RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions

The site is the existing boiler house for the NHS Grampian Foresterhill complex, situated on the southern edge of the site. Immediately to the south is Westburn Road with Mile End School opposite, to the west is the NHS Grampian Supplies Department building, to the east is Foresterhill Road providing access to the wider Foresterhill site and to the north is an access road beyond which is the NHS Blood Donor Centre.

The site comprises a boiler house building with four dual fuel boilers with a total rating of 30MW and a chimneystack (54m tall & 3.5m diameter). There are four oil tanks storage tanks also on the site.

There is an area of mature trees along the boundary with Westburn Road which largely screens the site from this perspective.

PROPOSAL

It is proposed to demolish the existing boiler house and construct a new energy centre to the north. The building would be 22m wide, 34m long and 9m high in a rectangular shape. It would have a modern appearance being finished with an aluminium roof (4º pitch), timber cladding,
aluminium louvre panels, translucent walls panels, and green aluminium windows and louvre doors.

The new chimneystack would be 35m in height from ground level and be 3m in diameter. It would be coloured silver with a black top. Two of the existing oil tanks would be removed whilst the other two would be cleaned for the storage of light oil.

The building would house one gas turbine combined heat and power (CHP) plant rated 3.9MWe (electricity) and 7MWth (heat), one biomass boiler rated 4.5MWth and two dual fuel boilers rated 6.5MWth each. The biomass boiler would run on wood-chips and no more than one delivery is anticipated per day. The facility would provide 90% of the electricity for the Foresterhill site.

CONSULTATIONS

ROADS SECTION – Satisfied that the proposed development would not have a significant effect upon parking.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – On receipt of further information from the applicants consultants, they have no objections to the development on air quality grounds. Advise that conditions should be attached regarding the operation and maintenance of the boiler, noise mitigation measures and hours of construction work.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL – No comments received.

SEPA – Have no objection to the proposed drainage scheme for the site and supports the principle of using renewables in the production of heat and electricity, subject to meeting all environmental regulations.

REPRESENTATIONS

No representations received.

PLANNING POLICY

_Aberdeen Local Plan (2008)_

_Policy 1 (Design)_ – New development must be designed with due consideration for its context and make a positive contribution to its setting.

_Policy 24 (Planning & Flooding)_ – Surface water drainage and disposal associated with development must be the best available in terms of SUDS.

_Policy 25 (Foul Drainage)_ – Connection to public sewer will be a pre-requisite of all significant development.
Policy 27 (Air Quality) – Air quality assessments shall be required for proposed developments which could have significant effects on local air quality. There shall be a presumption against developments, which would be likely to result in a breach of National Air Quality Standards (NAWS). A significant deterioration of local air quality, but at levels not threatening a breach of NAQS, will count as a material consideration against a proposed development.

Policy 33 (Protecting Trees and Woodlands) – There is a presumption against all activities and development that will result in the loss or damage to established trees or woodlands that have natural heritage value or contribute to the character, biodiversity or amenity of a particular locality.

Policy 45 (Existing Community Sites and Facilities) – Existing healthcare sites shall be used primarily for healthcare and/or related medical and educational purposes.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Foresterhill Development Framework (2008) – Provides a guide for the future development of the NHS Grampian Foresterhill site. The site area is identified as a site for a new heat and power centre.

EVALUATION

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires decisions on planning applications to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site is zoned as ‘Existing Community Sites and Facilities’ where in this instance healthcare facilities should be the primary use. The proposed use is ancillary to the hospital site and is required to heat and power the site. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is an acceptable use at this location and complies with Policy 45.

The Foresterhill Development Framework also indicates that the development site is earmarked for an energy centre such as that proposed. It calls for high quality design, which complements the existing modern buildings at Foresterhill.

Air Quality

The applicants have submitted an Air Quality Assessment (AQA), which has been reviewed by the Council’s Environmental Health officers and SEPA. The report concludes that a 35m chimney stack is required to overcome the building wake effects from large buildings within the Foresterhill site, which has been incorporated into the proposal. The principal source of emissions will be gases exhausted from the chimney stack after treatment in the flue gas treatment system. The potential effects of the associated pollutants (Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), Particulates (PM₁₀), Particulates (PM₂.₅) and Carbon Monoxide (CO)) upon human receptors and ecological receptors have been modelled in the AQA.

The conclusion of the modelling shows that overall, the effects of the energy centre are considered to be of negligible / neutral significance. Environmental Health officers and SEPA
indicate that they have no objections to the development on air quality grounds. Based on these assessments, it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy 27 (Air Quality). Several conditions have been attached to ensure that air quality is maintained.

**Design**

The proposed energy centre has a contemporary design, in common with other new buildings within the Foresterhill site. Although the building is industrial in nature, the use of materials such as timber cladding and translucent panels should allow the building fit into its surroundings more comfortably than perhaps the existing boiler house does. The location at the bottom of the Foresterhill site and the tree belt along Westburn Road also helps the development to be less obtrusive. The overall design of the development is acceptable and complies with policy 1.

**Flooding Drainage**

A suitable sustainable urban drainage scheme (SUDS) has been submitted and SEPA have indicated that they are satisfied with the proposal. The area is not in a known flood area. Therefore the proposal complies with policies 24 and 25. A condition has been attached to ensure that the scheme is implemented.

**Noise**

A noise assessment has been carried out to ascertain whether there is likely to be any adverse impact upon residential properties in the area from the operation of the energy centre. Mitigation measures have been recommended and a condition attached to ensure that these are carried out.

**Trees and Landscaping**

The plans show that one tree would be removed to allow the construction of the energy centre building. A condition has been attached to ensure that details of tree protection measures are implemented during the construction period. A landscaping scheme will also be submitted prior to the energy centre becoming operational.

**Summary**

In conclusion, it is considered that the principle of the energy centre at this location is acceptable in terms of both local plan policy and the Foresterhill Development Framework. SEPA and Environmental Health officers are satisfied with the proposal in terms of the effect upon air quality. The design of the building and overall layout is acceptable as are proposals for tree protection, noise mitigation and drainage of the site. There being no other material considerations apparent, it is recommended that the application be approved subject to the conditions outlined below.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approve subject to conditions
with the following condition(s):

(1) that no development pursuant to this planning permission shall take place unless a detailed site specific construction method statement for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority. The method statement must address the temporary measures proposed to deal with surface water run-off during construction and prior to the operation of the final SUDS. Such statement shall be implemented in full for the duration of works on the site - in order to prevent potential water pollution.

(2) that no development shall take place unless a Site Waste Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the planning authority as part of the Construction Method Statement. This plan shall detail the measures for minimising waste production and managing waste generation during the construction stage of development. The plan shall thereafter be implemented as agreed – to ensure that building materials are managed efficiently, waste disposed of legally and that material recycling, reuse and recovery is maximised in accordance with SPP10.

(3) that the development hereby granted planning permission shall not be occupied unless all drainage works detailed in the document 'NHSG Energy Centre Aberdeen Drainage Proposals' produced by Mott McDonald Ltd. and dated July 2009 or such other plan as may subsequently be approved in writing by the planning authority for the purpose have been installed in complete accordance with the said plan - in order to safeguard water qualities in adjacent watercourses and to ensure that the proposed development can be adequately drained.

(4) that no development shall take place unless a plan showing those trees to be removed and those to be retained and a scheme for the protection of all trees to be retained on the site during construction works has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Planning Authority and any such scheme as may have been approved has been implemented - in order to ensure adequate protection for the trees on site during the construction of the development.

(5) that the use hereby authorised shall not take place unless there has been submitted to and approved in writing for the purpose by the planning authority a scheme of landscaping for the site, which scheme shall include indications of all existing trees and landscaped areas on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development, and the proposed areas of tree / shrub planting including details of numbers, densities, locations, species, sizes and stage of maturity at planting - in the interests of the amenity of the area.

(6) that all planting, seeding and turving comprised in the approved scheme of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting season following the completion of the development and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a size and species similar to those originally required to be planted, or in accordance with such other scheme as may be submitted to and approved in writing for the purpose by the planning authority - in the interests of the amenity of the area.

(7) that the biomass boiler shall only be operated using clean wood chips that comply with a recognised fuel standard such as CEN/TS 14961 'Solid Biofuels - Fuel Specifications and
Prior to the biomass boiler becoming operational a statement shall be obtained from the fuel supplier and submitted to the local authority specifying the quality of wood chips used in the biomass boiler, and the fuel specification in accordance with CEN/TS 14961 – in order to ensure a suitable level of air quality is maintained.

(8) that prior to the biomass boiler becoming operational a written schedule of maintenance for the biomass boiler shall be submitted to the local authority. The schedule shall include removal of ash, inspection and maintenance of particulate arrestment equipment, boiler servicing and stack cleaning - in order to ensure a suitable level of air quality is maintained.

(9) that the energy centre shall not become operational unless the mitigation measures outlined in the document ‘NHS Grampian Energy Centre, Noise Impact Assessment’ dated December 2008 and produced by Mott McDonald Ltd. have been implemented in full – to ensure that nearby residents are protected from noise produced by the operation of the energy centre.

(10) that, except as the Planning Authority may otherwise agree in writing, no construction or demolition work shall take place:
   (a) outwith the hours of 7.00 am to 7.00 pm Mondays to Fridays;
   (b) outwith the hours of 10.00 am to 4.00 pm Saturdays; or
   (c) at any time on Sundays, except (on all days) for works inaudible outwith the application site boundary. [For the avoidance of doubt, this would generally allow internal finishing work, but not the use of machinery] - in the interests of residential amenity.

Dr Margaret Bochel
Head of Planning and Infrastructure