

Agenda Item	5.2
Report No	PLN/024/22

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: North Planning Applications Committee

Date: 26 April 2022

Report Title: 22/01308/PAN: Intelligent Land Investments Group Plc
Land at Mid Balnacraig, Alness, Ross shire IV17 0XL

Report By: Area Planning Manager – North

Purpose/Executive Summary

Description: Battery storage facility with capacity up to 50MW, access and associated infrastructure.

Ward: 06 – Cromarty Firth

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 22 March 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. The proposed public event is due to take place at the following location and date:
- Event 1: Tuesday 10 May 2022, 1500 – 1900hrs at Perrins Centre
 - Event 2: The Planning Authority have requested for a second event to be held virtually using online platform for public engagement at least 14 days following the date of the initial public consultation event. This will give the prospective applicant/s an opportunity to reflect upon and respond to queries or suggestions made at the first event. Details of the second event have not yet been confirmed.
- 1.5 A dedicated webpage will be set up detailing the proposals in due course. Details of this are still to be confirmed.
- 1.6 The consultation will be publicised and advertised in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements with adverts to be placed within Ross shire Journal as well as P&J at least seven working days before each of the two consultation events. 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 2500m radius from the site boundary. The PAN form also indicates that the Ardrross and Alness Community Council have been notified in line with statutory requirements on 18 March 2022. The Planning officers have also requested that the local MSPs and MPs are to be notified.
- 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 creation of a battery storage facility up to 50MW consisting of access track with energy storage equipment, meter building, security cameras, fencing and new planting of trees.
- 2.2 The wider overhead line proposals to connect the proposal to the Alness Substation located to the north east of the proposed development are to be the subject of a separate application to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit, under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989. The determination process for which requires further consultation with The Highland Council.
- 2.3 The applicant has not yet carried out formal Pre- Application Consultation with the Council.

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The PAN boundary comprises 12.5 ha of land at Mid Balnacraig, located to the north of Alness, between the B9176 public road and the River Averon.
- 3.2 The site is bounded by the Alness grid substation and an Ancient woodland to the north and to the east and south by long established woodland of Coulhill. Further to the east of the site, beyond the woodland, is River Averon Special Site of Scientific interest (SSSI) stretches north-south and to the west is the B9176 public road. The site would be accessed by the two existing access tracks crossing the northern section of the site and currently serving the Alness Grid Sub Station. A series of overhead electricity lines running east-west direction cross the northern perimeter of the site. The topography of the site gently rises to the northwest.
- 3.3 Approximately 2km south of the site lies the Cromarty Firth Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). The Site of Special Protection Area (SPA) of Novar is located approximately 1.5 km to the west of the site.
- 3.4 A small section of woodland designated as 'Ancient Woodland' lies in the proposed site boundary. The site lies within Forest Edge Farming Landscape Character area and the Farmed and Forested Slopes Landscape Character Area as defined by NatureScot.
- 3.5 Some historic environment features are identified in proximity of the site on the Council's Historic Environment Record including the scheduled monument of the Millcraig, chambered cairn (SM2406) approximately 1.25km to the east of the proposed site boundary. The site does not fall within or is in close proximity to any other environmental or built heritage designation.

- 3.6 There are existing watercourses and a pond located within the site. The majority of the site is free from flood risk, with the exception of small areas to the east and south of the site which are identified on the indicative flood risk maps produced by SEPA as being at risk of pluvial flooding. Further to the east, Outwith the proposed site boundary, there are also indicative areas of fluvial flood risk in the 1 in 200 year scenario flooding from Avern River.

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 - Development in the Wider Countryside
- 51 - Trees and Development
- 52 - Principle of Development in Woodland
- 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
- 66 - Surface Water Drainage
- 67 - Renewable Energy Developments
- 69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure
- 72 - Pollution
- 74 - Green Networks
- 77 - Public Access

4.2 Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP) (2015)

The site is not covered by any specific development allocation or safeguarding notation within the adopted Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan.

The Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan is under review. The Proposed Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan was published on 25 March 2022 for public consultation and now is a material consideration for determining planning applications.

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)
- 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)
- Scotland's Energy Strategy Position Statement (Mar 2021)
- Scottish Energy Strategy (Dec 2017)
- 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy (Jun 2011)
- Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map (May 2018)
- 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)
- Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy (Nov 2018/2006)

5.0 **POTENTIAL MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- a) Development Plan and other planning policy
- b) Planning history;
- c) Operational noise impacts;
- d) Impact on trees
- e) Design, landscape and visual impact (including cumulative impacts);
- f) Roads and transport;
- g) Natural heritage including protected species, ornithology and designated sites;
- h) Built and cultural heritage;
- i) Soils and peat;
- j) Economic impact and tourism;
- k) Outdoor access and recreation;
- l) Construction impacts;
- m) Pollution;
- n) Decommissioning;
- o) 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.

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

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

PROPOSAL OF APPLICATION NOTICE **MOLADH BRATH IARRTAIS**

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.

<p>Applicant: Intelligent Land Investments Group Plc Address: 33 Bothwell Road, Hamilton ML3 0AS</p> <p>Phone: 01698 891 352 E-mail: ah@ili-energy.com</p>	<p>Agent: LoganPM Ltd Address: Inverlair Farm, Roy Bridge PH31 4AR</p> <p>Phone 07917845154 E-mail simon@loganpm.co.uk</p>
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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

Land at Mid Balnacraig, Alness, Rossshire IV17 0XL, plan attached

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.

Battery Storage Facility up to 50MW (Major Application): access track, energy storage equipment, meter building, security cameras, fencing, new planting of trees

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
Ardross, secretary@ardross.community
Alness, alnesscomcouncil@gmail.com

18 March 2022

Names/details of any other parties
Cromarty Firth ward members (Councillors Finlayson, Smith, Munro, Wilson) by email

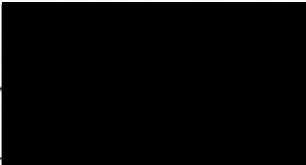
18 March 2022

Please give details of proposed consultation

Proposed public event	Venue	Date and time
Public exhibition or other venue, date and time as agreed with Council	Perrins Centre,	10 th May 2022 3-7pm

Newspaper Advert – name of newspaper	Advert date(where known)
Press and Journal, around 15 April 2022	

Details of any other consultation methods (date, time and with whom)
Project website to be established

Signed ...  Date..... 18 March 2022.....

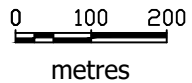
Balnacraig

 Proposed site

Site at Mid Balnacraig, Alness, RossShire IV17 0XL

Note site expected to occupy just a part of the area shown and landscaping planting of new native trees proposed around.

Scale 1:10000 at A3



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LOGAN PM
Energy Project Management

Proposed battery storage site

Drawing number
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Status
Draft

