

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

NORTH PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

6 August 2025, 9.30AM

MINUTE / 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 note.

Committee Members Present:

Ms S Atkin
Mr M Baird
Mr R Bremner (Remote)
Ms B Campbell
Ms C Collier (remote)
Ms L Dundas
Mr J Edmondson
Mr R Gale
Ms C Gillies
Ms L Kraft
Mrs A MacLean
Ms J McEwan
Mr D Millar
Mr M Reiss
Mr K Rosie (remote)

Non-Committee Members Present:

Mr S Coghill
Mr R Cross
Mr R Gunn
Ms M Hutchison

Substitutes:

Apologies:

Officers participating:

Mr D Jones, Area Planning Manager – North (DJ)
Mr P Wheelan, Planning Team Leader (PW)
Mr G Baxter, Principal Planner (GB)
Ms C Farmer-McEwan, Principal Planner (CF)
Mr M Fitzpatrick, Principal Planner (MF)
Mr A Brennan, Planner (AB)

Ms S Hadfield, Planner (SH)
 Ms L MacDonald, Planner (LM)
 Mr C Simms, Planner (CS)
 Ms J Bridge, Senior Engineer (JB)
 Mr I Meredith, Solicitor and Clerk
 Ms R Ross, Committee Officer

ITEM NO	DECISION	ACTION
1	Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan	n/a
2	Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt Ms J McEwan – items 6.3 and 6.4 Mr M Reiss – items 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3	n/a
3	Confirmation of Minutes Dearbhadh a’ Gheàrr-chunntais There had been submitted for confirmation as a correct record the action note and minute of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 June 2025 which was APPROVED .	n/a
4	Major Development Update Iarrtasan Mòra There had been circulated Report No PLN/045/25 by the Area Planning Manager - providing an update on progress of all cases within the “Major” development category currently with the Infrastructure and Environment Service for determination. During discussion, updates were sought and provided on the planning application from Ross Estates Company for 100 houses at Barbaraville, the application from Springfield Properties plc for a business park at Tore, the public local enquiry for Ben Aketil Windfarm and the judicial review for Strath Oykel Windfarm. The Committee NOTED the current position with the applications.	PW

5	<p>Major Developments – Pre-application consultations Leasachaidhean Mòra – Co-chomhairle Ro-iarrtais</p> <p>There had been circulated Report No PLN/046/25 by the Area Planning Manager – North.</p> <p>During discussion, it was asked that consideration be given to the height of the turbines, the lighting and the significance of the historic landscape.</p> <p>The Committee is invited NOTED the current pre-application notices.</p>	PW
6	<p>Planning Applications to be Determined Iarrtasan Dealbhaidh rin Dearbhadh</p>	
6.1	<p>Applicant: Caledonia North Offshore Ltd. (24/05124//S36) (PLN/047/25) Location: Land 50 KM SE of Wick Harbour, Harbour Road, Wick (Ward 03). Nature of Development: Caledonia North Offshore Wind Farm – construction and operation of an offshore wind farm comprising up to 77 turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 355m, subsea interconnector and export cabling and associated infrastructure. Recommendation: Raise No Objection</p> <p>Declaration of Interest – Mr M Reiss, as he had previously publicly expressed his views on continued energy production, left the meeting for this item.</p> <p>Member’s attention was drawn to the following correction to the report: -</p> <p>Paragraph 1.2 should have read –The current application for the Caledonia North development for 77 x 355m turbines (24/05124/S36, MS-00011014 / MS-00011015) forms one of two standalone applications, the other being for Caledonia South for 78 x 355m and 325m turbines (24/05129/S36, MS-00011012/MS-00011013), which collectively make up the Caledonia Offshore Wind.</p> <p>Paragraph 9.1 should have read - National and THC planning policy are supportive of renewable energy development and in particular for offshore wind. The anticipated 2GW maximum generating capacity of the Caledonia Offshore Wind Farm would significantly contribute to Scottish and UK Government policy targets, British energy security, and the international commitments for renewable energy and electricity generation to facilitate net zero by 2045.</p> <p>Motion – Mr R Bremner seconded by Mr D Millar to:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. RAISE NO OBJECTION subject to the following; ii. GRANT delegated authority to the Area Planning Manager – North to respond to the Marine Directorate regarding any future Further / Supplementary Environmental Impact Assessment, where that does not: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) materially increase the scale of the proposed development; ii) and result in any additional significant adverse environmental effects; 	MF

- iii) and does not undermine or remove mitigation which was secured within the Council previous consultation response on the application;
- iii. **GRANT** delegated authority to the Area Planning Manager- North to agree the finished condition wording, with any substantive amendments to be subject to prior consultation with the Chair of the North Planning Applications Committee

Amendment – Mrs J McEwan seconded by Mrs M Paterson to **RAISE AN OBJECTION** for the following reasons:-

With regard to the impact on visual amenity, the proposal is considered to result in significant adverse visual effects on a number of sensitive visual receptors. The assessment identifies that significant visual impacts will occur along the coastal fringe of Caithness, including nearby elevated locations such as the Yarrows Archaeological Trail, between the Hill of Harley (approximately 5km north of Keiss) and the Whaligoe Steps.

Specifically, Viewpoints 4 to 8 – representing residents Keiss, Wick (path south of South View), Sarclet, Yarrows Archaeological Trail, and Whaligoe Steps – are all identified as experiencing significant visual effects. These locations are up to approximately 34km from the nearest turbine with outward views over the North Sea. From these publicly accessible and valued viewpoints, the proposed development would:

- Result in a substantial horizontal extension of offshore turbine development,
- Introduce upscaled turbine heights that create visual dissonance when viewed behind or in combination with existing, smaller turbines,
- Disrupt the existing seascape character, particularly when assessed cumulatively with other offshore developments.

In line with Policy 67 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan, the Council will only support proposals where it is satisfied that they are located, sited, and designed such that they will not be significantly detrimental overall, either individually or cumulatively, taking account of any mitigation proposed. In this instance, the proposal is not considered to meet this policy test. The extent and prominence of the development, when viewed from key coastal and elevated receptors, is judged to result in unacceptable individual and cumulative visual impacts. Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to Policy 67 of the HwLDP.

In this instance, the proposal is not considered to meet this policy test. The extent and prominence of the development, when viewed from key coastal areas and by receptors at viewpoints 4 to 8, is judged to result in unacceptable individual and cumulative visual impacts. Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to Policy 67 of the HwLDP.

There were **10** votes for the motion and **4** votes for the amendment, with no abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:

For the Motion:-

Ms S Atkin, Mr M Baird, Mr R Bremner, Ms I Campbell, Ms T Collier, Ms L Dundas, Ms C Gillies, Ms L Kraft, Ms A MacLean, Mr D Millar

	<p>For the Amendment: - Mr J Edmondson, Mr R Gale, Ms J McEwan, Mrs M Paterson</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. RAISE NO OBJECTION officers informing the Marine Directorate of the conditions detailed in the report if the application is granted; ii. GRANT delegated authority to the Area Planning Manager – North to respond to the Marine Directorate regarding any future Further / Supplementary Environmental Impact Assessment, where that does not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Materially increase the scale of the proposed development; and b. result in any additional significant adverse environmental effects; and c. does not undermine or remove mitigation which was secured within the Council previous consultation response on the application; iii. GRANT delegated authority to the Area Planning Manager- North to agree the finished condition wording, with any substantive amendments to be subject to prior consultation with the Chair of the North Planning Applications Committee 	
6.2	<p>Applicant: Whirlwind Energy Storage Limited (24/03500/FUL) (PLN/048/25) Location: Land 530M South of Geiselittle Farm, Thurso (Ward 02). Nature of Development: Construction and operation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), accommodating 64 battery storage cabinets, landscaping and ancillary infrastructure. Recommendation: GRANT</p> <p>Declaration of Interest – Mr M Reiss, as he had previously publicly expressed his views on continued energy production, left the meeting for this item.</p> <p>Motion – Mr K Rosie seconded by Mr R Bremner to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions laid out in the report.</p> <p>Amendment – Mr R Gale seconded by Mrs J McEwan to REFUSE planning permission for the following reasons:-</p> <p>Given that the application site is in close proximity to the Thurso River which is a Special Site of Scientific Interest and also a Special Area of Conservation it is considered that the site is not appropriate in respect of mitigation of the risk of contamination and the likely significant detrimental effect on the Atlantic Salmon. Therefore, it is also considered that this proposal is not compliant with HwLDP Policy 28 Sustainable Design as it is not considered that this is the Right development in the right place.</p> <p>There were 8 votes for the motion and 7 votes for the amendment, with no abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:</p> <p>For the Motion:- Ms S Atkin, Mr R Bremner, Ms I Campbell, Ms T Collier, Ms L Kraft, Ms A</p>	GB

	<p>MacLean, Mr D Millar, Mr K Rosie</p> <p>For the Amendment:- Mr M Baird, Ms L Dundas, Mr J Edmondson, Mr R Gale, Ms C Gillies, Mrs J McEwan, Mrs M Paterson</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions laid out in the report.</p>	
6.3	<p>Applicant: Forss Energy Storage Limited (24/04585/FUL) (PLN/049/25) Location: Land 190M West Of Lythmore House South Wing, 21 Forss Business And Technology Park, Forss, Thurso (Ward 02). Nature of Development: Construction and operation of a Battery Energy Storage System with a capacity of 49.9MW consisting of battery storage modules and associated infrastructure including fencing, control buildings, substations and CCTV Recommendation: GRANT</p> <p>Declaration of Interest – Mr M Reiss, as he had previously publicly expressed his views on continued energy production, left the meeting for this item. Mrs J McEwan, as the reporting officer is a close family member.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions detailed in the report.</p>	CF
6.4	<p>Applicant: Albryn Housing Society (24/02782/FUL) (PLN/050/25) Location: Land 70M SE of 26 Seaforth Road, Tain (Ward 07). Nature of Development: Erection of 16no. houses Recommendation: GRANT</p> <p>Declaration of Interest – Ms J McEwan, as the presenting officer was a close family member.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions detailed in the report and the additional condition that prior to the commencement of development, an updated and revised dimensioned plan of the access junction onto Seaforth Road shall be submitted and approved by the Planning Authority. These Plans shall show Seaforth Road widened at the location of the junction to allow a 26-tonne refuse vehicle to enter and exist the new development whilst cars are parked opposite to the junction. The amended plan shall fully detail any traffic regulation and traffic calming proposals required to facilitate safe use of the junction and the parking opposite.</p> <p>Reason: In order to ensure the safety and free flow of traffic on Seaforth Road. In the interests of pedestrian safety.</p>	CF
6.5	<p>Applicant: Albryn Housing Society (24/04124/FUL) (PLN/051/25) Location: Land 60m West of 44 David Ross Street, Alness. (Ward 06). Nature of Development: Erection of 36no. houses Recommendation: APPROVE</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions detailed in the report with the additional condition that no development shall commence until plans to show the stand of trees enclosed</p>	SH

	<p>by a stockproof post and wire fence outwith tree fall distance, with gated access to include warning signs to caution on the safety issues, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Thereafter the fencing and gates shall be erected in full before the first occupation of any of the residential units and shall thereafter be maintained and retained, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority;</p> <p>Reason: In the interests of safety</p>	
6.6	<p>Applicant: Barry Property Ltd (24/02439/FUL) (PLN/052/25) Location: Former Bridgend Building Supplies Yard, Bridgend, Thurso (Ward 02). Nature of Development: Change of use of land to form holiday park. Recommendation: REFUSE</p> <p>Motion – Mr K Rosie seconded by Mr M Reiss to GRANT planning permission for the following reasons:-</p> <p>While it is acknowledged that the development is contrary to NPF4 Policies 22, 10, 13, and 18(b), and HwLDP Policies 64 and 56, the broader benefits of the proposal are considered to outweigh the objections raised along with the conditions to offset the detrimental impacts raised by the statutory consultees, SEPA and Transport Scotland. The site is a long-derelict brownfield location within the Thurso Settlement Development Area and allocated for mixed use in the CaSPlan. The redevelopment of this site is considered to improve the existing site and the wider environment to the betterment of the local area. Its redevelopment aligns with NPF4 Policy 9 and HwLDP Policy 42 and supports the local economy and tourism sector in line with NPF4 Policy 30 and HwLDP Policy 43. In relation to biodiversity and landscaping issues, these can be resolved by conditions requiring a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan, Tree Protection Plan, and Landscape Strategy, meeting the requirements of NPF4 Policy 3 and HwLDP Policy 51.</p> <p>Amendment – Mr D Millar seconded by Mr R Bremner to REFUSE planning permission for the reasons detailed in the report.</p> <p>There were 10 votes for the motion and 5 votes for the amendment, with no abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:</p> <p>For the Motion:- Ms S Atkin, Mr M Baird, Ms I Campbell, Ms L Dundas, Mr R Gale, Ms L Kraft, Ms J McEwan, Mrs M Paterson, Mr M Reiss, Mr K Rosie</p> <p>For the Amendment:- Mr R Bremner, Ms T Collier, Mr J Edmondson, Ms C Gillies, Mr D Millar</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to GRANT planning permission for the reasons detailed above subject to conditions, the drafting of the final wording of the conditions being delegated to officers.</p>	CS
6.7	<p>Applicant: Mr & Mrs William & Marlene Lipka (25/01063/FUL) (PLN/053/25) Location: 15 Riverside Place, Thurso, KW14 8BZ (Ward 02). Nature of Development: Extension and change of use from house to paint & decoration supply business (in retrospect). Recommendation: REFUSE</p>	CS

Motion – Mr D Millar seconded by Mr R Bremner to **REFUSE** planning permission for the reasons detailed in the report.

Amendment – Mr M Reiss seconded by Mr R Gale to **GRANT** planning permission for the following reasons:-

The constructed extension's exterior has been finished entirely in Cedral (fibre cement) cladding, a non-traditional material is appropriate to the historic character of the Category 'C' listed building. Both the choice and extent of this material does preserve the building's special architectural or historic interest and depart from the provisions of its Listed Building Consent. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 7, HwLDP Policies 28, 29 and 57, and to the statutory duty under Section 14 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to have "special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its features of special architectural or historic interest".

The external appearance of the constructed extension has not resulted in an adverse impact on a Category 'C' listed building, by incorporating a series of large uPVC-framed windows. The form of these windows is acceptable, as they take the existing listed building's windows into account. Their design preserves the building's special architectural or historic interest and complies with the approved Listed Building Consent is Accordingly. It is also considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 7, HwLDP Policies 28, 29 and 57, and to the statutory duty under Section 14 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to have "special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its features of special architectural or historic interest".

The external appearance of the constructed extension will not result in an adverse impact on a Category 'C' listed building, by unlawfully incorporating an additional storey in a departure from granted Listed Building Consent. The height of the constructed extension does not breach the eaves of the existing listed building, conveying an unbalanced and awkward appearance. Its scale and massing are considered to preserve the listed building's special architectural or historic interest. It is considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 7, HwLDP Policies 28, 29 and 57 and section 14 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.

There were **10** votes for the motion and **4** votes for the amendment, with **1** abstention, the votes having been cast as follows:

For the Motion – Ms S Atkin, Mr R Bremner, Ms I Campbell, Ms T Collier, Ms L Dundas, Mr J Edmondson, Mr C Gillies, Mr L Kraft, Mr D Millar, Mr K Rosie

For the Amendment – Mr M Baird, Mr R Gale, Mrs M Paterson, Mr M Reiss

Abstentions – Mrs J McEwan

The Committee **AGREED** to **REFUSE** planning permission for the reasons detailed in the report.

6.8	<p>Applicant: Mr & Mrs William & Marlene Lipka (25/01210/LBC) (PLN/054/25) Location: 15 Riverside Place, Thurso, KW14 8BZ (Ward 02). Nature of Development: Extension and change of use from house to paint & decoration supply business (in retrospect). Recommendation: REFUSE</p> <p>Motion – Mr D Millar seconded by Mr R Bremner to REFUSE planning permission for the reasons detailed in the report.</p> <p>Amendment – Mr M Reiss seconded by Mr R Gale to GRANT planning permission for the following reasons:-</p> <p>The constructed extension's exterior has been finished entirely in Cedral (fibre cement) cladding, a non-traditional material is appropriate to the historic character of the Category 'C' listed building. Both the choice and extent of this material does preserve the building's special architectural or historic interest and depart from the provisions of its Listed Building Consent. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 7, HwLDP Policies 28, 29 and 57, and to the statutory duty under Section 14 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to have "special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its features of special architectural or historic interest".</p> <p>The external appearance of the constructed extension has not resulted in an adverse impact on a Category 'C' listed building, by incorporating a series of large uPVC-framed windows. The form of these windows is acceptable, as they take the existing listed building's windows into account. Their design preserves the building's special architectural or historic interest and complies with the approved Listed Building Consent is Accordingly. It is also considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 7, HwLDP Policies 28, 29 and 57, and to the statutory duty under Section 14 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to have "special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its features of special architectural or historic interest".</p> <p>The external appearance of the constructed extension will not result in an adverse impact on a Category 'C' listed building, by unlawfully incorporating an additional storey in a departure from granted Listed Building Consent. The height of the constructed extension does not breach the eaves of the existing listed building, conveying an unbalanced and awkward appearance. Its scale and massing are considered to preserve the listed building's special architectural or historic interest. It is considered to comply with NPF4 Policy 7, HwLDP Policies 28, 29 and 57 and section 14 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.</p> <p>There were 10 votes for the motion and 4 votes for the amendment, with 1 abstention, the votes having been cast as follows:</p> <p>For the Motion – Ms S Atkin, Mr R Bremner, Ms I Campbell, Ms T Collier, Ms L Dundas, Mr J Edmondson, Mr C Gillies, Mr L Kraft, Mr D Millar, Mr K Rosie</p> <p>For the Amendment – Mr M Baird, Mr R Gale, Mrs M Paterson, Mr M Reiss</p>	CS
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	<p>Abstentions – Mrs J McEwan</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to REFUSE planning permission for the reasons detailed in the report.</p>	
6.9	<p>Applicant: Mrs Catherine Prentice (24/03163/PIP) (PLN/055/25) Location: Land 65M NE Of 4 Dunan, Broadford, Isle Of Skye (Ward 10). Nature of Development: Erection of house. Recommendation: REFUSE</p> <p>Motion – Mr D Millar seconded by Ms I Campbell to GRANT planning permission for the following reasons:-</p> <p>The proposed development is considered to comply with Policy 17(c) and Policy 29 of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), and Policies 28, 29, and 36 of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (HwLDP). While the proposal results in a form of tandem development, the existing house is considered beyond repair and uninhabitable. The proposed dwelling is sufficiently set back from both the public road and the existing building, allowing it to integrate within the existing, loosely clustered settlement pattern without resulting in an adverse impact on local amenity or the visual landscape character of the area. In addition, matters relating to scale, design, landscaping, and access can be adequately controlled by planning conditions, ensuring a high standard of development</p> <p>Amendment – Cllr Rosie seconded by Cllr Reiss to REFUSE planning permission for the reasons detailed in the report.</p> <p>There were 3 votes for the motion and 9 votes for the amendment, with no abstentions, the votes having been cast as follows:</p> <p>For the motion: - Ms I Campbell, Ms L Dundas, Mr D Millar</p> <p>For the amendment – Ms S Atkin, Mr M Baird, Mr J Edmondson, Mr R Gale, Ms C Gillies, Ms L Kraft, Mrs J McEwan, Mrs M Paterson, Mr M Reiss</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to REFUSE planning permission for the reasons detailed in the report.</p>	LM
6.10	<p>Applicant: Mrs Iwona Gawin (25/00812/FUL) (PLN/056/25) Location: Land 130M NW Of Heatherlea, Brough (Ward 02). Nature of Development: Siting of 3no. glamping pods for short-term letting. Recommendation: GRANT</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions detailed in the report.</p>	AB
7	<p>Decision under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 by Scottish Ministers</p> <p>Applicant: Offshore Wind Power Limited (23/04930/S36) Location: 28 kilometres West of Hoy, Orkney and 23 km North of the Caithness Coast Nature of Development: Construction and Operation of Offshore Generating Station and Offshore Transmission Infrastructure (West Orkney Windfarm)</p>	

	The Committee NOTED the decision by Scottish Ministers to grant consent for the reasons given in the Decision Notice	
	The meeting ended at 5.20 pm.	