

Agenda Item	5.1
Report No	PLN/020/24

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: North Planning Applications Committee

Date: 05 March 2024

Report Title: 24/00290/PAN: SSE
Land 2430M SW Of Loch Buidhe, Bonar Bridge

Report By: Area Planning Manager – North

Purpose/Executive Summary

Description: The construction and operation of a 400kV substation, access, construction compound, landscaping and ancillary infrastructure.

Ward: 01 - North, West And Central Sutherland

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 26 January 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 Forms)
 - Location Plan
- 1.4 In October 2022, The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2013 were amended by The Town and Country Planning (Pre-Application Consultation) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021. This changed some of the consultation activities required by the applicant for PANs submitted after 1 October 2022. The previous arrangements associated with the Covid-19 public health advice and previous modifications to the regulations, are now superseded. In line with the current regulations, the developer proposes to undertake two in person public consultation events at the Bonar Bridge Community Hall , scheduled as follows:
- **Event 1:** Thursday 18 March 2024, between 3:30-8:30pm
 - **Event 2:** Monday 10 June 2024, between 3:30-8:30pm
- 1.5 The consultation was publicised and advertised in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements, with adverts scheduled to be placed within the Press and Journal on 6 March 2024 and on or around 29 May 2024. An invitation maildrop will be undertaken on or around 8 March 2024, making local residents aware of the proposed development and the consultation events. The catchment for its wider distribution covered a radius of 10km from the proposed site. The PAN form also indicates that the Dornoch and Argay and District Community Councils were notified, in line with the statutory requirements.
- 1.6 The consultation information will also be made available on the applicant's website. A telephone contact is also available.
- 1.7 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.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 The proposed scheme is a new 400kV substation and its ancillary works. The development will involve the construction of new hardstanding's and service routes, contained by security fencing.
- 2.2 The developer has sought formal pre-application advice from the Planning Authority, through the Pre-Application Advice Service for Major Developments.
- 2.3 The developer will submit an EIA screening request in respect of the proposals.

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The PAN boundary comprises some 584 Ha of mainly commercial forestry, located south of the existing Loch Buidhe substation. Parts of the site are listed as potentially vulnerable to pluvial (surface water) flooding on the SEPA online maps.
- 3.2 The site is located within the Strath Carnaig and Strath Fleet Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 3.3 There are no national or local landscape designations within the application site boundary. The nearest local designation is the Loch Fleet, Loch Brora and Glen Lot Special Landscape Area (SLA), is just over 8km to the east of the site.
- 3.4 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas within the site.

4.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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

4.1 National Planning Framework (NPF) 4 (2023)

National Development 3 – Strategic Renewable Electricity generation and Transmission Infrastructure

1 - Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises

2 - Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

3 - Biodiversity

4 - Natural Places

5 - Soils

7 - Historic Assets and Places

11 - Energy

20 - Blue and Green Infrastructure

22 - Flood Risk and Water Management

23 - Health and Safety

25 - Community Wealth Building

29 - Rural Development

33 - Minerals

4.2 **Highland Wide Local Development Plan (2012)**

28 - Sustainable Design

29 - Design Quality and Place-making

30 - Physical Constraints

31 - Developer Contributions

36 - Development in the Wider Countryside

55 - Peat and Soils

56 - Travel

57 - Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage

58 - Protected Species

59 - Other important Species

60 - Other Importance Habitats

61 - Landscape

63 - Water Environment

64 - Flood Risk

65 - Waste Water Treatment

66 - Surface Water Drainage

69 - Electricity Transmission Infrastructure

72 - Pollution

73 - Air Quality

74 - Green Networks

77 - Public Access

Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan (CaSPlan) (2022)

4.2 The site is located within the wider countryside.

4.3 **Highland Council Supplementary Guidance**

- Construction Environmental Management Process for Large Scale Projects (Aug 2010)
- Developer Contributions (Nov 2018)
- Flood Risk & Drainage Impact Assessment (Jan 2013)
- Highland Historic Environment Strategy (Jan 2013)
- Highland's Statutorily Protected Species (Mar 2013)
- Managing Waste in New Developments (Mar 2013)
- Physical Constraints (Mar 2013)
- Public Art Strategy (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)

4.5 Scottish Government Policy and Other Guidance

- Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (Apr 2019)
- PAN 1/2011 – Planning and Noise (Mar 2011)
- PAN 60 – Planning for Natural Heritage (Jan 2008)
- PAN 61 – Sustainable Drainage Systems (Jul 2001)
- PAN 68 – Design Statements (Aug 2003)
- PAN 75 – Planning for Transport (Aug 2005)
- PAN 77 – Designing for Safer Places (Mar 2006)
- PAN 83 – Master Planning (Sept 2008)

5.0 POTENTIAL MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- a) Development Plan and other planning policy;
- b) Design and layout;
- c) Landscape and visual impact;
- d) Amenity impacts (including construction noise, operational noise and lighting);
- e) Screening landscaping;
- f) Roads, access and parking;
- g) Wider access (impact upon the Core Path network)
- h) Infrastructure Capacity
- i) Natural heritage (including protected species and impact upon trees);
- j) Water environment, flood risk and drainage; and
- k) 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. 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.

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: Michael Kordas
Background Papers: Documents referred to in report and in case file.
Relevant Plans: Plan 1 - Proposal of Application Notice
Plan 2 - LT00470_ENV_002_PAN - Location 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

I have read and understood the privacy notice.

Contact Details

Applicant	Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission PLC	Agent	N/A
Address	Inveralmond House, 200 Dunkeld Road Perth PH1 3AQ	Address	
Phone	07425 426761	Phone	
Email	stephanie.wade@sse.com	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.

On land adjacent to and including the existing Loch Buidhe Substation
Ardgay
IV24 3AT

Description of Development

Please include detail where appropriate – eg the number of residential units; the gross floorspace in m² 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.

Proposed new 400kV substation comprising new buildings, platform, plant and machinery, access, laydown/work compound area(s), drainage, landscaping, and other ancillary works (National Development).

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**

Dornoch Community Council

dornochareacommunitycouncil@hotmail.co.uk

All notifications sent via email on 26th January 2024.

Ardgay and District Community Council

secretary@ardgayanddistrictcommunitycouncil.org.uk

Local Elected Members (Ward 01)**Date Notice Served**

Michael Baird

Michael.Baird.cllr@highland.gov.uk

All notifications sent via email on 26th January 2024.

Marianne Hutchison

Marianne.Hutchison.cllr@highland.gov.uk

Hugh Morrison

Hugh.Morrison.cllr@highland.gov.uk

Members of Scottish Parliament and Members of Parliament**Date Notice Served**

Jamie Stone MP

Maree Todd MSP

Ariane Burgess MSP

Ariane.Burgess.msp@parliament.scot

Donald Cameron MSP

All notifications sent via email on 26th January 2024.

Rhoda Grant MSP	
Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP	
Edward Mountain MSP	
Emma Roddick MSP	
Douglas Ross MSP	
Names / details of other parties	Date Notice Served

Details of Proposed Consultation		
Proposed Public Event 1	Venue	Date and Time
	Bonar Bridge Community Hall, Lairg Road, Bonar Bridge, IV24 3EA	18 th March 2024, Between 1530 hours – 2030 hours.
Proposed Public Event 2 <i>(at least 14 days after Public Event 1)</i>	Venue	Date and Time
	Bonar Bridge Community Hall, Lairg Road, Bonar Bridge, IV24 3EA	10 th June 2024 Between 1530 hours – 2030 hours. The date of the second public event may be subject to change dependent on the scale of feedback received at the first public event. Any changes will be notified and communicated to the Council in advance of undertaking it and the PAN form will be updated accordingly.

Publication of Event		
Newspaper Advert	Name of Newspaper	Advert Date

Newspaper advert for Public Event 1	Press and Journal	6 th March 2024
Newspaper advert for Public Event 2	Press and Journal	On or around 29 th May 2024, but no less than 7 days prior to the date of public event 2.

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

- Mail drop to residents within 10km radius, target issue circa 10 days prior to 1st event.
- Full details of the Public Event and details of how to submit comments are available on the project website:
<https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/project-map/loch-buidhe-area-400kv-substation/>
- Information will be provided on SSEN Transmission Social Media outlets including SSEN Transmission Facebook, X (Twitter) and LinkedIn.
- Information can be obtained via telephone or email from: Community Liaison Manager, Martin Godwin, Tel: 07467 399592 Email: SLBB@sse.com

Signed	Stephanie Wade	Date	26th January 2024
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