

Agenda Item	<b>5.3</b>
Report No	<b>PLN-076-22</b>

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** North Planning Applications Committee

**Date:** 18 October 2022

**Report Title:** 22/04169/PAN: Scottish Power Energy Retail Ltd  
Land 2480M East of Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm, Edderton

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

### **Purpose/Executive Summary**

**Description:** Erection and operation of a hydrogen electrolyser plant and associated infrastructure

**Ward:** 04 - East Sutherland and Edderton

### **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 12 September 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 The developer proposes to undertake the following public consultation events
- In person event at Averon Leisure Centre, Alness on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022 between 2 - 7.30pm.
  - In person event at Edderton Village Hall on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 between 8am – 1.30pm.
  - Virtual exhibition online on the project's website [www.cromartyhydrogenproject.co.uk](http://www.cromartyhydrogenproject.co.uk) between 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022 and 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022.
  - An additional public event will be held during winter 2022 following feedback from the above events. The date of this will be confirmed in due course.

In addition, public comments can also be made by letter, email or phone to the agent, RSK Environment Ltd via Adam Peterson, 65 Sussex Street, Glasgow, G41 1DX, [apaterson@rsk.co.uk](mailto:apaterson@rsk.co.uk) 0141 4180471. Or to the applicant, Scottish Power Energy Retail Ltd, Scottish Power, Hydrogen Team, 320 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5AD, [hydrogen@scottishpower.com](mailto:hydrogen@scottishpower.com).

- 1.5 The consultation will be publicised and advertised in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements. Advertisements for the events will be published in the Ross-shire Journal and the Northern Times on 16th September 2022 and 23rd September 2022. A leaflet advertising the public event will be mailed to all residential and business properties within 2.5km of the proposed development by the week commencing the 19th of September. The PAN form also indicates that the following parties received a copy of the PAN.
- Edderton Community Council
  - Ardross Community Council

Local Councillors, MP and MSP have also been sent a copy of the PAN.

- 1.6 Ardross Community Council have requested that the Planning Authority ask the developer to undertake a consultation event in Ardross as well. We have relayed that request to the applicant and we will advise Members of the date of the event in Ardross in due course.
- 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 This PAN provides notice of the developer's intention to submit a planning application for a scheme which is classified as 'major development', as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Development) (Scotland) Regulations 2009) and under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (As Amended). The proposed development is for an electrolyser plant which will produce hydrogen by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using electrolysis. Electricity would be served from the existing Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm connection. Water supply is likely be taken from a local natural source. The connection to the water source will likely be subject to a separate application process. It is expected that the development will have a capacity of 50MW.
- 2.3 It is anticipated that the development will comprise several buildings, with multiple electrolysers feeding on-site low pressure storage containers. The hydrogen will then be compressed onto tube trailers for transportation off-site to the end users. The facility is envisaged to measure approx. 250 m x 100m and will be situated within a site area of approx. 2.5 hectares. The vertical standing pressure vessels are expected to be no taller than 15m in height. In addition, to the main development a temporary construction laydown area approximately 0.5ha in size would be required.
- 2.4 This development would form part of the North of Scotland Hydrogen Programme recognised in the Scottish Government's Hydrogen Action Plan. The programme is aimed at developing hydrogen production hubs across the North of Scotland to supply hydrogen, initially to meet industrial and heavy goods vehicle (HGV) transport demand in the near term and then expand to cater to additional hydrogen demands in the future.
- 2.5 The developer has undertaken formal pre-application advice from the Planning Authority through the Pre-Application Advice Service for Major Developments.

## **3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The PAN site boundary is located on land directly to the east of the Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm, approximately 12 km north of Alness. Access to the site would come from the existing Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm access track which runs from the B9176 "Struie Road" approximately 2km to the east.
- 3.2 There are no natural heritage designations located within the proposed site boundary. The nearest is the Struie Channels Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is designated for its geological features and is located approx. 2.85km to the southeast of the site. The palaeontological SSSI at Blackpark is located

approx. 3.6km to the northeast of the site. Craigroy Burn SSSI noted for its upland birch woodland and is located 4km to the northeast. Easter Fearn SSSI is also noted for its upland birch woodland and is located 4.7km to the northeast. Kinrive – Strathroy SSSI is designated for its native pinewood and springs, this is located approx. 7.2km to the southeast of the site. Loch Achnacloch SSSI is noted for its loch and transition fen features and is situated 7.7km to the southeast of the site.

- 3.3 Morangie Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) is designated for its capercaillie population and is situated approx. 4.1km to the south-east. Dornoch Firth and Morrich SPA is approx. 5.4km to the north and supports a number of bird species including osprey, greylag goose and bar-tailed godwit. Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors SPA is located 9.9km to the north and is designated for supporting a population of hen harriers. The closest Ramsar site is Dornoch Firth and Loch Fleet which is located approx. 7.6km to the northeast, the qualifying features are the estuaries, the estuarine alder woodland, the sand dunes, it also supports a number of plant species, seals, otters and a several bird populations including the osprey and curlew. This area is also a designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Loch Achnacloch SAC is situated 7.7km to the southeast and the qualifying interest relates to the nutrient rich lochs.
- 3.4 There are no landscape designations covering the site itself. In terms of national designations, the nearest is Dornoch National Scenic Area (NSA) which is located approx. 3.4km to the north of the site. The nearest local designations is the Fannichs, Beinn Dearg and Glencalvie Special Landscape Area (SLA) 15km to the west, Ben Wyvis SLA 15.6km to the southwest and Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Loth SLA 18.5km to the north-east.
- 3.5 There are no cultural heritage features within the site, the nearest Scheduled Monument is the Casandamff, settlement and farmstead which is approx. 3.6km to the northeast of the site. The nearest listed building is Meikle Daan which is approx. 5.3km to the northeast 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 Constrains
- 31 - Developer Contributions
- 36 – Wider Countryside
- 55 - Peat and Soils
- 56 - Travel
- 57 - Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage
- 58 - Protected Species
- 59 - Other Important Species
- 60 - Other Important Habitats
- 61 – Landscape
- 62 – Geodiversity

63 - Water Environment  
64 - Flood Risk  
65 – Wastewater Drainage  
66 - Surface Water Drainage  
67 - Renewable Energy Developments  
69 - Electricity Transmission  
72 - Pollution  
73 - Air Quality  
77 - Public Access

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

The site is not covered by any specific development allocation or safeguarding notation. The plan did review and confirm the boundaries for the Special Landscape Areas (SLA) and defines the Settlement Development Areas (SDAs).

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

- Developer Contributions (November 2018)
- Flood Risk & Drainage Impact Assessment (Jan 2013)
- Green Networks (Jan 2013)
- Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (Mar 2013)
- Highland Renewable Energy Strategy & Planning Guidelines (May 2006)
- Physical Constraints (Mar 2013)
- Public Art Strategy (Mar 2013)
- Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments (May 2013)
- Special Landscape Area Citations (Jun 2011)
- Onshore Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (OWESG) (Nov 2016)

Other guidance is contained within

- Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects
- The Highland Council Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments.

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

- Scottish Planning Policy (Jun 2014)
- National Planning Framework 3, NPF3 (Jun 2014)
- National Planning Framework 4, NPF4 Consultative Draft (Nov 2021)
- Scotland's Energy Strategy 2017 and Scotland's Energy Strategy Position Statement (Mar 2021)
- PAN 1/2011 - Planning and Noise (Mar 2011)
- Circular 1/2017: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (May 2017)
- PAN 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (Jan 2008)
- 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy (Jun 2011)
- Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape, SNH (Aug 2017)
- Wind Farm Developments on Peat Lands, Scottish Government (Jun 2011)
- Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map, Scottish Government (May 2018)

#### 5.0 **POTENTIAL MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- a) compliance with the development plan and other planning policy

- b) energy and economic benefits;
- c) construction impacts;
- d) transport and access (including wider public access);
- e) hydrology, hydrogeology and peat;
- f) natural heritage (including ornithology);
- g) built and cultural heritage;
- h) siting, design, landscape and visual impact;
- i) noise (construction and operational) and air quality;
- j) decommissioning, and other material considerations including matters 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.

Designation: Area Planning Manager – North

Author: Alison Harvey

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 – Scottish Power Energy Retail Ltd Address 320 St Vincent Street Glasgow G2 5AD  Phone E-mail – jdavies@scottishpower.com	Agent – RSK Environment Ltd Address 65 Sussex Street, Glasgow G41 1DX  Phone – 0141 418 0471 E-mail – apaterson@rsk.co.uk
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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

The Proposed Development is located on land to the east of the Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm (NGR NH 64225 81469), approximately 12 km north of Alessex within the Highland region of Scotland.

The site location is shown on Figure 3.1.1 and the application boundary on Figure 3.1.2.

### 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 proposed development comprises an electrolyser plant with a predicted capacity of up to 50 MW and comprises multiple buildings with vertical standing pressure vessels no taller than 15m in height. The extent of the green hydrogen production facility site would likely measure 250 m x 100 m based on a site platform of 2.5 hectares. Associated with the green hydrogen production facility would be a temporary construction laydown area approximately 0.5ha in size. It would be formed of temporary hardstanding. Access to the site would come from the existing Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm access track which runs from the B9176 “Struie Road” (to the north of Aultnamain at NGR NH 66321 81768), approximately 2km to the east.

**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 – Screening Report yet to be submitted**

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 Edderton (host) and Ardross Community Council (neighbour)  
Date Notice Served – 12/09/2022

Names/details of any other parties

Elected Members Ward: 06 Cromarty Firth

Date Notice Served – 13/09/2022

Tamala Collier

Pauline Munro

Molly Nolan

Maxine Smith

Jamie Stone, MP Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross  
12/09/2022

Date Notice Served –

Maree Todd MSP, MP Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross  
12/09/2022

Date Notice Served –

Please give details of proposed consultation

Proposed public event

Venue

Date and time

Public Exhibition 1 – Averon Leisure Centre, Alness.  
– Edderton Village Hall, Edderton

29/09/2022 (2pm – 7.30pm)  
30/09/2022 (8am – 1.30pm)

Public Exhibition 2 - Virtual Exhibition on project website  
([www.cromartyhydrogenproject.co.uk](http://www.cromartyhydrogenproject.co.uk)) 23/09/2022 – 14/09/2022

Newspaper Advert – Ross-shire Journal and Northern Times  
16/09/2022 and 23/09/2022

Advert date –

A leaflet advertising the public event will be mailed to all residential and business properties within 2.5km of the proposed development by the week commencing the 19<sup>th</sup> of September.

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

Additional public event to be held in Winter 2022 following review of feedback from first event.

Comments relating to the proposal can also be made to RSK:



RSK Environment Ltd  
FAO Adam Paterson  
65 Sussex Street  
Glasgow G41 1DX

[apaterson@rsk.co.uk](mailto:apaterson@rsk.co.uk)  
0141 418 0471

Or to ScottishPower Energy Retail Ltd:

Scottish Power  
Hydrogen Team  
ScottishPower Energy Retail Ltd  
320 St Vincent Street  
Glasgow  
G2 5AD

[hydrogen@scottishpower.com](mailto:hydrogen@scottishpower.com)

Signed .....  
Date.....12/09/2022.....



Legend:  
 Application Boundary

Coordinate System: British National Grid  
 Projection: Transverse Mercator  
 Datum: OSGB 1936  
 Units: Meter



Rev	Date	Description	Drn	Chk	App
00	14/02/2022	First Draft	NH	AP	RB

**Cromarty Green Hydrogen**



TITLE: Figure 3.1.1:  
Location Plan

ID:P663356\_Layout\_3.1.1 Location Plan

