

PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PRE-APPLICATION FORUM

ABERDEEN, 3 November 2022. Minute of Meeting of the PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PRE-APPLICATION FORUM. Present:- Councillor Henrickson, Convener; and Councillors Blake, Boulton, Cooke, Copland, MacKenzie, MacGregor (as substitute for Councillor Alphonse), van Sweeden (as substitute for Councillor McRae) and Thomson.

INTRODUCTION AND PROCEDURE NOTE

1. The Forum had before it the procedure note and guidance for members on the operation of Forum meetings.

The Forum resolved:-

to note the procedure note and guidance for members.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 1 SEPTEMBER 2022

2. The Forum had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 1 September 2022, for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record, subject to amending Councillor MacGregors name which was spelt incorrectly.

PROPOSAL OF APPLICATION NOTICE - LAND ADJACENT TO EXISTING ELECTRICITY SUBSTATION, WILLOWDALE PLACE, ABERDEEN - 220562

3. The Forum had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning, on a submission of a Proposal of Application by Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Plc for an extension to an existing 132kV electricity substation including grid supply point to be accommodated in a new building, associated plant and infrastructure, ancillary facilities (including handstanding area) and road alterations and improvement works at land adjacent to existing electricity substation, Willowdale Place Aberdeen, 220562.

The report advised that the application site comprised a 2-storey industrial warehouse building at 23-42 Willowdale Place with a footprint of approximately 1200sqm along with the Willowdale Place Road carriageway. The industrial building lies on the northern side of Willowdale Place at its eastern end, and it is bound to the north by the Willowdale Place electricity substation, operated by SSE. Further industrial and commercial buildings line both sides of Willowdale Place to the north and south, with a residential flatted development on King Street adjoining the site to the east.

The report explained that the applicant proposed to extend and upgrade the existing 132kV electricity substation on Willowdale Place. The substation extension would

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involve the formation of a new grid supply point, to be accommodated in a new building, replacing the existing warehouse, with associated plant and infrastructure, ancillary facilities (including an area of hardstanding), and road alterations and improvement works. As the proposed development would comprise the upgrade of an existing onshore substation directly linked to electricity transmission cabling of or in excess of 132 kilovolts, at present the proposal constitutes a National development, in accordance with Annex A (National developments) of National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3). It should be noted that in the event National Planning Framework 4 is adopted in its current form, the development proposal was likely to constitute a Local development, due to an amendment to relevant criteria. However it is not possible to confirm this presently.

The Forum heard from Alex Ferguson, Planner, who addressed the Forum and provided details regarding the planning aspects of the application.

Ms Ferguson provided details on the relevant planning policies noting that the following policies were relevant to the proposed application:-

- H2 (Mixed Use Areas)
- D1 (Quality Placemaking by Design)
- NE6 (Flooding, Drainage and Water Quality)
- R2 (Degraded and Contaminated Land)
- R7 (Low and Zero Carbon Buildings, and Water Efficiency)
- T5 (Noise)

Supplementary Guidance

- Noise
- Resources for New Development

Mr Ferguson also highlighted the Proposed Local Development Plan 2020 and noted the following policies as relevant:-

- H2 (Mixed Use Areas)
- D1 (Quality Placemaking)
- NE4 (Our Water Environment)
- R2 (Degraded and Contaminated Land)
- R6 (Low and Zero Carbon Buildings, and Water Efficiency)
- WB3 (Noise)

It was noted that as part of the application, the applicant had been advised that the following information would need to accompany the formal submission:-

- Design & Access Statement
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Drainage Impact Assessment

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- Pre-Application Consultation Report

The Forum then heard from the agent for the application, Mr Chris Gardener, SSE.

Mr Gardner began the presentation and provided background information on the site, noting that the substation transformer site was originally constructed in 1963 and had a significant role to play in supplying the distribution network for eastern Aberdeen. He advised that the proposed works formed part of a wider programme of upgrade and protection works at a number of SSEN sites within the wider area including Woodhill, Persley, Clayhills, Redmoss and Craigiebuckler substations.

Mr Gardner explained that SSEN had identified the need to replace Grid Transformers 1 and 2 and the existing 132kV circuit breakers. The external equipment had reached the end of its design life with the coastal environment having a considerable toll on its condition. The current electrical circuit configuration was also outdated and needed to be replaced. He advised that the replacement works would extend the life of the substation and improve network reliability as part of the Aberdeen ring which served large amounts of customer demands in the area.

Mr Gardner indicated that the key elements of the proposal comprised:-

- Demolition of the existing foundry buildings at 23-41 Willowdale Place;
- The construction of a new 15m high building to accommodate a new GSP substation and two new super grid transformers;
- Upgrades to the control systems and standby systems;
- Removal of the old outdoor equipment; and
- Upgrades to the site security and perimeter fencing;

Mr Gardner explained that the proposed works would reduce the total network risk, improve operational flexibility and resilience in line with SSEN's wider goal of 100% network reliability and use of innovative solutions.

In terms of public consultation, Mr Gardener explained that virtual consultation and face to face events were advertised using various media platforms and a flyer was delivered throughout the local area. Councillors and Community Councils were also emailed in advance. The face to face event was held at Aberdeen Arts Centre on 28 June 2022 and the online consultation was on 30 June from 1-3pm and 5-7pm. A feedback form was created to provide respondents with the option to provide feedback regarding their areas of interest.

In terms of noise, Mr Gardner highlighted that noise surveys had been undertaken and a Noise Assessment would be submitted with the application and noted that a voluntary Environmental Appraisal would also be undertaken to identify any potential environmental effects from the proposed development.

Members then asked a number of questions of both the applicant and the case officer and the following information was noted:-

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- There would be no disturbance to the supply of electricity and would be a phased construction and switchover;
- The proposal development would mean that the outbuildings would be discontinued and the substation would be in an internal building which would be safer and would improve any safety concerns or issues;
- A design review will be carried out with the aim to reduce the height of the buildings;
- In terms of the properties in the surrounding areas, this new development would not cause any more noise than the current facilities and therefore no negative impact to local residents.

The report recommended:-

that the Forum –

- (a) note the key issues identified;
- (b) if necessary, seek clarification on any particular matters; and
- (c) identify relevant issues which they would like the applicant to consider and address in any future application.

The Forum resolved:-

- (i) to thank Mr Gardner for his informative presentation; and
 - (ii) to request that the applicant consider the points raised above.
- **COUNCILLOR DELL HENRICKSON, Convener**