the landscape, drawing attention away from the surrounding forest environment.



1.4 Conclusion: Visual Effects of the 20-Year Felling Plan

- 1.4.1 The Proposed Development's 20-year felling plan ensures phased operations that minimise visual effects across key viewpoints. Retained coupes and phased replanting maintain forest cover and continuity, reducing impacts over time.
- Key Viewpoint 1: **Minor adverse** – Slight increase in visible felling compared to the baseline, reducing to **negligible** as Phase One areas replant and establish.
 - Key Viewpoint 2: **Minor beneficial** – Reduced visibility compared to the baseline due to smaller coupe size and delayed timing.
 - Key Viewpoint 3: **No effect** – Views remain entirely obstructed by the landform.
 - Key Viewpoint 4: **Negligible** – Minimal change from the baseline, with limited cumulative effects.
 - Key Viewpoint 5: **Moderate adverse** – A clear increase in tree felling compared to the baseline will be noticeable, initially intensifying the visual impact. However, as Phase One areas are replanted and begin to establish, this impact will gradually reduce to a **minor adverse** level. Despite this change in forestry cover, the turbines will become the dominant feature in the landscape once erected.
- 1.4.2 The phased structure of the 20-year plan aligns with sustainable forestry management practices and ensures that visual effects remain acceptable while forest cover is re-established over time.



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