

Agenda Item	5.1
Report No	PLN/002/21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: North Planning Applications Committee

Date: 26 January 2021

Report Title: 20/04706/PAN: EnergyFarm UK Lairg LLP
Land At 100M SE of 104 Torroble Lairg (Lairg II Wind Farm)

Report By: Acting Head of Development Management – Highland

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 Description: Lairg II Wind Farm - Construction of a wind farm up to 10 turbines (7 turbines to a maximum tip height of 210m and 3 turbines to a maximum tip height of 150m), including associated infrastructure

1.2

Ward: 01 – North, West and Central Sutherland

2. Recommendations

2.1 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 the application for planning permission.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This report informs the Planning Applications Committee of the submission of the attached Proposal of Application Notice (PAN).
- 3.2 Member's will be aware that the site currently has planning permission for construction of a wind farm comprising 10 turbines (7 turbines to a maximum tip height of 180m and 3 turbines to a maximum tip height of 150m) which was granted planning permission on 24 June 2020 (Ref: 19/01096/FUL). Having further considered the viability and renewable energy generation potential of the site, the applicant submitted a PAN in July 2020 with a proposal to bring forward a development comprising construction of a wind farm comprising up to 10 turbines (7 turbines to a maximum tip height of 190 metres and 3 to a maximum tip height of 150 metres), including associated infrastructure (Ref: 20/02607/PAN). The PAN subject to this report effectively supersedes the PAN submitted in July 2020.
- 3.3 The submission of the PAN accords with the provisions of the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and was lodged and made valid on 26 November 2020. Members are asked to note this may form the basis of a subsequent planning application.
- 3.4 The submitted information attached includes:
- Proposal of Application Notice (Application Form); and
 - Location Plan.
- 3.5 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 an online exhibition from 1st February 2021 to 15th February 2021.
- 3.6 The Planning Authority have also requested that a letter drop be undertaken by the applicant to make people aware of the proposed development, the catchment for which will cover a 3.5km radius from the site. The applicant has confirmed that they will also provide posters for local notice boards and shops.
- 3.7 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.

4. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The PAN provides notice of the developer's intention to submit a planning application for increasing the tip heights of 7 wind turbines from 180m to 210m of the proposed wind farm (known as Lairg II Wind Farm) which was permitted in July 2020 following consideration of the application by members of the North Planning Applications Committee in June 2020. The wind farm would likely comprise of the following infrastructure and has the potential to generate up to 49MW of electricity:
- 7 wind turbines, with a maximum height to blade tip of 210m;

- 3 wind turbines, with a maximum height to blade tip of 150m;
- Access tracks;
- Access to the public road network;
- Turbine foundations;
- Laydown Areas;
- Energy storage;
- 2 borrow pits;
- Substation; and
- Associated infrastructure

5. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 5.1 The site is located approximately 4km south-east of Lairg. The application site is extensive, covering approximately 720 hectares, although the developed area would have a much smaller footprint. Access to the development will be provided through the existing access to Lairg I Wind Farm, located to the north west corner of the site.
- 5.2 The site is located directly to the south of Lairg I Wind Farm. Lairg I Wind Farm consists of a three turbine array with the closest turbine approximately 0.8km from the northern site boundary of this development. Lairg I Wind Farm comprises of three 2.5MW turbines with an approximate tip height of 100 metres. Lairg I Wind Farm was granted consent in 2008 (ref: 06/00376/FULSU) and became operational in 2012.
- 5.3 There are a number of residential properties located in proximity to the development, with the nearest properties located to the north west of the development site. Although the properties lie relatively close to the main access to the site the closest turbine is approximately 1.6km away from the closest property (Cracail). There are no properties located within the boundary of the applications site.
- 5.4 The site includes both gently sloping areas and steeper areas of open moorland. There are several open lochs and lochans within the site, the largest two are Loch Cracail Mor in the south of the site and Loch Dailidh n'Airbh in the north as well as some smaller lochans, Loch and Fheoir and Loch Dubh. Furthermore, there are two main streams within the site; Allt Ramascaig Mor (forms the southern boundary) and Torroboll Burn, both run east to west. The watercourses are part of the river system that flows into the River Oykel SAC.
- 5.5 There are no statutory nature conservation designations within the proposed development area, but the proposed development area is within 10km of two SACs, three SPAs and three SSSI's.
- 5.6 There are cultural and heritage interests both within the site and close to the site.
- 5.7 The site sits within the Rounded Hills and Moorland Landscape Character.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

The following policies are relevant to the assessment of the application

6.1 Highland Wide Local Development Plan 2012

28 - Sustainable Design
29 - Design Quality & Place-making
30 - Physical Constraints
31 - Developer Contributions
51 - Trees and Development
52 - Principle of Development in Woodland
55 – Peats and Soils
56 - Travel
57 - Natural, Built & Cultural Heritage
58 - Protected Species
59 - Other Protected Species
60 - Other Important Habitats
61 – Landscape
63 – Water Environment
64 - Flood Risk
66 - Surface Water Drainage
67 - Renewable Energy Developments
68 – Community Renewable Energy Developments
72 – Pollution
77 – Public Access

6.2 Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (2019)

There are no site-specific policies covering the site. However, the Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan identifies Special Landscape Areas within the plan area.

6.3 Highland Council Supplementary Planning Policy Guidance

Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects (August 2010)
Highland Historic Environment Strategy (Jan 2013)
Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (March 2013)
Highland Renewable Energy Strategy & Planning Guidelines (May 2006)
Onshore Wind Energy: Supplementary Guidance including Landscape Sensitivity Appraisals (November 2016)
Standards for Archaeological Work (March 2012)
Sustainable Design Guidance
Trees, Woodlands and Development (Jan 2013)

6.4 Scottish Government Planning Policy and Guidance

Scottish Planning Policy (June 2014)
National Planning Framework 3 (June 2014)
Onshore Wind Policy Statement (December 2017)
Scottish Energy Strategy (December 2017)

PAN 1 / 2011 – Planning and Noise;
Circular 1/2017 – Environmental Impact Assessment;
PAN 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage;
2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy;
Onshore Wind Turbines; and
Wind Farm developments on Peatlands

7. POTENTIAL MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1
- Development Plan;
 - National Policy;
 - Planning History;
 - Roads and Transport;
 - Water Environment (including private water supplies);
 - Flood Risk and Drainage;
 - Peat;
 - Natural Heritage (including protected species, ornithology and designated sites);
 - Trees and Forestry;
 - Built and Cultural Heritage;
 - Design, Landscape and Visual Impact (including Cumulative impacts and Impact on Wild Land Areas);
 - Access and Recreation;
 - Economic Impact and Tourism;
 - Noise and Shadow Flicker;
 - Telecommunications;
 - Aviation; and
 - Construction.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The report sets out 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.

9. IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Resource: Not applicable
- 9.2 Legal: Not applicable
- 9.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): Not applicable
- 9.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever: Not applicable
- 9.5 Risk: Not applicable
- 9.6 Gaelic: Not applicable

10. RECOMMENDATION

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: Acting Head of Development Management – Highland

Author: Claire Farmer

Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.

Relevant Plans: Plan 1 - Application Form

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: Energyfarm UK Lairg LLP Address: 4330 Park Approach Thorpe Park Leeds LS15 8GB Phone: 0113 204 4850 E-mail: info@energiekontor.com	Agent: Address: Phone: E-mail:
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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

800m south of the existing Lairg wind farm and approximately 3.5km southeast of Lairg

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.

Construction of a wind farm comprising up to 10 turbines (7 with a maximum tip height of 210m and 3 with a maximum tip height of 150m) including associated infrastructure

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

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
Ardgay District Community Council	26/11/2020
Creich Community Council	26/11/2020
Dornoch Community Council	26/11/2020
Lairg Community Council	26/11/2020
Rogart Community Council	26/11/2020

Names/details of any other parties	Date Notice Served
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Please give details of proposed consultation

Proposed public event	Venue	Date and time
Lairg II Windfarm Exhibition	ONLINE	01/02/2021- 15/02/21

Newspaper Advert – name of newspaper	Advert date(where known)
Northern Times	22/01/2021

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

Email communication with all five community councils at various time as well as emails to councillors

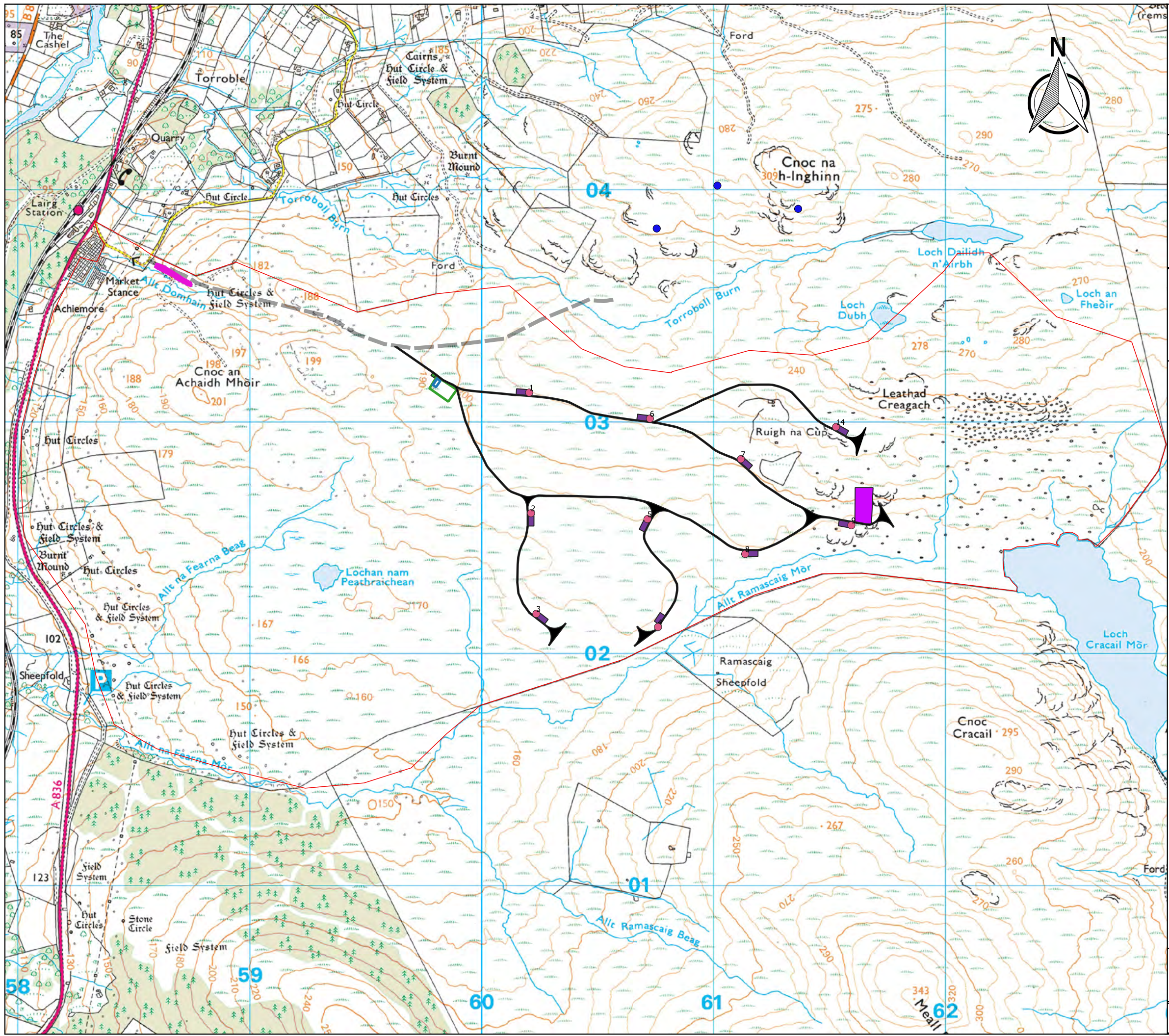
Signed ..  Date..... 26/11/2020

Lairg II Wind Farm

OFFICE GLASGOW
11 Somerset Place
Glasgow
G3 7JT
T: 0141 354 6544
www.energiekontor.co.uk

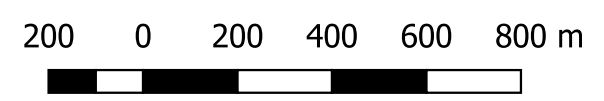
OFFICE BREMEN
Mary-Somerville-Str. 5
28359 Bremen
Germany
T: +00 49 421 330 4304
www.energiekontor.co.uk

Figure 3.1: Layout & Infrastructure Plan



Legend

- Existing Lairg Wind Farm (3 x N80s)
- Planning Application Boundary
- Existing Track
- Turbine
- Battery storage area
- Borrow pit
- Construction compound
- Crane hardstanding
- Onsite access track
- Substation



Note: All turbines are 180m Tip Height Save T1, T6 & T14 which are 150m.

Date	Paper	Scale	Rev	By
04/02/20	A3	1:16,000	FEI2	AM

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