

Perth and Kinross Council
Planning & Development Management Committee –16 February 2022
Pre-Application Report by Head of Planning and Development (Report No. 21/34)

Installation of a 32MW solar farm and 16MW battery energy storage facilities and associated infrastructure at Keithick Farms Ltd, Keithick, Blairgowrie

Ref. No: [21/00019/PAN](#)

Ward No: P2- Strathmore

Summary

This report is to inform the Committee of a potential forthcoming planning application in respect of a major development for Installation of a 32 Megawatt (MW) solar farm and 16MW battery energy storage facilities and associated infrastructure at Keithick Farms Ltd, Keithick, Blairgowrie.

The report also aims to highlight the key planning policies and the likely stakeholders who would be involved in the decision-making process, and to offer a brief overview of the key planning issues which are likely to be relevant to the proposal.

BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

- 1 In accordance with the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended), the applicant has submitted a Proposal of Application Notice (PoAN) on 6 December 2021. The purpose of this report is to inform the Planning and Development Management Committee of a forthcoming planning application in respect of a major development for Keithick Farms Ltd, Keithick, Blairgowrie pertaining to the installation of a 32MW solar farm and 16MW battery energy storage facility and associated infrastructure. Pre-application reports give the Committee an opportunity to raise issues which it would like to see addressed in the planning application.
- 2 This PoAN seeks to formally establish the major development comprising 32MW solar farm and a 16MW battery energy storage facility for the production, storage and export of electricity to provide local energy and a balancing and back up supply facility to the National Grid. The development will be encompassed within existing field boundaries which will contain photovoltaic (PV) panels, mountings, and areas for container units with associated infrastructure components, such as transformers, inverters, DC and AC converters, switchgear and controllers, as well as requisite substations which will be housed within units as determined within the site layouts. The exact range of uses scale and design of the development will be arrived at during pre-application discussions.
- 3 A separate screening request, under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 2017, has been sought for a similar ground mounted photovoltaic solar farm development of up to 49.9 MW with associated infrastructure, on land around the Coupar Angus substation, approximately 600m south of Coupar Angus, and being approximately 1.km to the east of this proposed development.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 4 The landowner has already obtained a screening opinion from the Planning Authority covering part of this area of ground, the subject of this PoAN application, (21/01970/SCRN), for the installation of a 16MW solar farm and 16MW battery energy storage farm, with associated infrastructure. The Planning Authority determined at that time and taking account of the characteristics of the potential impact of the development, in terms of extent, scale, magnitude, complexity, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility, it was likely that the development would not have a significant effect on the environment and therefore an EIA would not be required for that proposal. A revised screening request has now been made to the Planning Authority (22/00111/SCRN) for this development.

PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS

- 5 The PoAN confirmed that two public online events were to be held via Zoom on 15 December 2021 between 5 and 8pm and on 26 January 2022 between 5 and 7pm. The Ward Councillors and local MSPs, Coupar Angus Town Team, Blairgowrie and Rattray Community Council, Kettins Community Council, Meigle and Ardler Community Council, Forward Coupar Angus Group and Mr David Stirling of Keithick House, Coupar Angus, have all been notified. The results of the community consultation will be submitted with the planning application as part of the required Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report.

NATIONAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 6 The Scottish Government expresses its planning policies through the National Planning Framework (NPF) 3, the National Roads Development Guide 2014, Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 2014 and Planning Advice Notes (PAN).

National Planning Framework

- 7 The NPF3 is a long-term strategy for Scotland and is a spatial expression of the Government's Economic Strategy and plans for development and investment in infrastructure. Under the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006, this is now a statutory document and a material consideration in any planning application. The document provides a national context for development plans and planning decisions as well as informing the on-going programmes of the Scottish Government, public agencies and local authorities.

The Scottish Planning Policy 2014 (SPP)

- 8 The SPP is a statement of Scottish Government policy on land use planning. The following sections of the SPP will be of particular importance in the assessment of this proposal:-
 - Sustainability: paragraphs 24 – 35
 - Placemaking: paragraphs 36 – 57
 - Promoting Rural Development: paragraphs 74 – 91
 - Supporting Business and Employment: paragraphs 92 – 108
 - Valuing the Historic Environment: paragraphs 135 – 151

- Delivering Heat and Electricity: Paragraphs 152 -174
- Valuing the Natural Environment: paragraphs 193 – 218
- Maximising the Benefits of Green Infrastructure: paragraphs 219 – 233
- Managing Flood Risk and Drainage: paragraphs 254 – 268

9 The following Scottish Government Planning Advice Notes are likely to be of relevance to the proposal:-

- PAN 3/2010 Community Engagement
- PAN 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology
- PAN 40 Development Management
- PAN 51 Planning, Environmental Protection and Regulation
- PAN 61 Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
- PAN 73 Rural Diversification
- Large Photovoltaic Arrays: Planning Advice (2011)
- Energy Storage: Planning Advice (2011)

LOCAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE

TAYPlan Strategic Development Plan 2016-2036

10 TAYPlan sets out a vision for how the region will be in 2032 and what must occur to bring about change to achieve this vision. The vision for the area as set out in the plans states that:

“By 2032 the TAYplan region will be sustainable, more attractive, competitive and vibrant without creating an unacceptable burden on our planet. The quality of life will make it a place of first choice where more people choose to live, work, study and visit, and where businesses choose to invest and create jobs”

11 The following sections of the TAYplan 2016 are of particular importance in the assessment of this application:

- Policy 1 - Location Priorities
- Policy 2 - Shaping better quality places
- Policy 3 – A First Choice for Investment
- Policy 7 – Energy, Waste and Resources
- Policy 9 – Managing Tayplan’s Assets

Perth and Kinross Local Development Plan 2019

12 The Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) was adopted by Perth and Kinross Council on 29 November 2019. It is the most recent statement of Council policy and is augmented by Supplementary Guidance.

13 The LDP2 sets out a vision statement for the area and states that:

“Our vision is of a Perth and Kinross which is dynamic, attractive and effective which protects its assets whilst welcoming population and economic growth.”

- 14 Under the LDP2, the following policies are of particular importance in the assessment of this application:

Policy 1: Placemaking
Policy 2: Design Statements
Policy 8: Rural Business and Diversification
Policy 14: Open space Retention and Provision
Policy 15: Public Access
Policy 26B: Scheduled Monuments and Archaeology: Archaeology
Policy 33A: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy: New Proposals for Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy
Policy 35: Electricity Transmission Infrastructure
Policy 37: Management of Inert and Construction Waste
Policy 38B: Environment and Conservation: National Designations
Policy 38C: Environment and Conservation: Local Designations
Policy 39: Landscape
Policy 40: Forestry, Woodland and Trees
Policy 41: Biodiversity
Policy 42: Green Infrastructure
Policy 47: River Tay Catchment Area
Policy 50: Prime Agricultural Land
Policy 51: Soils
Policy 52: New Development and Flooding
Policy 53: Water Environment and Drainage
Policy 55: Nuisance from Artificial Light and Light Pollution
Policy 60B: Transport Standards and Accessibility Requirements: New Development Proposals

OTHER POLICIES

- 15 The following supplementary guidance and documents may be of particular importance in the assessment of this application:

- Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance April 2020
- Flood Risk and Flood Risk Assessments – Developer Guidance June 2021
- Perth and Kinross Green and Blue Infrastructure (2020)
- Renewables and Low Carbon Energy (draft)
- Perth and Kinross Community Plan 2013/2023
- Perth and Kinross Local Transport Strategy (2010)
- Perth's Transport Futures Project: Phase 2 Cross Tay Link Road Preferred Route - Report by Depute Chief Executive, Environment (Sustainability, Strategic and Entrepreneurial Development) – 14 December 2016
- Loch Leven SPA, the Dunkeld-Blairgowrie Lochs SAC and the River Tay SAC

PLANNING SITE HISTORY

07/00946/FUL Full Planning Permission was Approved on 17 May 2007 for Erection of a steel framed agricultural cattle court

12/01942/SCRN On 7 November 2012 for Proposed anaerobic digestion development. An opinion was issued on 7 November 2012.

12/02003/SCRN On 5 December 2012 for Installation of an Anaerobic Digestion plant. An opinion was issued on 5 December 2012

12/02205/FLL Full Planning Permission was Approved On 21 March 2013 for Construction of an anaerobic digester plant

19/01852/FLL Full Planning Permission was Approved On 24 February 2020 for Installation of ground source heat pump system and siting of 2 container units

21/01924/SCRN application was Withdrawn On 25 November 2021 for Proposed Solar farm and battery energy storage facility and associated works

21/01970/SCRN On 25 November 2021 for Installation of a 16MW solar and 16MW battery energy storage farm up to with associated infrastructure. An opinion was issued on 25 November 2021.

21/00016/PAN On 6 December 2021 for Installation of a 32MW solar farm and 16MW battery energy storage facilities and associated infrastructure. Further consultation and extra events were requested. A decision was issued on 6 December 2021.

CONSULTATIONS

16 As part of the planning application process the following would be consulted:-

17 **External**

- Scottish Water
- Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust
- Coupar Angus Town Team
- Community councils

18 **Internal**

- Environmental Health
- Strategic Planning and Policy
- Community Greenspace including Access
- Transport Planning
- Structures and Flooding
- Biodiversity Officer

KEY ISSUES AGAINST WHICH A FUTURE APPLICATION WILL BE ASSESSED

19 The key considerations against which the eventual application will be assessed include:

- a. Visual Impact (including noise, lighting, glint and glare)
- b. Scale, Design and Layout
- d. Natural Heritage and Ecology

- e. Landscape and Biodiversity
- f. Water Resources and Soils
- h. Transport Implications and Road Safety
- i. Impacts on Core Paths and tourist routes such as the A822
- k. Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, including the Coupar Angus Conservation Area

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS WHICH WILL BE REQUIRED

20 The following supporting documents will need to be submitted with any planning application:

- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report
- Transport Assessment
- Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Tree and Woodland Survey
- Habitat Survey
- Archaeological Assessment
- Sustainability Assessment
- Noise and Light Assessment
- Construction Traffic Management Plan

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

21 This report summarises the key issues which should be considered as part of the appraisal of any subsequent planning application which may be lodged in respect of this development and members are recommended to note these key issues and advise officers of any other issues which they consider should be included as part of the application and assessment.

Background Papers: None
Contact Officer: Jamie Torrance
Date: 3 February 2022

DAVID LITTLEJOHN
HEAD OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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