

Agenda Item	5.2
Report No	PLN/040/24

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** North Planning Applications Committee  
**Date:** 04.06.2024  
**Report Title:** 24/01461/PAN: SSE Renewables PLC  
Land 450M West Of Pennyland Farm  
Thurso  
**Report By:** Area Planning Manager - North

### Purpose/Executive Summary

**Description:** Hardstanding area to accommodate vehicle access, parking, loading and unloading, an office, 3 x crane set up areas, and a main turbine component storage area

**Ward:** 02 – Thurso and North West Caithness

### 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. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This report informs the North 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 23 April 2024. 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)
  - Site Layout Plan
- 1.4 There have been two in-person exhibition events, the first took place on Thursday 16 May 2024 between 1400-1900 hours at The Weigh Inn, Thurso, and the second on Wednesday 19 June 2024 between 1600-1900 hours at The Weigh Inn, Thurso. Both events were advertised in The Caithness Courier and John O'Groat Journal at least 7 days prior to each event.
- 1.5 Details of all notified parties are contained / appended to the PAN form and include Thurso Community Council, as well as local Members and Councillors.
- 1.6 Any 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. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 2.1 The proposed temporary development is for a laydown area associated with the consented Strathy South Wind Farm. The laydown area will be used for the temporary storage of turbine components required for the construction of the wind farm. The proposed development will broadly consist of a hardstand area to accommodate vehicle access, parking, loading and unloading, an office, 3 x crane set up areas and a main turbine component storage area. The site area will be approximately 9.1 hectares. The site would be required for a period of approximately 2 years, from the development stage to full reinstatement of the site.
- 2.2 The developer does not appear to have sought formal pre-application advice from the Planning Authority through the Pre-Application Advice Service for Major Developments.

## **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The proposed site measures around 22.5 acres in area and is sandwiched between the Pennyland area of Thurso and Scrabster. It is bound along its northern side by the A826 road, marked by a traditional stone wall. Its southern boundary is partially demarcated by an attractive vernacular Caithness stone fence. Existing access is

via a gate at the site's north-east corner. The site currently is open and contains a grazing grass surface. The site slopes gently downwards towards the north. The closest existing residential properties are located immediately to the south of the site. A core path (CA13.20) passes alongside the A836 public road at the site's northern boundary.

- 3.2 There are no statutory natural heritage designations within the site boundary. The nearest is the coastal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Pennylands which is located to the north-east of the site. River Thurso SAC and North Caithness Cliffs SPA are also in relative proximity to the site. There are no national or local landscape designations within the application site boundary, or relative to its boundaries.
- 3.3 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas within the application site. The nearest listed buildings are Pennyland House and its associated outbuildings (all Category C-listed) located over 200 metres to the site's east.

#### **4. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 None found.

#### **5. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY**

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

##### **5.1 National Planning Framework 4 (2023)**

- 1 – Tackling the climate and nature crises
- 2 – Climate mitigation and adaptation
- 3 – Biodiversity
- 4 – Natural places
- 5 – Soils
- 11 – Energy
- 13 – Sustainable transport
- 14 – Design, quality and place
- 23 – Health and safety
- 25 – Community wealth building
- 33 – Minerals

Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure supports electricity generation and associated grid infrastructure throughout Scotland, providing employment and opportunities for community benefit, helping to reduce emissions and improve security of supply. This applies across Scotland and is identified as one of 18 National Developments.

##### **5.2 Highland Wide Local Development Plan 2012**

28 - Sustainable Design  
29 - Design Quality and Placemaking  
30 - Physical Constraints  
31 - Developer Contributions  
36 - Development in the Wider Countryside  
56 - Travel  
57 - Natural, Built and 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  
67 - Renewable Energy Developments  
69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure  
72 - Pollution

### 5.3 **Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (CaSPlan)**

- Mixed-use allocation TS04: Thurso West. Allocated for housing (200 units), business, petrol station and open space uses.
- Core path abuts site's northern edge. Proposed core paths bisect the site.
- Green networks to be expanded along site's northern and southern edges.

### **Highland Council Supplementary Planning Policy Guidance**

- 5.4 Developer Contributions (November 2018)  
Flood Risk & Drainage Impact Assessment (Jan 2013)  
Green Networks (Jan 2013)  
Highland Historic Environment Strategy (Jan 2013)  
Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (March 2013)  
Highland Renewable Energy Strategy and Planning Guidelines (May 2006)  
Physical Constraints (Mar 2013)  
Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments (May 2013)  
Standards for Archaeological Work (Mar 2012)  
Sustainable Design Guide (Jan 2013)

### 5.5 **Scottish Government Policy and Other Guidance**

Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023)  
Scottish Energy Strategy (Dec 2017)  
2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy (2011)  
Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map (Scottish Government, 2018)  
Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS, 2019)  
Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HES, 2019)  
PAN 1/2011 - Planning and Noise (2011)  
PAN 60 - Planning for Natural Heritage (2008)  
Circular 1/2017: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (2017)  
'Developing with Nature' Guidance (NatureScot, 2022)

## **6. POTENTIAL MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1
- a) Development Plan and other planning policy;
  - b) Community amenity including operational noise impacts;
  - c) Construction impacts;
  - d) Roads and transport;
  - e) Flood risk and drainage impacts;
  - f) Design, landscape, and visual impact (including cumulative impacts);
  - g) Natural heritage including protected species and habitats;
  - h) Built and cultural heritage;
  - i) Economic impact and tourism;
  - j) Pollution;
  - k) Decommissioning and restoration;
  - l) Outdoor access; and,
  - m) Any other material considerations raised within representations.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 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.

## **8. IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 None applicable.

## **9. RECOMMENDATION**

- 9.1 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: Dafydd Jones  
Designation: Area Planning Manager - North  
Author: Craig Simms  
Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.  
Relevant Plans: Plan 1 – Proposal of Application Notice  
Plan 2 – Site Plan

**The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning Etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and Planning (Scotland) Act 2019**

**Town and Country Planning (Pre-Application Consultation) (Scotland) Regulations 2021**

The Council will respond within 21 days of validation 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.

The Proposal of Application Notice will be valid for a period of 18 months from the date of validation of the notice by the Council.

**Data Protection**

Your personal data will be managed in compliance with the Data Protection legislation. You can read our privacy notice for planning related certificates on the Council's website at: [https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory\\_record/1052173/planning\\_applications\\_consents\\_and\\_notice\\_of\\_review](https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/1052173/planning_applications_consents_and_notice_of_review)

I have read and understood the privacy notice.

**Contact Details**

Applicant	SSE Renewables PLC	Agent	N/A
Address	<a href="#">1 Waterloo Street, Glasgow G2 6AY</a>	Address	
Phone	0141 224 7247 / (0)7425426673	Phone	
Email	<a href="mailto:Tina.cordner@sse.com">Tina.cordner@sse.com</a>	Email	

**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 site is located on an area of land to the north west of the settlement of Thurso called "Pennyland". The NGR of the site is E310563, N968764 and the site address is A836, Burnside, Thurso, Highland, Scotland, KW14 7XT

**Description of Development**

Please include detail where appropriate – e.g. the number of residential units; the gross floorspace in m<sup>2</sup> 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 **temporary** development is for a laydown area associated with the consented Strathy South Wind Farm. The laydown area will be used for the temporary storage of turbine components required for the construction of the wind farm. The proposed development will broadly consist of a hardstand area to accommodate vehicle access, parking, loading and unloading, an office, 3 x crane set up areas and a main turbine component storage area. The site area will be approximately 9.1 hectares. The site would be required for a period of approximately 2 years, from the development stage to full reinstatement of the site.

The Pennyland site provides the optimum location for a laydown area storage site due to its close proximity to Scrabster Harbour. A storage area close to the harbour will help to minimise disruption to the local road networks by limiting the number of main road closures required on the delivery route to the Strathy South Wind Farm.

Attached is a plan showing the red line boundary of the proposed site.

**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

**Community Consultation**

State which other parties have received a copy of this Proposal of Application Notice.

**Community Council/s****Date Notice Served**

Thurso - Ward 2  
Caithness West - Ward 2

Notice served via email – 24/4/24

**Local Elected Members****Date Notice Served**

Ron Gunn – Ward 1  
Struan Mackie  
Matthew Reiss  
Karl Rosie  
Michael Baird - Ward 2  
Marianne Hutchison

Notice served via email – 24/4/24

Hugh Morrison	
<b>Members of Scottish Parliament and Members of Parliament</b>	<b>Date Notice Served</b>
<b>Names / details of other parties</b>	<b>Date Notice Served</b>
All residents within 500m of site boundary.	Mail drop to be undertaken w/c 6 <sup>th</sup> May.

<b>Details of Proposed Consultation</b>		
<b>Proposed Public Event 1</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Date and Time</b>
Public Exhibition	The Weigh Inn	2pm – 7pm, Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> May
<b>Proposed Public Event 2</b> <i>(at least 14 days after Public Event 1)</i>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Date and Time</b>
Public Exhibition	The Weigh Inn	2pm- 7pm, Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> June

<b>Publication of Event</b>		
<b>Newspaper Advert</b>	<b>Name of Newspaper</b>	<b>Advert Date</b>
Advert will be designed and issued	Caithness Courier & John O’Groat Journal	Caithness Courier - publishing date - Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> May/ Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> June  John O’Groat Journal – publishing date – Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> May/ Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> June



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

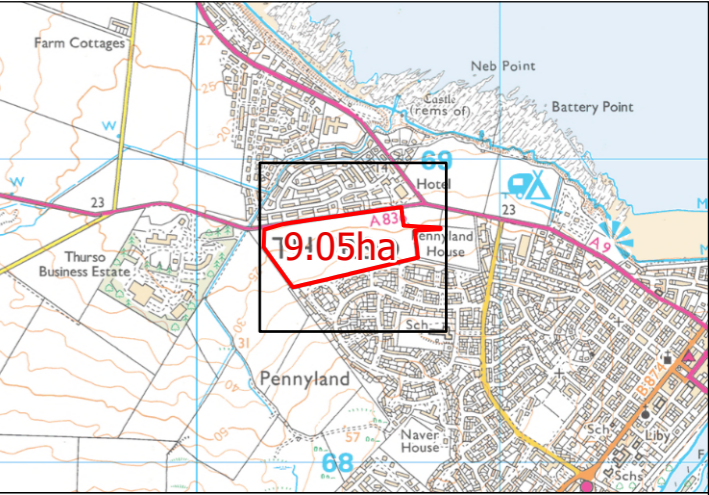
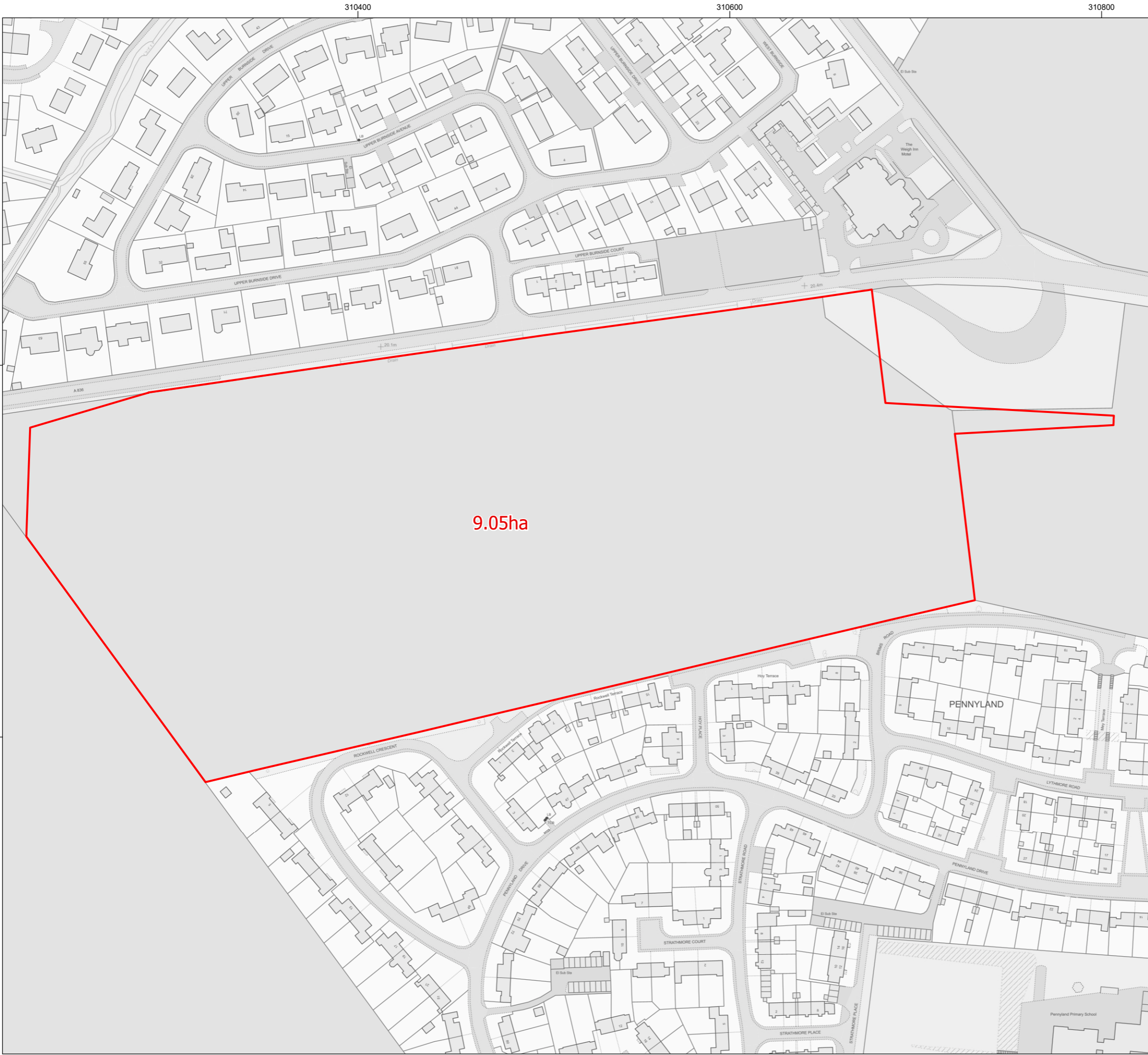
Exhibition boards will be available for online viewing from the 16th May [Strathy South | SSE Renewables](#)

Signed



Date

8/4/2024



**Legend**

Proposed Turbine Component Laydown Area

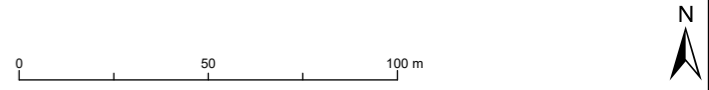
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Rev	Date	Status	AM	ID	Appd
03	16/02/2024	Update to laydown area	AM	ID	-
02	29/11/2023	Update to laydown area	AM	GT	ID
01	08/11/2023	Update to laydown area and access added	AM	ID	-
04	26/02/2024	Update to laydown area	AM	ID	-



Project  
**STRATHY SOUTH**

Title  
**TURBINE COMPONENT LAYDOWN PLAN**



Scale 1:2,000	Plot Size A3	Datum OSGB36	Projection BNG
Drawing Number <b>LN200019-ST-SID-SK-0008-07</b>	Sheet No. <b>001 OF 001</b>		