

ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE DESIGNATED SITES (ECOLOGY AND ORNITHOLOGY)

There are a number of sites designated for ecological and ornithological features within and surrounding the site boundary. These designations are being carefully considered in the design of the proposed development to minimise any potential impact on the associated ecological and ornithological features. The designations include:

- Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – SACs protect one or more special habitats and/or species listed in the Habitats Directive. The qualifying habitats for Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SAC include blanket bog; and natural acid peat-stained lakes and ponds.
- Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands Ramsar site – Ramsar sites are wetland sites designated as being of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. The Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands Ramsar site supports one of the largest and most intact areas of blanket bog in the world and supports a number of rare species of wetland plants and animals including internationally important numbers of Northern Scottish Greylag Goose.
- Ben Hutig Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and A' Mhoine SSSI – SSSIs are notified as areas of outstanding quality to protect their flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features. The Ben Hutig SSSI is designated for its alpine heath and blanket bog features and the A' Mhoine SSSI is designated for its blanket bog features as well as its high densities of ornithological species of Dunlin, Golden Plover and Greenshank.
- Caithness and Sutherland Special Protection Area (SPA) – SPAs are selected to protect one or more rare, threatened or vulnerable bird species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive, and regularly occurring migratory species. The Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands SPA supports populations of European importance including: Golden Eagle, Golden Plover and Greenshank.

ECOLOGICAL AND ORNITHOLOGICAL DESIGNATIONS

