

Agenda Item	<b>5.2</b>
Report No	<b>PLS/14/22</b>

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** South Planning Applications Committee

**Date:** 22 March 2022

**Report Title:** 22/00536/PAN: SSE Renewables  
Land at Mucomir Farm Sand and Gravel Quarry, Gairloch,  
Spean Bridge, PH34 4EQ

**Report By:** Area Planning Manager – South

### **Purpose/Executive Summary**

**Description:** Depositing of spoil, formation of jetty and associated landscaping.

**Ward:** 11 – Caol And Mallaig

### **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 an application for planning permission.

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report informs 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 made valid on 3 February 2022. The PAN is a statutory requirement for planning applications for major or national developments and must be lodged at least 12 weeks prior to the submission of a planning application. Members are asked to note this may form the basis of a subsequent planning application.
- 1.3 The submitted information attached includes:
- Proposal of Application Notice (Application Form)
  - Location Plan
- 1.4 Due to relaxations in COVID-19 restrictions the prospective developer proposes to hold face to face public event on the date noted below. They also intend to undertake a virtual event using online platform for public engagement to allow local people to express their views and to submit questions to the applicant's project design team for live discussion. The proposed event is due to take place at the following location and date:
- 21 April 2022, 1400 – 1900hrs at Spean Bridge Community Centre
  - 23 August 2022 – 1400-1900hrs online
- 1.5 The virtual exhibition will be accessible between 19 April 2022 and 13 May 2022 through the Coire Glas project website: <http://www.coireglas.com/>
- 1.6 The online consultation will be publicised and advertised in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements with adverts to be placed within The Oban Times incorporating Lochaber Times at least seven working days before the consultation. An invitation maildrop will also be undertaken by the applicant to make people aware of the proposed development. The catchment for its distribution has been agreed with the Planning Authority and will cover a 5km radius from the site boundary. Details of all notified parties are contained and appended to the PAN form, this states that a copy of the PAN was sent to the Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council on 4 February 2022, as well as, local Caol and Mallaig ward Councillors, the ward manager, MSP and MP. As it is a development related to the wider Coire Glas Project, following a request from officers, the applicant has confirmed that it will also be discussed as part of the Coire Glas Community Liaison Group.
- 1.7 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 The PAN provides notice of the developer's intention to submit a planning application classified as a Major Development. The proposal comprises the deposition and landscaping of spoil from the Coire Glas Pumped Storage Hydro (PSH) scheme on land at Mucomir Farm, Gairloch, where for part of which there is an existing consent for quarrying activities (Ref: 15/01836/FUL) that expires 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022. It is however noted that the existing quarry will only form part of the area which will be landscaped due to the likely volume of material.
- 2.2 The Coir Glas 1055MW Pumped Storage Hydro (PSH) project was granted consent via Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 for the energy generation stations with a deemed planning permission issued under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, including for ancillary developments in October 2021. Condition 11 of the Section 36 consent requires production and agreement of a Spoil Management Plan.
- 2.3 Whilst the precise characteristics of the proposal still require to be confirmed, in overall terms the proposed scope of work comprises:
- Establishment of a jetty or other form of land / Loch interface either within Mucomir Cut or on the foreshore of Loch Lochy or a combination of both.
  - Spoil barges shuttling between Mucomir and the Coire Glas lower works area.
  - Spoil handling equipment at the jetty area to unload barges (excavators, dumper trucks, grading machinery).
  - Welfare and equipment compound as necessary.
  - Deposit and regrading of spoil material across the land holding – will involve heavy equipment including dumper trucks, excavators and potentially conveyor belt handling. Rock crushing is also a possibility.
  - Profiling of the final volume of material to achieve a semi natural landform.
  - Installation of drainage, topsoil, vegetation, planting etc as necessary, together with any other environmental protection or mitigation measures.
- 2.4 Dredging may also be required to provide access to the land via barges from Loch Lochy. If this is required, a separate consent will be obtained from SEPA under the Controlled Activity Regulations.
- 2.5 The applicant has sought an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Opinion for the development submitted on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (Ref: 22/00206/SCOP). The response was provided to the applicant in early March 2022 and was informed by the consultee responses, which outline the environmental and technical assessment requirements to help inform the design of the forthcoming proposal.

## **3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The PAN boundary comprises some 45.14 ha of land at Mucomir Quarry Farm, located on the eastern side of the village of Gairloch and approximately 4km to the west of Spean Bridge, between the B8004 public road and the southern end of Loch Lochy. The site boundary is bound to the east by a dismantled railway line and open agricultural fields with forestry and to the west by Mucomir Cut. The site is served by

two access tracks including the existing farm access road which serves Mucomir Lodge and a private access track used to serve a separate residential property close to the junction with the B8004.

- 3.2 The land is a mix of agricultural and land previously worked for minerals and consists of a quarry and associated excavations, plantation woodland, trackways, three burns and ponds. Further to this, multiple buildings both in use and derelict farm buildings, old farmhouse, newly refurbished house and disused caravan and radio mast building are located within the site boundary with pockets of residential development along the B8004 outwith the site, to the south.
- 3.3 There are three watercourses running along east boundary of the site. At the north east and south east boundary of the site, two small watercourses running east-west. The remaining, located in the middle of the site, stretches southeast-northwest and performs as a channel that bisects Mucomir Quarry. In addition, there are three ponds present within the site.
- 3.4 Although there is a ranging elevation throughout the site, the site slopes predominantly towards eastern boundary.
- 3.5 The site boundary lies within Parallel Roads of Lochaber Special Site of Scientific interest (SSSI). The existing narrow forestry strips surrounding the northern perimeter of the site and further to the south beyond B8004, appears in the ancient woodland inventory, as being (of semi natural origin) (ASNO). The site lies within Broad Forested Strath Landscape Character Area as identified by NatureScot.
- 3.6 The scheduled monument of the Caledonian, Gairloch Locks, lighthouse and signal lamp cluster (SM5294) at the nearest point sits approximately 215m to the north west corner of the PAN site boundary. Adjoining to this setting, is the scheduled monument of Caledonian Canal, Moy Bridge to Gairloch (SM6493) sprawling along river Lochy. The site does not fall within or is in close proximity to any other environmental or built heritage designation.
- 3.7 Due to the location of the site, south of Loch Lochy, the major part of the site is surrounded by areas of Fluvial flooding 1 in 200 years predominantly to the north and west with the northern boundary also being subject to pluvial surface water 1 in 200 years. The site is therefore identified at risk of high flooding on the indicative flood risk maps produced by SEPA.

#### **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
- 42 - Previously Used Land

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  
65 - Waste Water Treatment  
66 - Surface Water Drainage  
67 – Renewable Energy Developments  
69 – Electricity Transmission Infrastructure  
72 - Pollution  
73 - Air Quality  
74 - Green Networks  
77 - Public Access

#### 4.2 **West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan 2019**

The site is not covered by any specific development allocation or safeguarding notation within the West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan.

#### 4.3 **Highland Council Supplementary Guidance**

- Developer Contributions (Nov 2018)
- Flood Risk & Drainage Impact Assessment (Jan 2013)
- Highland Historic Environment Strategy (Jan 2013)
- Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (Mar 2013)
- Physical Constraints (Mar 2013)
- Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments (May 2013)
- Standards for Archaeological Work (Mar 2012)
- Sustainable Design Guide (Jan 2013)
- Special Landscape Area Citations (June 2011)
- Trees, Woodlands and Development (Jan 2013)

#### 4.4 **Scottish Government Policy and Guidance**

- Scottish Planning Policy (June 2014)
- National Planning Framework 3, NPF3 (June 2014) and consultative draft NPF4 (Nov 2021)
- PAN 1/2013 – Environmental Impact Assessment (Aug 2013)
- PAN 1/2021 – Planning and Noise (Mar 2011)
- PAN 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (Jan 2008)
- PAN 68 – Design Statements (Aug 2003)
- Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (Apr 2019)

## **5.0 POTENTIAL MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- a) Development Plan and other planning policy
- b) Planning History;
- c) Noise;
- d) Design, Landscape and Visual Impact (including cumulative impacts);
- e) Roads and Transport;
- f) Natural Heritage including protected species, ornithology and designated sites;
- g) Built and Cultural Heritage;
- h) Soils and Peat;
- i) Economic Impact and Tourism;
- j) Outdoor Access and Recreation;
- k) Construction Impacts;
- l) Pollution;
- m) Decommissioning;
- n) 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. The policy considerations against which any future planning application will be considered have been summarised 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 notes the submission of the PAN and advises of any material issues it wishes to be brought to the applicant's attention.

Signature: David Mudie  
Designation: Area Planning Manager – South  
Author: Simon Hindson / Negar Maydanchi  
Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.

Relevant Plans: Plan 1 – Proposal of Application Notice  
Plan 2 – Location Plan

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: SSE Renewables  Address SSE Renewables Inveralmond House 200 Dunkeld Road Perth PH1 3AQ  Phone: 01738 456 000 E-mail: info.glasgow@stantec.com	Agent: Stantec UK Ltd.  Address Stantec Lomond House 9 George Square Glasgow G2 1DY  Phone: 0141 352 2360 E-mail: info.glasgow@stantec.com
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### **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

Mucomir Quarry, Gairloch (see attached Location Plan)

### **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.

Whilst the precise characteristics of the proposal still require to be confirmed, in overall terms the proposed scope of work comprises:

- Establishment of a jetty or other form of land / Loch interface either within Mucomir Cut or on the foreshore of Loch Lochy or a combination of both.
- Spoil barges shuttling between Mucomir and the Coire Glas lower works area.
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- Deposit and regrading of spoil material across the land holding – will involve heavy equipment including dumper trucks, excavators and potentially conveyor belt handling. Rock crushing is also a possibility.
- Profiling of the final volume of material to achieve a semi natural landform.
- Installation of drainage, topsoil, vegetation, planting etc as necessary, together with

any other environmental protection or mitigation measures.

Dredging may also be required to provide access to the land via barges from Loch Lochy. If this is required, a separate consent will be obtained from SEPA under the Controlled Activity Regulations.

### **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, but we are aware that this is a 'major' development proposal

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: 04/02/2022

Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry Community Council

#### **Names/details of any other parties**

Date Notice Served: 04/02/2022

#### Highland Council

- Dot Ferguson – Senior Ward Manager, Ward 5, Ward 11 and Ward 21

#### Elected Members

- Cllr Allan Henderson - Elected Member for Ward 11 Caol and Mallaig
- Cllr Denis Rixson - Elected Member for Ward 11 Caol and Mallaig

#### Members of the Scottish Parliament

Constituency MSP (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch)

- Kate Forbes MSP

Regional MSPs (Highlands and Islands)

- Ariane Burgess MSP
- Donald Cameron MSP
- Rhoda Grant MSP
- Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP
- Edward Mountain MSP
- Emma Roddick MSP
- Douglas Ross MSP

#### Member of the UK Parliament

Constituency MP (Ross, Skye and Lochaber)

- Ian Blackford MP



Relevant Landowners

- Mucomir Farm
- Scottish Canals
- The Crown Estate
- Forestry and Land Scotland

Neighbours

A mailshot has been issued to local residents and businesses advising of the nature of the proposals and arrangements for the public consultation. This has been issued simultaneously with the lodgement of this PoAN with The Highland Council. The mailing directs recipients to [www.coireglas.com](http://www.coireglas.com) for further details and to view a copy of the PoAN Materials including this form.

Please give details of proposed consultation

Proposed public event	Venue	Date and time
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Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> April 2022 at Spean Bridge Community Centre between 2pm and 7pm		
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Newspaper Advert – name of newspaper	Advert date (where known)
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The Oban Times incorporating Lochaber Times - 14 <sup>th</sup> April 2022	
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Details of any other consultation methods (date, time and with whom)

Virtual online consultation between 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and 13<sup>th</sup> May 2022 via [www.coireglas.com](http://www.coireglas.com)

A second interactive event may be held depending on the timing of the application, feedback and the level of change required following the first event and online consultation.

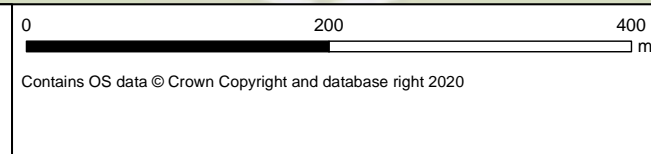
For further detailed please refer to the attached PoAN Report

Signed .....  ..... Date..... 01/02/2022 .....



Client  
**SSE**  
 Generation Ltd

**MUCOMIR QUARRY - Coire Glas PSH Spoil Deposit Proposal**  
 Site Location plan



1:5,000 @ A3	Date: 03/02/2022
Drawn: JP	Checked: AD
Figure 01	Rev A