

The Highland Council

North Planning Applications Committee
15 December 2015

Agenda Item	5.2
Report No	PLN/064/15

15/03962/PAN: E.ON Climate and Renewables UK Developments Ltd
Land 4km north of Lybster

Report by Head of Planning and Building Standards

Proposal of Application Notice

Description : Formation of a wind farm including the erection of up to 47 turbines (up to 130m to blade tip, access tracks and other ancillary development. The development is to be known as Golticlay Wind Farm.

Ward : 04 - Landward Caithness

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 To inform the Planning Applications Committee of the submission of the attached Proposal of Application Notice (PAN).
- 1.2 The submission of the PAN accords with the provisions of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and was lodged on 26 October 2015. At present, the scheme is of a scale which would be subject to an Application under 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (As Amended). The applicant has however stated that the scheme may reduce to a scale where it will require to be considered as a planning application, i.e. under 50MW. Therefore Members are asked to note this may form the basis of a subsequent planning application or an application to Scottish Government under the Electricity Act, through which The Highland Council will be a consultee.
- 1.3 The following information was submitted in support of the Proposal of Application Notice:
 - Site Location Plan; and
 - Application Notice which includes:
 - Description of Development;
 - Details of Proposed Consultation; and
 - Details of Any Other Consultation Methods

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 Based upon the information provided, the development is likely to comprise of the following:

- Up to 46 wind turbines of up to 130m tip-height;
- Access tracks;
- Turbine foundations and transformer plinths and enclosures;
- Electrical substation' underground power cable;
- Permanent meteorological mast; and
- Temporary site construction compound.

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The site lies approximately 15km south west of Wick and approximately 4km north of Lybster. The site extends to approximately 2030 hectares, although the built development will occupy a much smaller area. The turbines will be set on a site which is predominantly coniferous forestry but also comprises sweeping moorland. The highest point on the site is approximately 211m AOD with some parts of the site dropping down to approximately 130m AOD.
- 3.2 The site will likely be accessed from the C1053 towards Rumster Forest. The delivery of abnormal loads is likely to be via Wick Harbour on the A99(T).
- 3.3 There are a number of sites designated for natural heritage interests in the wider area. The closest designated site is the Caithness and Sutherland Special Protection Area / Special Area of Conservation / Ramsar site and its composite Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 3.4 There are a number of scheduled monuments in the area, including but not limited to the following:
- Golsary Broch (Index no. 550)
 - Rumster Broch (Index no. 573)
 - Achkinloch Chambered Cairn (Index no. 419);
 - Achkinloch Setting Stone (Index no. 420); and
 - Greysteil Castle (Index no. 555).
- 3.5 In addition to the above there are a number of listed buildings and archaeological records, identified within the Highland Historic Environment Record, which exist within and in proximity to the site.
- 3.6 The site contains a number of watercourses which feed into Reisgill Burn and Burn of Forse.
- 3.7 The site is not located within any international or regional landscape designations. However, it is in close proximity of the Flowlands Special Landscape Area.
- 3.8 While not located within a Wild Land Area, the study area of the site will contain some parts of Wild Land Areas, namely:
- Wild Land Area 36 - Causeymire and Knockin Flows;
 - Wild Land Area 39 - East Halladale Flows; and
 - Wild Land Area 35 - Ben Klibreck - Armine Forest.

- 3.8 When assessing a wind farm proposal consideration of similar developments around the site is required. The list below sets out the projects around this development site that are operational, approved or have been submitted but not yet determined.

Built and / or Consented

Burn of Wilk
Rumster Forest
Buolfruich
Camster
Acharin
Flexhill
Bad a Cheo
Causeymire (and Extension)
Halsary
Achlachan
Baillie Hill
Forss (and Extension)
Taigh na Muir
Stroupster
Wathegar (and Extension)

Under consideration

West Garty

4.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

The following policies are likely to be relevant to the assessment of the proposal:

4.1 Highland Wide Local Development Plan 2012

Policy 28	Sustainable Development
Policy 29	Design, Quality and Place Making
Policy 31	Developer Contributions
Policy 51	Trees and Development
Policy 55	Peat and Soils
Policy 56	Travel
Policy 57	Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
Policy 58	Protected Species
Policy 59	Other Important Species
Policy 60	Other Important Habitats
Policy 61	Landscape
Policy 63	Water Environment
Policy 67	Renewable Energy Developments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage• Other Species and Habitat Interests• Landscape and Visual Impact• Amenity at Sensitive Locations

- Safety and Amenity of Individuals and Individual Properties
- The Water Environment
- Safety of Airport, Defence and Emergency Service Operations
- The Operational Efficiency of Other Communications
- The Quantity and Quality of Public Access
- Other Tourism and Recreation Interests
- Traffic and Transport Interests

Policy 72 Pollution
Policy 77 Public Access

4.2 **Caithness Local Plan (As Continued in Force) April 2012**

The general policies and land allocations of the Local Plan pertinent to this application have been superseded by the policies of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan.

4.3 **Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance**

- Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment: Supplementary Guidance (January 2013);
- Highland Historic Environment Strategy: Supplementary Guidance (March 2013);
- Sustainable Design Guide: Supplementary Guidance (January 2013);
- Trees, Woodlands and Development: Supplementary Guidance (January 2013); and
- Highland Statutorily Protected Species: Supplementary Guidance (March 2013).

5.0 **POTENTIAL MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 5.1
- Planning History;
 - Interim Supplementary Guidance;
 - Highland Renewable Energy Strategy;
 - National Policy;
 - Roads and Transport;
 - Water (including private water supplies), Flood Risk and Drainage;
 - Peat;
 - Natural Heritage;
 - Trees and Forestry;
 - Built and Cultural Heritage;
 - Design, Landscape and Visual Impact (including Cumulative impacts);
 - Wild Land;
 - Access and Recreation;
 - Economic Impact and Tourism;
 - Noise and Shadow Flicker;
 - Telecommunications;
 - Aviation;
 - Construction;

- Other Relevant Planning Documents including but not limited to:
 - Onshore Wind Energy: Draft Supplementary Guidance (September 2015);
 - Caithness and Sutherland Proposed Local Development Plan (November 2015)
 - Highland Renewable Energy Strategy (HRES) (May 2006);
 - Scottish Government Planning Policy (June 2014);
 - National Planning Framework for Scotland 3 (June 2014);
 - PAN 56 – Planning and Noise;
 - PAN 58 – Environmental Impact Assessment;
 - PAN 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage;
 - 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy;
 - Onshore Wind Turbines; and
 - Wind Farm developments on Peat Lands.
- Any other material considerations within representations.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 The report sets out the information submitted to date as part of the PAN. Summarised are the policy considerations against which any future planning application will be considered as well as the potential material planning considerations and key issues based on the information available to date. The list is not exhaustive and further matters may arise as and when a planning application is received and in the light of public representations and consultation responses.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 It is recommended the Committee notes the submission of the PAN and advises of any material issues it wishes to be brought to the applicant's attention.

Signature: Malcolm MacLeod

Designation: Head of Planning and Building Standards

Author: Simon Hindson

Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.

Relevant Plans: Location Plan (Drawing Number G_151014_P5 REV V8)

PROPOSAL OF APPLICATION NOTICE MOLADH BRATH IARRTAIS

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008

The Council will respond within 21 days of receiving the Notice. It will advise whether the proposed Pre-application Consultation is satisfactory or if additional notification and consultation above the statutory minimum is required. Please note that a planning application for this proposed development cannot be submitted less than 12 weeks from the date the Proposal of Application Notice is received by the Council and without the statutory consultation requirements having been undertaken. The planning application must be accompanied by a Pre-application consultation report.

Applicant E.ON Climate & Renewables UK Developments Ltd Address Westwood Business Park, Westwood Way Coventry. CV4 8LG	Agent Address E-mail
Phone No. 07595 125014 E-mail [REDACTED]	

Address or Location of Proposed Development Please state the postal address of the prospective development site. If there is no postal address, please describe its location. Please outline the site in red on a base plan to a recognised metric scale and attach it to this completed Notice

Golticlay Wind Farm is located approximately 15 km southwest of Wick and 4 km north of Lybster. The site currently comprises Golticlay and Rumster forests including adjacent land to the east. NGR E322412, N939523

Description of Development Please include detail where appropriate – eg the number of residential units; the gross floorspace in m² of any buildings not for residential use; the capacity of any electricity generation or waste management facility; and the length of any infrastructure project. Please attach any additional supporting information.

E.ON are proposing the development of Golticlay Wind Farm, made up of up to 47WTG and up to 141MW of renewable energy. The development will include associated infrastructure for example, access roads, crane hard standings, one or more permanent meteorological masts, internal cable routes, drainage infrastructure, and buildings and compounds associated with the wind farm. Although the wind farm is currently above 50MW there is a possibility that with further design work, it could fall below this threshold.

Pre-application Screening Notice

Has a Screening Opinion been issued on the need for a Proposal of Application notice by the Highland Council in respect of the proposed development?

If yes please provide a copy of this Opinion.

NO

Community Consultation [See checklist of Statutory minimum consultation attached]

State which other parties have received a copy of this Proposal of Application Notice.

Community Council/s	Date Notice Served
Latheron and Lybster Community Council	26th October 2015
Berriedale and Dunbeath Community Council	As Above
Watten Community Council	As Above
Tannach Community Council	As Above
Halkirk and District Community Council	As Above
Wick Community Council	As Above

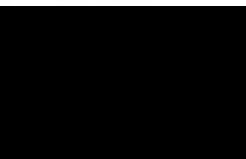
Names/details of any other parties	Date Notice Served
Councillor Willie MacKay (Highland Council)	26th October 2015
Councillor David Bremner (Highland Council)	As Above
Councillor Matthew Reiss (Highland Council)	As Above
Councillor Gillian Coghill (Highland Council)	As Above
Rob Gibson MSP and Paul Monaghan MP	As Above

Please give details of proposed consultation

Proposed public event	Venue	Date and time
Public Exhibitions	Lybster Village Hall	27th & 28th January 2016 2pm-8pm

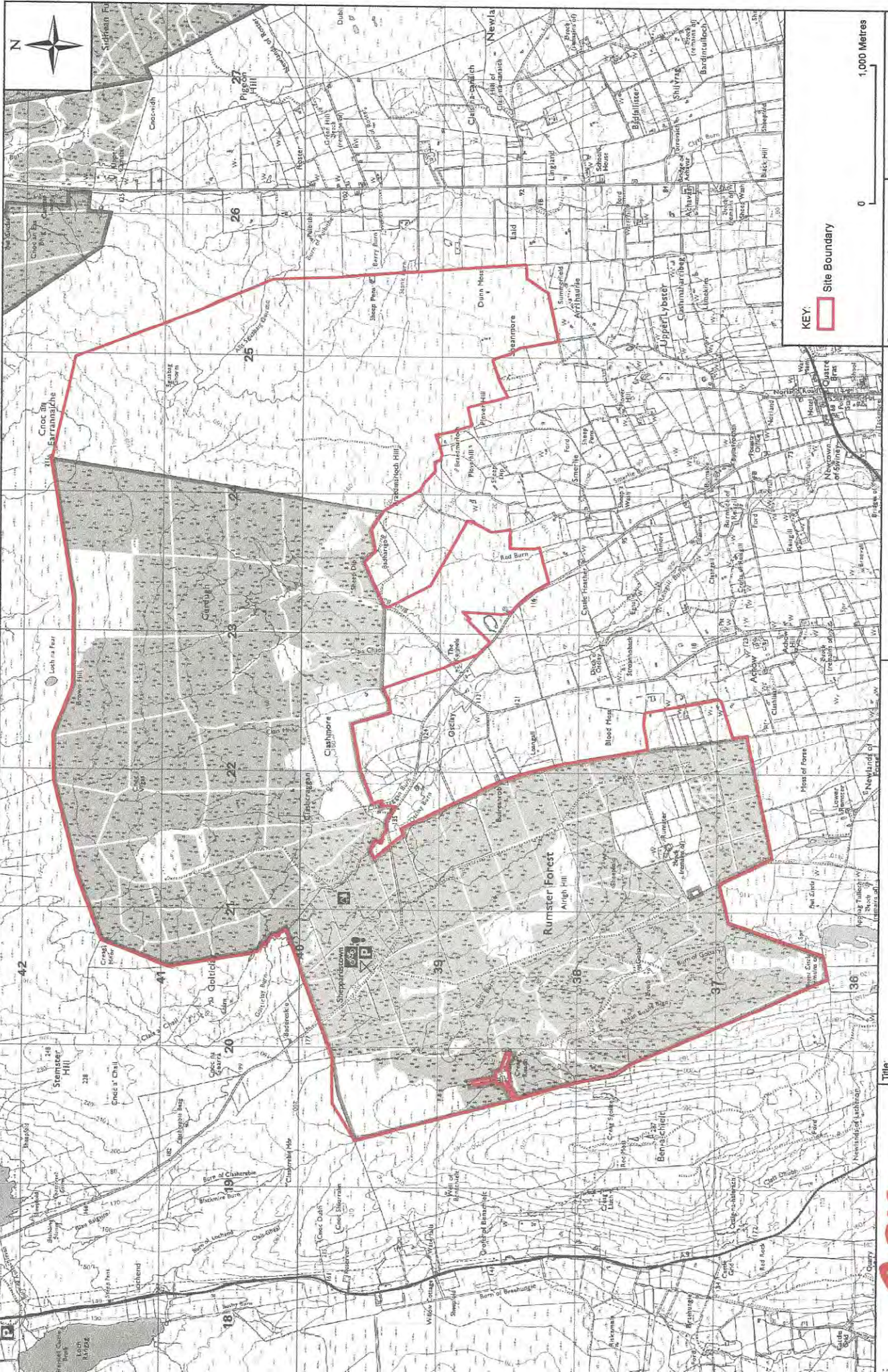
Newspaper Advert – name of newspaper	Advert date(where known)
Caithness Courier	2 consecutive weeks prior to Exhibitions
John O'Groats Journal	2 consecutive weeks prior to Exhibitions

Details of any other consultation methods (date, time and with whom)
Newsletter, Freephone, email address, project specific website, Community Council meeting

Signed 

Date... 26/10/2015

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KEY: Site Boundary

Drawn: LC Checked: LC
 Verified: CS Approved: ...
 Date: OCTOBER 2015 Scale at A3: 1:25,000
 Drawing Number: G_151014_P5_v8

0 1,000 Metres

AECOM
 One Trinity Gardens
 Cluyside
 Newcastle, NE1 2HF

Title: SITE BOUNDARY PLAN

e-on
 GOLTICLAY WIND FARM
 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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