THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

NORTH PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE (via MS TEAMS)

26 JANUARY 2021

MINUTES & ACTION NOTE

Listed below are the decisions taken by Committee at their meeting and the actions that now require to be taken. The webcast of the meeting will be available within 48 hours of broadcast and will remain online for 12 months: https://highland.public-i.tv/core/portal/home

A separate memorandum will be issued if detailed or further instructions are required, or where the contents of the memorandum are confidential. Please arrange to take the required action based on this Action Sheet.

Committee Members Present (via MS Teams):

Mr R Bremner (except items 1-3), Mrs I Campbell, Ms K Currie, Mr M Finlayson, Mr C Fraser, Mr R Gale, Mr J Gordon, Mr D MacKay, Mrs A MacLean (except items 1-3), Mr C Macleod, Mrs M Paterson, Mr A Rhind (except items 6.2 and 6.3), Mr K Rosie, Mr A Sinclair and Ms M Morley-Smith (**Chair**)

Substitutes:

None

Other Members Present:

Mrs J Barclay (except items 1-6.1 and 7.1), Mrs H Carmichael (except items 1-6.1), Mr A Mackinnon (except items 6.3-7.1), Mr D Macpherson (except items 1-6.1) and Mr C Munro (except items 6.4-7.1).

Officers Participating:

Dafydd Jones – Acting Head of Development Management – Highland

Mark Harvey (MH) - Team Leader

Simon Hindson (SH) - Team Leader

Erica McArthur (EM) - Principal Planner

Gillian Pearson (GP) - Principal Planner

Graham Sharp (GS) - Planner

Matthew Taylor (MT) – Planner

Jane Bridge – Senior Engineer (Development Management)

Karen Lyons - Principal Solicitor (Planning) and Clerk

Alison MacArthur – Administrative Assistant

Guests:

None

ITEM	DECISION	ACTION
NO		

1	Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan	
	None.	N/A
2	Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt	
	None.	N/A
3	Confirmation of Minutes Dearbhadh a' Gheàrr-chunntais	
	There had been submitted for confirmation as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 November 2020 which were APPROVED.	N/A
4	Major Development Update Iarrtasan Mòra	
	Mr R Bremner and Mrs A Maclean joined the meeting at the start of this item.	DJ/SH/KL
	The Acting Head of Development Management – Highland updated members as to applications not included in the report, as follows:	
	Refused Application (Delegated Powers) • 19/03015/FUL - Erection of up to 11 wind turbines maximum tip height of 126.5m with associated infrastructure - Camster II Wind Farm – decision issued on 12.01.2021	
	 New Major Applications in NPAC area 20/05080/FUL - Ackron Wind Farm - Erection and Operation of a Wind Farm for a period of 30 years, comprising of 12 Wind Turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 149.9m, access tracks, borrow pits, substation, control building, and ancillary infrastructure – Land 1575M NE Of Ackron Farm, Golval, Forsinard - anticipate determination Summer 2021 (June) 20/05067/FUL - Strath Tirry Wind Farm - Erection and Operation of a Wind Farm for a period of 30 years, comprising of 4 Wind Turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 135m, access tracks, borrow pits, substation, control building, energy storage system, meteorological mast and ancillary infrastructure – land 1450m NE of Dalmichie, Lairg – anticipate determination Summer 2021 (August) 	
	Consultation by Orkney Isles Council • 21/00090/FUL - Quanterness Wind Farm - Erection of 6 wind turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 149.9m, meteorological mast, substation, access tracks, borrow pit, and associated	

	infrastructure - Lyness (Land Near), Hoy, Orkney (consulted as a neighbouring authority by Scottish Ministers who are determining the application. Anticipate response in Spring 2021 (March)	
	 Decision Notice issued following completion of s75 agreement 18/05159/PIP - Masterplan for the erection of 104 houses - Lochan Corr, Black Isle Road, Muir of Ord (issued 22 Jan 2021) 	
	 In answer to Members' questions the Acting Head of Development Management – Highland advised that: The s75 related to application 15/01202/FUL - Former Fish Factory, High Street, Conon Bridge is in the process of being signed and the Principal Solicitor (Planning) will advise local members once she requests that planning permission be issued. He will find out current progress on the A9 junction consultation for Mr C Fraser and provide an update to him. 	
	Agreed: to NOTE the report.	
5	Major Developments – Pre-application consultations Leasachaidhean Mòra – Co-chomhairle Ro-iarrta	
5.1	Description: Lairg 2 Wind Farm - Construction of a wind farm comprising up to 10 turbines (7 turbines with a maximum tip height of 210 m and 3 turbines to a maximum tip height of 150 m) including associated infrastructure (20/04706/PAN) (PLN/002/21) Ward: 1 Applicant: EnergyFarm UK Lairg LLP Site Address: Land at 100 m SE of Torroble, Lairg (Lairg II Wind Farm).	
	Agreed: no additional considerations raised by Members.	CF
6	Planning Applications to be Determined larrtasan Dealbhaidh rin Dearbhadh	
6.1	Applicant: Mr John Nightingale (17/03202/FUL) (PLN/003/21) Location: Daffodil Field, Miller Road, Cromarty (Ward 9). Nature of Development: Erection of three houses (amended from four houses) and garage/boathouse for plot three. Recommendation: Grant.	
	 In answer to Members' questions, the Principal Planner and Senior Engineer advised: That the applicant will take down and rebuild the wall and create a service bay which will allow 2 cars to pass each other, will allow the refuse lorry to pull in and will also give pedestrians a safe refuge from traffic. The consultation response from the Transport Planning Team is set out in the report. Miller Road acts as a shared surface and is subject to a 20mph speed limit. It is the Transport Planning Team's view that traffic associated with the proposed 3 properties isn't going to have 	EM

an adverse impact on vehicular and non-vehicular use of Miller Road.

During debate the following views were expressed:

- This application is unusual in that the majority of the objectors are from Cromarty itself, there has been consistent objection to the application over the duration of the application.
- The main housing development site in Cromarty is the Sandilands site which is well positioned to the main centre of Cromarty, unlike the application site which is on the edge of the settlement.
- The layout chosen 3 houses in a cul de sac arrangement does not reflect the streetscape of the conservation area and will look out of place despite the traditional design chosen for the proposed houses.
- There would be benefit in retaining the application site as open space giving unbroken views to the Cromarty Firth and a haven for wildlife.
- Despite the comments of the Transport Planning Team, concern was raised about the impact of additional traffic movements on Miller Road which was considered would be to the detriment of pedestrian use.
- Although not zoned for development this should be considered a windfall site as it is within the settlement boundary.
- The layout may not be ideal but the Historic Environment Team has not objected to the application.

Motion: by Mr C Fraser seconded by Mrs M Paterson to refuse the application on the grounds that, despite the acknowledgement that the application site is within the Cromarty settlement development area identified in the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan and that Policy 34 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan indicates conditional support for development within the settlement development area, the proposed development does not demonstrate sensitive siting in keeping with local character and the historic environment as the cul de sac design and layout of the houses does not reflect the existing built development in the vicinity of the application site. Loss of the existing open space to this proposed development will not preserve the setting of the adjacent listed buildings and will not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. Instead, approval of the application would be significantly detrimental to these heritage assets and therefore should be considered contrary to Policies 57 (Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage), Policy 28 (Sustainable Design) and Policy 34 (Settlement Development Areas) of the HwLDP.

Amendment: by Mrs A Maclean seconded by Ms M Morley-Smith to grant planning permission in accordance with the recommendation contained in the report of handling.

Vote:

Motion – 10 (Mr R Bremner, Ms K Currie, Mr M Finlayson, Mr C Fraser, Mr J Gordon, Mr D Mackay, Mr C Macleod, Mrs M Paterson, Mr K Rosie, Mr A Sinclair)

Amendment – 5 ((Mrs I Campbell, Mr R Gale, Mrs A Maclean, Mr A Rhind, Ms M Morley-Smith)

Motion carried 10 votes to 5.

	Agreed : to REFUSE planning permission for the reasons given in Mr C Fraser's motion.	
6.2	Applicant: Organic Sea Harvest (20/00097/FUL) (PLN/004/21) Location: Land 1600 m East of Balmaqueen (Ward 10). Nature of Development: New marine fish farm for Atlantic salmon consisting of 12 x 120 m circumference circular cages in an 80 m mooring grid with associated feed barge. Recommendation: Grant.	
	Mr A Rhind left the meeting during consideration of this item and did not take part in the determination thereof.	МН
	 The Team Leader advised of various updates since the report was written including: Consultation response from NatureScot (which had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting) and the applicant's response thereto; Suggested amendments to conditions 1 and 6, as follows: The fish farm hereby approved shall not be operated other than in strict accordance with the provisions of the approved ADD deployment plan. For the avoidance of doubt the approved deployment plan is that entitled "Organic Sea Harvest ADD deployment plan: version 2 dated 15 June 2020 or subsequent revisions as may be agreed in consultation with NatureScot. Reason: To ensure there is no adverse impact on the integrity of the Inner Hebrides and the Minches SAC. No top-nets shall be installed on the pens hereby approved other than where the mesh size of the netting is 150mm or less. Reason: To ensure there is no adverse impact on the integrity of the St Kilda SPA or other SPA with gannet as a qualifying feature. Explaining that the decision issued in respect of the Flodigarry fish farm appeal focused on the interrelationship between the fish farm and the islands close by and indicating that the current application is 2km further north of the Flodigarry application. As regards impacts on users of the coastal path, officers had concluded that these impacts would be very localised and not visible from the road. Some of the impacts on the coastal path are significant but are not considered sufficient to justify refusal. 	
	 In answer to Members' questions, the Team Leader advised: Cage and mooring stability/escaped fish – the equipment will be suitable for purpose for the location in which it is to be installed insofar as can reasonably be foreseen. The management document is to allow feedback throughout the life of the development, to allow improved management where required and to react to any impacts. In the ADD analysis, NatureScot are aware of the potential for cumulative impact on harbour porpoise and other cetaceans. In this case, cumulative impacts are not considered likely because the application site is isolated from other existing fish farm sites and is in a more open location. Impacts will 	

- be monitored, and use of ADD will be recorded and both can be analysed by NatureScot and discussed with the operator as considered necessary.
- Net and mooring the Service has asked the question of the operator and they have confirmed that Gael Force - who will be supplying the moorings - have confirmed that the moorings will be suitable. NE winds are the concern – the operator is fully aware of the prevailing conditions and has chosen equipment accordingly. It is something that MSS will regulate, and MSS appears to be happy.
- Design of net proposed has been around for some time and there may be examples of this netting elsewhere in Scotland – it is an established technology. The company's intention is to meet the organic certification so they are using physical measures rather than chemical interventions to limit sea lice. This net design is about trying to avoid infestation taking hold in the first place.
- Gannets have a huge foraging area, the nearest colony is St Kilda.
 Gannets are afforded a high level of protection through the SPA hence NatureScot are taking such a cautious approach to what is a relatively new issue. Difficult to say how big the issue is or might be.
- It's understood that Kishorn is to be used as the primary point of loading/unloading of harvested fish. Staffin pier isn't proposed to be used at this stage. If it was, the intensification of use of the jetty would require up grading of the roads leading to the jetty.
- Night-time visualisations are from the clifftop path and the number of receptors affected by the night-time lighting is likely to be low.
- Conclusion by Environmental Health on the issue of noise is that the
 proposed development is unlikely to breach the suggested noiselimit condition. If the limit is breached, there will be monitoring to
 establish whether there is a statutory nuisance. The applicant's
 standard procedure would be to undertake a noise assessment once
 the fish farm is operating to ensure compliance with the NR20
 standard required by Environmental Health.
- Underwater lights will be used at certain points in the fish lifecycle and navigation lights which will be used to accord with lighthouse board requirements. The navigation lights will not be visible from places where expect the public to be or from the road.

During debate the following views were expressed:

- NatureScot have given a cautious yes to the proposed development;
- Some of the same concerns raised in terms of the Flodigarry application were also being raised in respect of this application;
- Support for the application as it will offer employment opportunities;
- Concern about visual impact of the development:
- Concern about impact on harbour porpoise and other cetaceans as a consequence of the use of ADDs;
- Given the experience at Portree, which is thriving, fish farms don't have an adverse impact on tourism.

Motion: by Mr C Macleod seconded by Mr R Gale to refuse planning permission for the following reasons:

Whilst considering all relevant material considerations both positive and negative in appraising this application, it is considered that the application would have an adverse localised visual impact on the SLA when seen from

	the Skye Trail coastal path, in particular the transitory experience from the western approach and the southern approach to the area by the coastal path. The extent of these adverse impacts is considered to be contrary to policies 50, 57 and 61 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan. The overall effect of this development could adversely impact on local people and visitors to the area enjoying outdoor access thereby impacting on local businesses and the local economy. Because of the impacts of the proposal referred to above, the development is not considered to be acceptable. Amendment: by Ms Morley-Smith seconded by Mrs A Maclean to grant planning permission in accordance with the recommendation contained in the report of handling. Vote: Motion – 8 (Mr R Bremner, Ms K Currie, Mr C Fraser, Mr R Gale, Mr D Mackay, Mr C Macleod, Mrs M Paterson, Mr A Sinclair) Amendment – 6 (Mrs I Campbell, Mr M Finlayson, Mr J Gordon, Mrs A Maclean, Mr K Rosie, Ms M Morley-Smith) Abstain – 0 Motion carried 8 votes to 6. Agreed: to REFUSE planning permission for the reasons given in Mr C Macleod's motion.	
6.3	Applicant: Mr and Mrs H Morgan (20/01717/FUL) (PLN/005/21) Location: Land 70 m SW of Lochbay House, Stein, Waternish (Ward 10). Nature of Development: Erection of house. Recommendation: Grant.	
	Mr A Rhind re-joined the meeting during this item and therefore did not take part in the determination thereof. The Team Leader provided a response to the letter received by Members the day before the meeting from the Stein Conservation Action Group. He indicated that only one site – the application before the Committee – suggested by the applicant is considered acceptable by the planning authority. It is a proposal specifically designed to be sensitive to its siting and to have minimal impact on the conservation area. In answer to Members' questions, the Team Leader advised: • The height of the building was discussed with the applicant as the Historic Environment Team originally wanted the building lower than proposed by the application. After discussion, including consideration of the environmental impacts of taking additional material off-site, it was agreed that the height of the proposed building was considered acceptable; • That he couldn't confirm if the application site was tied to crofting; • The proposal doesn't attempt to match the settlement pattern, its designed in a way in which to minimise visual impact of the development on the character of the conservation area; • In 2017, the proposal was for 4 dwellings and advice given that one of the sites wasn't acceptable. The other 3 sites have now been submitted as applications; the planning authority's advice has been taken on board to different degrees across the applications. This site is the one that was responded to positively in the pre-app;	MH

 Access into the site is off the private track serving one further property (The Boathouse). There's no reason to expect that this track is heavily used by the public. There is an access to the private track from the public road which the roads authority requires improvements to (covered by condition 2).

During debate the following views were expressed:

- Stein is a unique place, more compact than other settlements in Skye;
- The development isn't sensitive to the settlement pattern of Stein, isn't in keeping with the existing houses in Stein and isn't sympathetic to Loch Bay House;
- Support for the style of house but concern about the location;
- Praise for the efforts made by the applicant to come up with an innovative design for this location.

Motion: by Mr J Gordon seconded by Mrs I Campbell to refuse planning permission for the following reasons:

The modern design of the development will have a detrimental impact on the character of the Stein Village Conservation Area, the application does not demonstrate sensitive siting and high-quality design in keeping with local character and would have an adverse effect on the historic pattern of development which is unique to Stein.

The modern design of the development will not enhance the character or appearance of the C-listed Loch Bay House which is a historical and important building in the context of the Stein Village Conservation Area and the planning authority needs to have a special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of this listed building (section 59 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act). Building in front of Loch Bay House will erode the qualities of Loch Bay house and surrounding houses.

This development is not considered to be acceptable on the basis that it is contrary to policies 28, 29 and 34,36 of the HWLDP.

Amendment: by Mr R Bremner seconded by Ms M Morley-Smith to grant planning permission in accordance with the recommendation contained in the report of handling.

Vote:

Motion – 6 (Mrs I Campbell, Mr M Finlayson, Mr C Fraser, Mr J Gordon, Mr D Mackay, Mr C Macleod)

Amendment – 8 (Mr R Bremner, Ms K Currie, Mr R Gale, Mrs A Maclean, Mrs M Paterson, Mr K Rosie, Mr A Sinclair, Ms M Morley-Smith)
Amendment carried 8 votes to 6.

Agreed: to **GRANT** planning permission subject to the conditions contained in the report.

6.4 **Applicant:** Mowi Scotland Ltd (20/01745/S42) (PLN/006/21) **Location:** Upper Loch Torridon, Shieldaig, Strathcarron (Ward 5). **Nature of Development:** Section 42 to amend condition 1 of planning permission 11/04695/FUL at Torridon Salmon Farm.

Recommendation: Grant.

In answer to Members' questions, the Team Leader advised:

MH

The EMP comes with commitment to respond to findings from monitoring therefore a time limited condition is not considered to be necessary: Confident that the EMP will provide sufficient control in relation to sea lice: • Where companies use cleaner fish, there is an obligation on the company to maintain the health and welfare of the cleaner fish. While the planning authority needs to be confident the use of the cleaner fish will be successful, the health and welfare of the fish themselves is subject to other regulatory controls. During debate the following views were expressed: Satisfied that the conditions will appropriately control the development. **Motion**: to grant planning permission in accordance with the recommendation in the report of handling. Amendment: None. Vote: N/A. **Agreed**: to **GRANT** planning permission subject to the conditions contained in the report. Applicant: Artesian Holdings Ltd (20/02770/FUL) (PLN/007/21) 6.5 Location: Sky House, Upper Ardelve, Ardelve, Kyle, IV40 8EY (Ward 5). Nature of Development: Erection of house. Recommendation: Grant. The Planner advised that it was proposed to re-word condition 3 to capture GS Building Standards' recommendation as regards the drainage plan. In answer to Members' questions, the Team Leader advised: The culvert isn't currently blocked, the problem is a capacity issue and when very wet, water runs along the road. During debate the following views were expressed: Welcome, if applicable, a landscape plan to include tree planting to slow down the water run-off and for this to be secured by a further revisal to condition 3. **Motion**: to grant planning permission subject to a revised condition 3 and the conditions contained in the report of handling. Amendment: None. Vote: N/A. Agreed: to GRANT planning permission subject to a revised condition 3 to capture Building Standards' recommendation and Members' request to secure additional tree planting to reduce surface water run-off, the revised condition 3 to be agreed with the Chair and local Members following the meeting, and the conditions contained in the report.

6.6 Applicant: Network Rail (20/03530/FUL) (PLN/008/21)
Location: Delny Level Crossing, Barbaraville (Ward 7).
Nature of Development: Closure (and stopping up) of level crossing, formation of link road and erection of road bridge.
Recommendation: Grant.

The Principal Planner suggested that condition 3 be altered to read "up to 3m" rather than "3m" to take account of the land under the control of the applicant. Members suggested, as an alternative, between "1-3m". It was agreed that this matter would be discussed and agreed between Planning and Transport Planning following the meeting.

GP

In answer to Members' questions, the Senior Engineer advised:

- The bridge will be maintained by Network Rail, the Council will maintain the road, embankment and the drainage;
- The road cannot be stopped up until the alternative route is available. The road will be stopped up under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984:
- The road isn't subject to a 60mph speed limit, it is de-regulated. This
 is no different to a large number of roads in Highland. The bridge
 design in itself will restrict vehicular speed.

In answer to Members' questions the Principal Planner advised:

• The reason for the weight limit on the level crossing was to protect the amenity of residents of the retirement village. The same weight limit will be imposed on the new bridge to continue to protect amenity. Palisade fencing is proposed on the bridge to prevent anything going onto the railway line. The Senior Engineer added that all technical issues will be dealt with under the roads construction consent (RCC) process. A risk assessment will need to be undertaken and, if this concludes that barriers on the embankment are required, the RCC process will control this.

During debate the following views were expressed:

- Happy to see this long overdue development coming forward;
- Generally, the development is supported by the community and will benefit both the road and rail user;
- Road access should be maintained at all times during construction;
- Loss of the agricultural land not seen as being a big issue;
- Will speed up the rail journey on the North Line and may assist the promotion the re-opening of the halt at Evanton.

Motion: to grant planning permission subject to an amended condition 3 to be agreed between the Planning Service and the Transport Planning Team and the other conditions contained in the report of handling.

Amendment: None.

Vote: N/A.

Agreed: to **GRANT** planning permission subject to an amended condition 3 to be agreed between the Planning Service and the Transport Planning Team and the conditions contained in the report.

6.7	Applicant: Mr P Austin (20/03626/FUL) (PLN/009/21) Location: Land 20 m East of Eversley Cottage, Gaza, Main Street, Portmahomack (Ward 7). Nature of Development: Erection of house. Recommendation: Grant.	
	 No questions were raised. During debate the following views were expressed: Concern about the modern design/materials chosen and how well the materials would fit in with the existing housing; Contrary to the view expressed above, there was support for the modern design and materials chosen and the view was expressed that the proposed development would fit in well with the existing housing. Motion: to grant planning permission subject to the conditions contained in the report of handling. Amendment: None. Vote: N/A. Agreed: to GRANT planning permission and the conditions contained in the report. 	MT
6.8	Applicant: Mr Simon Platts (20/04345/FUL) (PLN/010/21) Location: Council Garage, Meadow Park Road, Dornoch (Ward 4). Nature of Development: Siting of 8 storage units to form self-storage facility. Recommendation: Grant.	
	 In answer to Members' questions, the Team Leader advised: the existing fence is to be retained as the boundary and there will be no new fence to the north. During debate the following views were expressed: Excellent use of vacant ground and will benefit the economy of Dornoch. Impact of the development would be well mitigated. 	David Borland
	Motion: to grant planning permission subject to the conditions contained in the report of handling. Amendment: None. Vote: N/A. Agreed: to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions contained in the report.	
7	Decision of Appeals to the Scottish Government Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (PP 149 - 180) Co-dhùnadh mu Iarrtas do Bhuidheann-stiùiridh Riaghaltas na h-Alba airson Lùth agus Atharrachadh Aimsir	

The Committee noted the decision of the Reporter appointed by the Scottish Ministers.	7.1	Applicant: Organic Sea Harvest Limited (19/03093/FUL) (PPA-270-2224) Location: 1520 m North East of Bridgend Cottage, Flodigarry, Portree, IV51 9HZ (Ward 10) Nature of Development: New marine fish farm for Atlantic salmon consisting of twelve 120 m circumference circular cages in an 80 m mooring grid with associated feed barge.	
			МН