

Agenda Item	5.1
Report No	PLN 066/17

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: North Planning Applications Committee

Date: 28 November 2017

17/05166/PAN: National Grid Shetland Link Limited

Report Title: Land 1280M South Of Vulcan NRTE Dounreay Nuclear Research Establishment, Dounreay

Report By: Area Planning Manager – North

1. **Purpose/Executive Summary**

Description: Proposal of Application Notice (PAN)

Erection of High Voltage direct Current (HVDC) converter station as part of a new high voltage electricity link between Dounreay and Shetland.

Ward: 02 – Thurso And North West Caithness

2. **Recommendation**

Members are asked to note the submission of the PAN and highlight any material issues they wish to be brought to the attention of the applicant before the submission of the application for planning permission.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 To inform the Planning Applications Committee of the submission of the attached Proposal of Application Notice (PAN).

The PAN forms part of a proposal for the erection of a High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) converter station as part of a new high voltage link between Dounreay, Caithness and Scalloway, Shetland.

The Dounreay Onshore Scheme is part of a proposed 60 MW HVDC link connecting the Shetland Islands to the UK electricity transmission system for the first time. The Dounreay Onshore Scheme comprises a converter station, and approximately 1km of underground DC cables to a landfall where it connects to subsea DC cables. It will be connected to the existing electricity network at the Dounreay 132 kV substation. The footprint of the converter station (to the perimeter boundary security fence) is anticipated to be up to 100m x 150m with a maximum height of 15m. The converter station is made up of specialist electrical equipment all of which will be located in one to two building units. Access to the proposed converter station will be via the existing A836 access at Dounreay.

The PAN sets out the applicant's proposed statutory Pre-Application Consultation in advance of submitting a planning application in spring 2018.

An Environmental Impact Screening Request and a draft Processing Agreement has been submitted alongside the PAN.

A pre-application meeting was held on 27 September 2017.

High Voltage Energy Transmission Network is identified as National Development in National Planning Framework 3 (NPF 3).

- 3.2 The submission of the PAN accords with the provisions of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and was lodged on 7 November 2017. Members are asked to note this may form the basis of a subsequent planning application.

- 3.3 The submitted information attached includes:

- Proposal of Application Notice
- Location Plan
- Supporting Statement

4. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 4.1 The site is located close to the north coast of Caithness, immediately to the south and south west of the Vulcan Nuclear Reactor Testing Establishment, Dounreay Nuclear Site and existing electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure. The site is currently agricultural land to the south of the Vulcan site.

5. PLANNING HISTORY

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

5.1 Highland Wide Local Development Plan 2012

24	Policy 24 - Dounreay (including the Dounreay Planning Framework 2 Supplementary Guidance)
28	Sustainable Design
29	Design Quality and Placemaking
30	Physical Constraints
31	Developer Contributions
36	Development in Wider Countryside
56	Travel
57	Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage
59	Protected Species
60	Other Important Habitats
61	Landscape
63	Water Environment
64	Flood Risk
66	Surface Water Drainage
69	Electricity Transmission Infrastructure
72	Pollution
77	Public Access

5.2 Caithness Local Plan 2002 (as continued in force 2012)

The site proposed lies outwith settlement development areas as defined in the Caithness Local Plan, but lies within the Wider Countryside, although adjacent to Dounreay. Following adoption of the HwLDP, only certain parts of the Local Plans continue in force as part of the Development Plan

5.3 Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan: Modified Proposed Plan 2016

The Modified Proposed Plan is currently with Scottish Ministers for Examination and it holds weight in the decision making process as a material consideration.

5.4 **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Dounreay Planning Framework 2

Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects (August 2010)

Developer Contributions (March 2013)

Flood Risk & Drainage Impact Assessment (Jan 2013)

Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (March 2013)

Physical Constraints (March 2013)

Sustainable Design Guide (Jan 2013)

5.5 **National Policy**

National Planning Framework 3

Scottish Planning Policy.

6. **POTENTIAL MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS, KEY ISSUES, AND PLANNING HISTORY**

- National policy
- National Planning Framework 3
- Dounreay Planning Framework 2
- Development plan policies and relevant supplementary guidance
- Planning history
- Siting and design including materials that reflect the long term situation with the removal of buildings and site restoration on the Dounreay site
- Access and parking
- Contaminated Land
- Impact on amenity including noise considerations
- Protected species and nature conservation
- Drainage
- Historic environment

7. **CONCLUSION**

7.1 The report presents 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.

8. **RECOMMENDATION**

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

Designation: Area Planning Manager - North

Author: Emma Forbes

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

Relevant Plans: Plan 1 – Location Plan SH_171106_SC_03 REV 1

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:	National Grid Shetland Link Limited	Agent	Hugh Smith
Address:	National Grid Shetland Link Limited 35 Homer Road Solihull Birmingham B913QJ	Address	National Grid 1100 Century Way Thorpe Park Leeds LS15 8TU
Phone No.:	n/a	Phone:	██████████
E-mail:	n/a	E-mail:	████████████████████

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

The proposed Scheme is located close to the north coast of Caithness, immediately to the south and south west of existing developments including the Vulcan Nuclear Reactor Testing Establishment (NRTE), Dounreay Nuclear Power Development and existing electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure. The proposed converter station site is currently arable land to the south of the NRTE. A plan illustrating the location of the proposed converter station and underground cables is enclosed.

Description of Development Please include detail where appropriate – eg the number of residential units; the gross floorspace in m 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.

The Dounreay Onshore Scheme is part of a proposed 60 megawatt (MW) High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Link between Caithness and Shetland. It will connect the Shetland Islands to the UK electricity transmission system for the first time. The Dounreay Onshore Scheme comprises a converter station, approximately 1 km of underground DC cables to a landfall where it connects to subsea DC cables. It will be connected to the existing electricity network at the Dounreay 132 kilovolt (kV) substation by up to approximately 1km of underground AC cables. The footprint of the proposed converter station (to the boundary fence) is anticipated to be up to 100m x 150m with a maximum height of 15m.

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. A Screening Report including a request for a screening opinion accompanies this proposal of application notice. A pre-application meeting was held with THC on 27/9/17 (ref: 17/03946/PREAPP)

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
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Caithness West Community Council	Not yet served
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Names/details of any other parties	Date Notice Served
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Please give details of proposed consultation

Proposed public event	Venue	Date and time
Public Exhibition Event	Old Town Hall, Thurso	17 th January 2018, 10am – 2pm and 5pm – 8pm

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Newspaper Advert – name of newspaper	Advert date (where known)
John O’Groats Journal and Caithness Courier	Advert not yet placed

.....

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Details of any other consultation methods (date, time and with whom)

Formal Pre-Application Meeting with The Highland Council and statutory consultees on 27th September 2017 as part of the paid for pre-application service.

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Signed Hugh Smith, Consents Officer, National Grid

Date 1st November 2017

Dafydd Jones
Area Planning Manager North
Planning and Development Service
The Highland Council
Council Headquarters
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness
IV3 5NX

National Consents Team
Hugh Smith
Consents Officer

Mobile [REDACTED]

1st November 2017

Dear Mr Jones,

Shetland HVDC Link – Erection of a High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) converter station as part of a new high voltage electricity link between Dounreay, Caithness and Scalloway, Shetland.

Dounreay Onshore Scheme - Proposal of Application Notice

As required for all 'Major Developments' by the Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 please find enclosed our Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) for the Shetland Onshore Scheme, part of the Shetland High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Link. The PAN sets out our proposed statutory Pre-Application Consultation in advance of submitting a planning application in spring 2018.

Project Background

The Shetland Islands are not currently connected to the electricity transmission or distribution networks that serve mainland Great Britain meaning that electricity demand on Shetland has to be met by on-island generation. Currently the main sources of electricity generation are Lerwick Power Station and Sullom Voe Terminal Power Station; the former is nearing the end of its operational life and the future of the latter is unclear.

National Grid Shetland Link Limited is developing proposals for a 60 megawatt (MW) HVDC link which would connect Shetland with the electricity transmission network at Dounreay, replacing the existing diesel-fuelled Lerwick Power Station with a connection to the electricity transmission system.

A diesel back-up power generation solution is proposed to be located at a site near Lerwick. It would consist of a series of specially designed generators which are commonly used to provide back-up power generation and will be designed to withstand the environmental conditions on Shetland. This will be the subject of a separate consent application to Scottish Ministers.

The Dounreay Onshore Scheme

The Dounreay Onshore Scheme consists of a converter station, approximately 1km of underground DC cables from the converter station to the landfall, and 0.5km of underground AC cables from the converter station to the existing Dounreay 132kV substation. The Scheme is located close to the north coast of Caithness, immediately to the south and south west of existing developments including the Vulcan Nuclear Reactor Testing Establishment (NRTE), Dounreay Nuclear Power Development and existing electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure. A plan illustrating the location of the proposed converter station and underground cables is enclosed.

The converter station will convert electricity from AC to DC for onwards transmission to Shetland by underground and subsea cable (the converter station can also convert electricity from DC to AC according to the direction of operation). The exact dimensions of the proposed converter station are subject to detailed design work but it is anticipated that it will occupy an area approximately 100m x 150m to the perimeter security fence. The converter station is made up of specialist electrical equipment all of which will be located in one to two building units. These will range in height according to the electrical equipment they contain up to a maximum height of 15m.

Statutory Pre-Application Consultation

Under The Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009, the proposed converter station constitutes 'Major Development', being Other Development in Column 1 of the table in the Schedule where any applicable threshold or criterion in the corresponding part of Column 2 of that table is met or exceeded.

As the proposed converter station constitutes 'Major Development', statutory Pre-Application Consultation is required to be undertaken in advance of submitting a planning application. The aim of our Pre-Application Consultation is to inform the local community and other consultees about our proposals and provide them with the opportunity to contribute their views prior to the submission of the planning application.

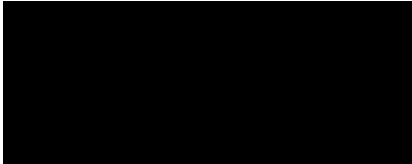
Our proposed statutory Pre-Application Consultation Activities include:

- A Public Exhibition Event is proposed at the Old Town Hall, High Street, Thurso, Caithness KW14 8AJ on 17th January 2018 between 10am - 2pm and 5pm - 8pm. The event will be open to members of the public (times to be confirmed in the John O'Groats Journal and Caithness Courier). Specific invites to the event will also be sent to members of Caithness West, Thurso and Castletown Community Councils, elected representatives (MPs and MSPs) as well as consultees, stakeholders and interest groups.
- A project website (shetlandconnection.com) which provides a range of information about the project, publically available documents and contact details for queries or comments, has been set up. The project website will be kept up to date with news and information about the project as it becomes available.
- A project email address (shetlandconnection@communitycomms.co.uk) and telephone number (0131 226 2363) have been set up so that members of the public can directly submit queries or comments about the project. These will be responded to by a relevant member of the project team.

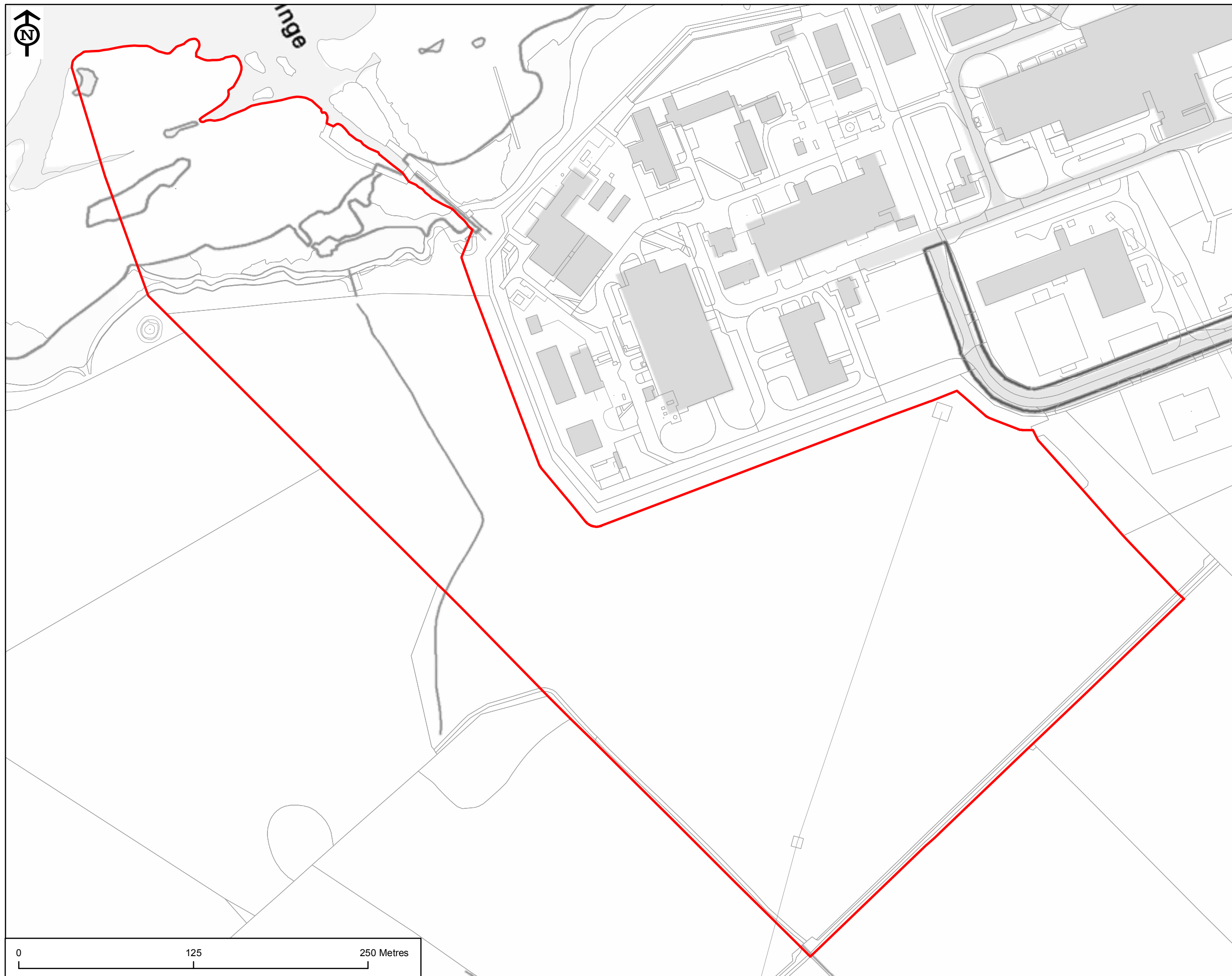
- Additional Consultation Meetings. Further consultation meetings will be held with statutory and non-statutory consultees and other stakeholders as required or requested.

Should you or your colleagues wish to discuss any aspect of the proposed development or our proposed Pre-Application Consultation then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Hugh Smith
Consents Officer



LEGEND

Dounreay Onshore Scheme Area

NOTE:

The redline illustrates the location in which the design of the Dounreay Onshore Scheme will be finalised taking into account technical and environmental studies as well as feedback from pre-application consultation with statutory and non-statutory consultees and the local community.

The proposed converter station (approx. footprint 150 m x 100 m) will be sited within the redline area to the south of the HMS Vulcan site.

The DC cable route will be installed in a temporary 30 m working width in the corridor to the west of HMS Vulcan.

REVISION:

REV.	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1	06/11/17	ORIGINAL ISSUE

FIGURE NO.

SH_171106_SC_3

FIGURE TITLE

**FIGURE 1
LOCATION OF DOUNREAY
ONSHORE SCHEME**

SHEET NUMBER

1 of 1

NOTES

Date:

06/11/17

Scale at A3:

1:2,500

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