



Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean

Date: 16 November 2021
Contact: David Oxley

To: Malcolm Macleod Esq.,
Executive Chief Officer – Infrastructure and Environment
The Highland Council
Headquarters
Glen Urquhart Road
Inverness
IV3 5NX

Dear Mr Macleod

Re: Proposed alteration of the use designation of the sites to the east of Nigg Energy Park listed as NG1 in the local development plan.

I write to give the opinion of Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) on the recommendation to remove the zoning for industrial use of the site immediately to the east of the Nigg Energy Park designated NG1 in the local plan. **It is the position of HIE that the current designations and boundary configurations for these sites should remain in place unchanged for industrial use.** These sites in the current designation or allocation are of vital importance to establishing Nigg as a strategic site at both the Scottish and UK level for developing offshore wind energy and an alteration of the zoning to the more limited boundaries proposed would seriously impact on the ability of the area to reach its potential and provide many hundreds of jobs paying materially more than the Scottish Living Wage for people in Easter Ross and the wider Highlands from this emerging industry. Although the area has not been developed for many years, Highlands and Islands Enterprise has been closely involved in the current developments of Nigg and the Cromarty Firth and the plans for the future of the basin. With the further development of the offshore wind supply chain, which is about to take place following the announcements for ScotWind and AR4, a number of developments that are poised to be announced, which will trigger further inward investment on a scale that will bring the yard closer to the employment levels that followed shortly after its origins.

The nature of this new industry and technology is that it requires significant additional space, beyond the footprint of the oil and gas sector, particularly for floating wind, and the inward investment that should follow. The importance of the Cromarty Firth and the Nigg

site in particular is set out in the Scottish Offshore Wind Energy Council (SOWEC) joint industry and government [Strategic Infrastructure Assessment](#) published in August which recommends Nigg and neighbouring facilities as the best location to establish an offshore wind manufacturing cluster. The assessment builds on the earlier [Port Enhancements for Offshore Wind](#) report which clearly demonstrates Nigg as the optimal location for further development to support higher levels of Scottish content in UK offshore wind. There is considerable policy alignment at a UK and Scottish level with associated availability of public and private capital funds to support the development of a manufacturing cluster at Nigg.

The development of the East Quay at Nigg (under construction) which was supported by Scottish Government through HIE creates a large new marine interface to realise the industrial development potential of land to the East of Nigg for offshore wind and is part of a broader strategy to facilitate significant new manufacturing investment into the region.

I would be most grateful if you could bring this to the attention of the committee as part of their deliberations this Thursday concerning this proposal.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Osley', is superimposed over a background of a complex, light-colored circuit board or technical drawing pattern.

Director of Strategic Projects
Highlands and Islands Enterprise

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