

Perth and Kinross Council
Planning & Development Management Committee –13 April 2022
Pre-Application Report by Head of Planning and Development
(Report No. 22/80)

Installation of a 49.9MW ground-mounted solar array and associated works, 130 metres southeast of Coupar Angus Substation, Pleasance Road, Coupar Angus

Ref. No: [22/00006/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 the installation of a 49.9MW ground-mounted solar array and associated works, on land 130m southeast of Coupar Angus Substation, Pleasance Road, Coupar Angus. The report also aims to highlight the key planning policies and the 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 submitted a Proposal of Application Notice (PoAN) on 7 February 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 Couper Two Limited, pertaining to the installation of a 49.9MW ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) development along with associated infrastructure and works. 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 a new solar photovoltaic (PV) development which will consist of rows of solar panels known as strings. Each string of panels would be mounted on a rack comprising metal poles anchored to the ground. The development would be set on approximately 114.95 hectares (ha) of land, although the exact scale and design will be arrived at during ongoing discussions with the applicant. It is anticipated that only three quarters of the land area noted would be developed.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 3 A screening request for this proposed development has already been obtained from the Planning Authority (our reference: 21/02234/SCRN), which confirms that the development is not EIA development under the EIA 2017 Regulations. However, detailed environmental impact assessment, flood risk assessment,

landscape and visual impact assessment and ecological impact assessment reports are required to be submitted and form part of an application for planning permission that is submitted.

PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS

- 4 The PoAN confirmed that two public online events were to be held via Microsoft Teams on 23 March and 7 April 2022 between 16:30hrs and 18:30hrs. The exact details of the events have yet to be confirmed but are to be advertised within the local newspaper as well as via leaflet drops to all properties within a 1.5-kilometre radius. The Kettins Parish Community Council and the Blairgowrie and Rattray Community Council, as well as local landowners, have been notified. It has been recommended that further notifications also be provided in writing to Local Members, as well as the Local MP and MSP.
- 5 In addition to the above consultation, it has been recommended to the applicant that additional consultation, above the minimum required, be given further consideration. This could take the form of an additional online and or physical in person event locally. There is notable public interest locally and some criticism exists that only two online events are proposed for a development of the scale identified. It is confirmed at the time of the submission of this PoAN that guidance from the Scottish Government is unchanged, and alternative consultation to physical in-person events, remains acceptable. The applicant has confirmed that consideration of any further consultation will be had following a review of its initial two consultation events.
- 6 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

- 7 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

- 8 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)

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

- PAN 3/2010 Community Engagement
- PAN 1/2011 Planning and Noise
- PAN 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology
- PAN 1/2013 Environmental Impact Assessment
- PAN 40 Development Management
- PAN 51 Planning, Environmental Protection and Regulation
- PAN 61 Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
- PAN 73 Rural Diversification
- PAN 79 Water and Drainage
- Energy Storage: Planning Advice (2011)

LOCAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE

TAYplan Strategic Development Plan 2016-2036

- 11 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”

- 12 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

- 13 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.

14 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.”

15 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 15: Public Access

Policy 32: Embedding Low & Zero Carbon Generating Technologies in New Development

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 39: Landscape

Policy 40: Forestry, Woodland and Trees

Policy 41: Biodiversity

Policy 42: Green Infrastructure

Policy 52: New Development and Flooding

Policy 53: Water Environment and Drainage

Policy 55: Nuisance from Artificial Light and Light Pollution

Policy 56: Noise Pollution

Policy 60B: Transport Standards and Accessibility Requirements: New Development Proposals

OTHER POLICIES

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

- Placemaking Supplementary Guidance March 2020
- 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

PLANNING SITE HISTORY

17 [16/02230/FLL](#) Full Planning Permission was granted on 9 March 2017 for Erection of switch room facility and associated works.

[18/00016/PAN](#) On 6 February 2019 for Formation of an energy storage compound including 15 battery storage units, inverters and transformers, a substation, ancillary equipment, store, vehicular access, track and associated works. Response provided.

[19/00513/FLM](#) Full Planning Permission Major was granted on 24 September 2019 for Formation of a battery storage facility, vehicular access and associated works.

[21/00015/PAN](#) On 18 November 2021 for Formation of battery energy storage system with associated work and infrastructure of up to 49.9 MW. Response provided.

[21/02234/SCRN](#) screening opinion sought on 1 February 2022 for Ground mounted solar photovoltaic array. Opinion provided.

[22/00195/FLM](#) Full Planning Permission Major has been applied for the Formation of battery energy storage system with associated work and infrastructure of up to 49.9 MW. Decision pending.

CONSULTATIONS

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

External

- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)
- NatureScot
- Scottish Water
- National Grid and plant Protection Team
- Transport Scotland
- Historic Environment Scotland
- Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust
- Kettins Parish Community Council
- Blairgowrie and Rattray Community Council

Internal

- Environmental Health
- Strategic Planning and Policy
- Developer Contributions Officer
- Community Greenspace including Access
- Conservation Officer/Team
- 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. Archaeology and heritage impacts
- B. Noise, dust, and vibration during construction
- C. Biodiversity and ecological impacts

- D. Flood risk and drainage impacts
- E. Landscape and visual impacts, including cumulative impacts
- F. Transport Impacts
- G. Impacts on core paths and recreational spaces
- H. Impacts on the National Grid and or Scottish Gas network

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS WHICH WILL BE REQUIRED

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

- A. Planning Statement
- B. Design and Access Statement
- C. Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report
- D. Transport Assessment
- E. Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment
- F. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- G. Tree and Woodland Survey
- H. Habitat Survey
- I. Sustainability Assessment
- J. Noise and Light Assessment
- K. Grid Connection Site Survey
- L. 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: 31 March 2022

DAVID LITTLEJOHN HEAD OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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