

Agenda Item	5.1
Report No	PLN/031/20

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: North Planning Applications

Date: 15 September 2020

Report Title: 20/02866/PAN: WP Grid Services Ltd
Thurso South Substation, Geiselittle, Thurso, KW14 8YH

Report By: Acting Head of Development Management

Purpose/Executive Summary

Description: Erection of grid stability facility with ancillary works including landscaping, parking, grid connection, drainage and boundary enclosures

Ward: 2 – Thurso and North West Caithness

Recommendation

Committee members are is asked to note the submission of the Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) and highlight any material issues that they wish to be brought to the attention of the applicant before the submission of a planning application.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report informs committee members of the submission of the attached PAN which was received by the Council on 31 July 2020.
- 1.2 The PAN is a statutory requirement for full planning applications for major or national developments and must be lodged at least 12 weeks prior to the submission of a planning application. The submitted information attached includes:
- Location Plan;
 - Proposal of Application Notice (PAN);
 - PAN Boundary Indicative Areas;
 - 31 July 2020 covering letter from prospective applicant; and
 - 18 August 2020 additional information from prospective applicant.
- 1.3 The prospective applicant has stated that in line with Covid-19 public health advice and temporary modifications made to the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013, the prospective developer proposes to undertake an online public consultation. This will be in the form of a dedicated website outlining the proposal and affording the ability to make comments and ask questions. The consultation is anticipated to take place during the 14th to 18th of September 2020.
- 1.4 There will be a live element to the consultation where the public can ask questions via the website and can expect a swift follow up response from the prospective developer and its consultation team. This is proposed to take place between 12pm – 3pm on a Wednesday during consultation dates. The precise consultation dates and arrangements will be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority and shall be confirmed by the prospective applicant in early due course. These dates will be dependent upon the progress made with studies and the design evolution of the scheme. This is to make sure that sufficient information is available to ensure that the consultation and responses to enquiries are meaningful.
- 1.5 Furthermore, the consultation will still be publicised and advertised in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements with adverts to be placed within the Press and Journal (Highlands and Islands Edition) and in the John o' Groats Journal. A letter drop will also be undertaken, the catchment for which shall be shown on a drawing and is expected to cover communities in proximity of the site, as well as communities that may have visibility of the proposed development. The finalised consultation details will also be shared in advance with local Members.
- 1.6 The forthcoming application will be accompanied by a Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) report explaining the consultation undertaken, feedback received, and any resultant amendments made to the planning application.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 Based on the description of development contained within the proposal of application notice, and the submitted supporting information, a 'Grid Stability Facility', which is a Synchronous Condenser and includes an electricity transmission infrastructure compound, transformers and cables connecting to the main plant room building. The purpose of the proposed infrastructure is not to generate or convert electric power to mechanical power or vice versa, but to adjust and stabilise conditions on the electric power transmission grid. Also required will be the formation of an access, landscaping, boundary enclosures/treatment, SUDS, drainage and groundworks.
- 2.2 This proposed stability hardware project will provide one of the ancillary services being introduced by National Grid ESO ('NGESO') to ensure the electricity network can be safely operated in a zero-carbon world in which electricity is only supplied by low-carbon sources and is increasingly moved through interconnectors and HVDC links.
- 2.3 The prospective applicant has sought formal pre-application advice from the Planning Authority via the Pre-Application Advice Service for Major Developments. The pre-application meeting is due to take place in September 2020 with a pre-application advice pack to be issued thereafter.

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The proposed development would be situated on land immediately east of Thurso South Substation, which is located around 2km south of Thurso on the western side of the A9. The site is presently an agricultural field. The existing substation received planning permission 13/00594/FUL on 13 September 2013 and has a dedicated access onto the A9.
- 3.2 The site does not fall within or close to any natural heritage designations. The landscape is very open with the principal visual receptors being users of the A9 Trunk Road to the east of the site and Thurso to the north. The closest built and cultural heritage feature is Tulloch of Shalmstry which is a designated as a scheduled monument located around 900m south of the proposed site. Previous archaeological site investigations undertaken for the substation also uncovered the presence of a putative Bronze Age burial cairn. Based on SEPA's indicative flood risk maps there is some surface water flood risk to the south east of the site. There are also residential properties in the wider area, which maybe sensitive to noise, with the closest being around 325m east and 550m north of the site.

4.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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

4.1 Highland Wide Local Development Plan (2012)

- 28 - Sustainable Design
- 29 - Design Quality & Place-making
- 30 - Physical Constraints

- 31 - Developer Contributions
- 36 - Development in the Wider Countryside
- 51 - Trees and Development
- 55 - Peat and Soils
- 56 - Travel
- 57 - Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage
- 58 - Protected Species
- 59 - Other Important Species
- 60 - Other Important Habitats
- 61 - Landscape
- 63 - Water Environment
- 64 - Flood Risk
- 66 - Surface Water Drainage
- 69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure
- 72 – Pollution

4.2 **Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (2018)**

The site is neither allocated for development nor safeguarded from development in the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan.

4.3 **Highland Council Supplementary Guidance**

- Developer Contributions (Nov 2018);
- Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment (Jan 2013);
- Highland Historic Environment Strategy (Jan 2013);
- Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (Mar 2013);
- Standards for Archaeological Work (Mar 2012);
- Trees, Woodlands and Development (Jan 2013); and
- Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments (May 2013).

4.4 **Scottish Government Policy and Guidance**

- National Planning Framework for Scotland 3 (Jun 2014);
- Scottish Energy Strategy (Dec 2017);
- PAN 1/2011 – Planning and Noise (Mar 2011);
- PAN 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (Jan 2008);
- Scheduled Monuments Consents Policy (Historic Environment Scotland 2019)
- 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy (Jun 2011); and
- Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map (May 2018).

5.0 **POTENTIAL MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- a) Compliance with the Development Plan and other planning policy;
- b) Planning history;
- c) Landscape and visual impact;
- d) Noise;
- e) Water environment (flood risk and drainage);
- f) Natural heritage;
- g) Built and cultural heritage;
- h) Peat and soils;
- i) Roads, transport, access and recreation;

- j) Construction impacts; and
- k) Any other material considerations raised within representations.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 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.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Not applicable.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is recommended the committee members note the submission of the PAN and advises of any material issues it wishes to be brought to the applicant's attention.

Designation: Acting Head of Development Management
Author: Peter Wheelan
Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.

Relevant Plans: Plan 1 - Location Plan
Plan 2 - Proposal of Application Notice
Plan 3 - PAN Boundary Indicative Areas
Plan 4 - Covering Letter from Prospective Applicant
Plan 5 - Additional Information Letter from Prospective Applicant

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	WP Grid Services Limited	Agent	Gordon Thomson
Address	Fourth Floor	Address	Lichfields
	2 Kingsway		101 George Street
	Cardiff, CF10 3FD		Edinburgh, EH2 3ES
Phone No.		Phone	07964 912 360
E-mail		E-mail	gordon.thomson@lichfields.uk

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

Land East of Thurso South Substation

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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.

Erection of grid stability facility with ancillary works including access, parking, landscaping

.....

and grid connection

.....

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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.

YES..... NO.....^X

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
Castletown Community Council	31/07/2020
.....
Caithness West Community Council	31/07/2020
.....

Names/details of any other parties	Date Notice Served
.....
.....

Please give details of proposed consultation

Proposed public event	Venue	Date and time
No public event is proposed in line with the Town and Country Planning (Miscellaneous Temporary Modifications) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020		
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Newspaper Advert – name of newspaper	Advert date(where known)
.....
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Details of any other consultation methods (date, time and with whom)

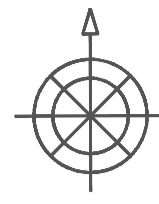
Dedicated consultation webpage with project details, FAQs and consultation questionnaire. 3hr live Q&A will take place on Wednesday X July/August between 12pm-3pm where parties can ask questions directly to the applicant/team and receive a swift response

Signed

Date..... 31/07/2020

PREPARATION OF APPLICATION NOTICE BOUNDARY

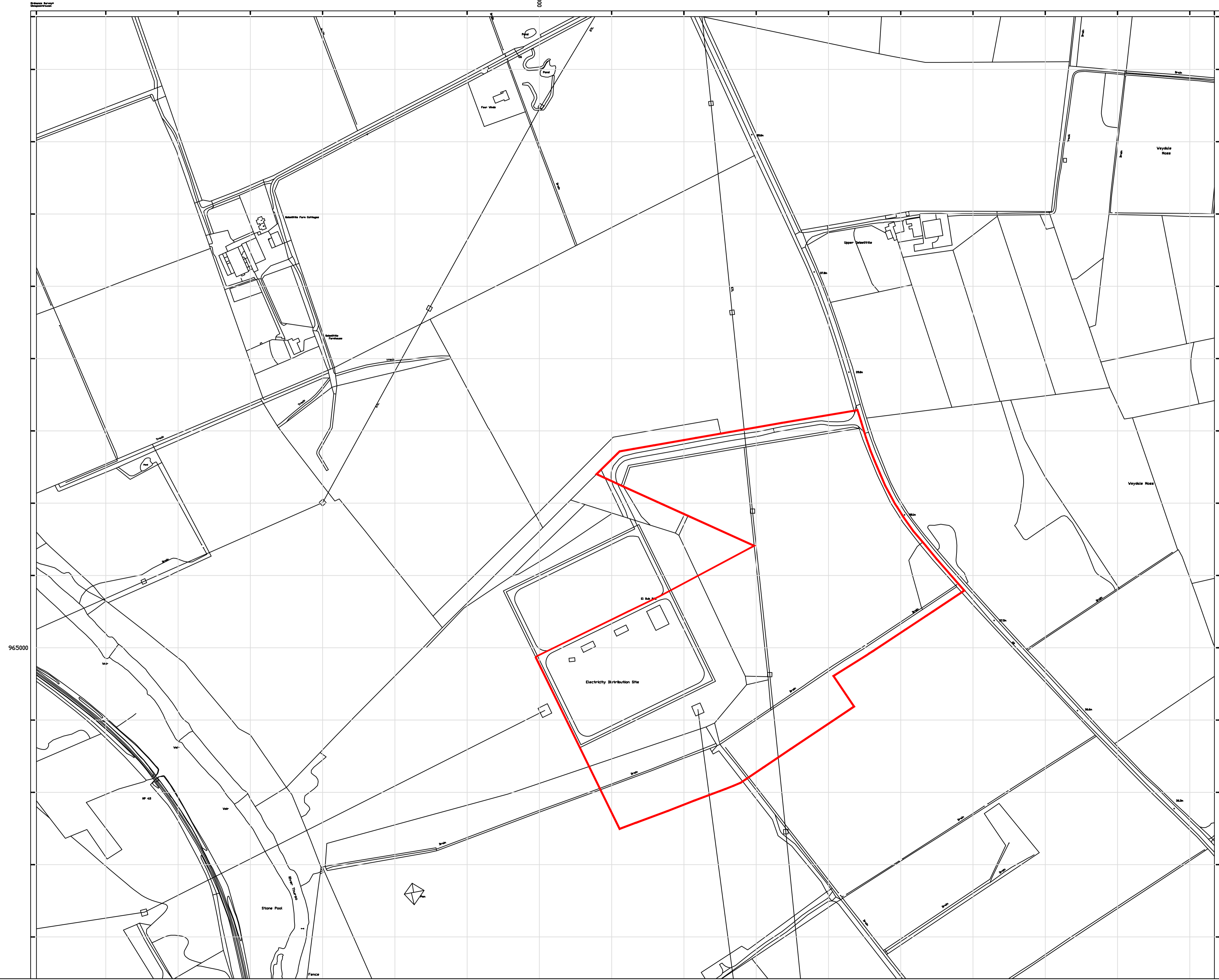
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DRAWING NOTES

- DRAWING NOTES:
1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE SHOWN IN MM.
 2. SCALE FOR PLANING PURPOSES ONLY.
 3. ORDNANCE SURVEY SERIAL NUMBER: 187454

DRAWING KEY:
 = PREPARATION OF APPLICATION NOTICE BOUNDARY



**FOR PLANNING
 PURPOSES ONLY,
 NOT TO BE USED FOR
 CONSTRUCTION
 PURPOSES**

0	29/6/2020	PREPARATION OF APPLICATION NOTICE BOUNDARY - ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	CDM	CW
REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	CHKD



PROJECT
 THURSO SOUTH SYNCHRONOUS COMPENSATION
 THURSO SOUTH, KW14 8YH

TITLE
 PREPARATION OF APPLICATION NOTICE BOUNDARY

DISCIPLINE
 PLANNING DRAWING

DRAWING STATUS
FOR INFORMATION

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN BY	CHECKED BY	APPROVED BY
1:2500 @ A1	29/6/2020	CDM	CW	PT
PROJECT NO.	DRAWING NO.	REV.		
WPGSL002	PL_TS_001	0		