

## **PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PRE-APPLICATION FORUM**

ABERDEEN, 9 February 2023. Minute of Meeting of the PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PRE-APPLICATION FORUM. Present:- Councillor Henrickson, Convener; Councillor Bouse, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Blake, Boulton, Clark, Farquhar (as substitute for Councillor Houghton), McRae and Thomson.

Also present as local Members: Councillor

**The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be found [here](#).**

**Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.**

### **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 3 NOVEMBER 2022**

2. The Forum had before it the minute of the previous meeting of 3 November 2022, for approval.

**The Forum resolved:-**

to approve the minute as a correct record.

### **PROPOSAL OF APPLICATION NOTICE - CONSTRUCTION OF HYDROGEN PRODUCTION AND RE-FUELLING FACILITY, SOLAR FARM AND CONNECTING CABLE ROUTE - HARENESS ROAD/ NESS LANDFILL SITE TO THE WEST OF THE COAST ROAD, ABERDEEN**

3. The Forum had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning, on a submission of a Proposal of Application by Aberdeen Hydrogen Energy Ltd for the construction of Hydrogen Production and Re-fuelling facility, Solar Farm and connecting cable route at Hareness Road/ Ness Landfill Site to the west of the Coast Road, Aberdeen, planning reference number 221408.

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The report advised that the proposal was for a solar farm generating 8MW on the former Ness landfill site, with hydrogen production and fuelling facility on the industrial zoned site on the corner of Hareness Road at the southern extremity of the red lined area. Between the two would be laid a connecting cable to carry electricity from the solar farm to the hydrogen plant. The solar farm would include: photovoltaic panels, electrical transformers, DC to AC inverters, switchgear, metering system and a small sub-station with connection point to a solar grid connection.

Early conceptual work indicated the solar panels as being located around the upper areas of the hill side, as these were flatter, with the gradient of the sides being less suitable. The solar farm would provide energy for hydrogen production, with any excess being provided to the grid. The hydrogen facility would include: three vehicle hydrogen dispensers, one or more electrolyser – which splits water molecules (H<sub>2</sub>O) into hydrogen (H<sub>2</sub>) and oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>), compressor(s), low pressure storage, station module with fuelling storage and local electrical substation. The hydrogen facility would also be connected to the grid for back up. It was indicated that the cable would be below ground and would carry 33Kv. The precise route for the cable was not yet established, however, it was indicated that it would be within the soft road verge where carried along Coast Road.

The report also noted that the Pre-application notice for this application was submitted on 23rd November 2022 and was agreed on 14 December 2022. The first public consultation event took place on 10th December 2022 at St Fittick's Church. The event consisted of presentation boards with members of the applicant's project team available to answer questions. Feedback forms were available for feedback to be either left at the event or sent later, including by email. A second event was held at St Fittick's Church on 28th January 2023.

The Forum heard from Lucy Greene, Senior Planner, who addressed the Forum and provided details regarding the planning aspects of the application.

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

- NE1 – Green Space Network
- NE2 – Green Belt
- B1 – Business and Industry
- D1 – Quality Placemaking by Design
- D2 – Landscape
- D4 – Historic Environment
- I1 – Infrastructure Delivery and Planning Obligations
- T2 – Managing the Transport Impact of Development
- T3 – Sustainable and Active Travel
- T5 – Noise
- NE6 – Flooding, Drainage and Water Quality
- NE8 – Natural Heritage
- NE9 – Access and Informal Recreation

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R2 – Degraded and Contaminated Land  
R8 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments

### Proposed Local Development Plan (2020)

NE1 – Greenbelt  
NE2 – Green Space Network  
B5 – Energy Transition Zone  
B1 – Business and Industry  
WB1 – Healthy Developments  
WB3 - Noise  
NE2 – Green and Blue Infrastructure  
NE3 – Our Natural Heritage  
NE4 - Our Water Environment  
D1 – Quality Placemaking  
D2 - Amenity  
D4 – Landscape  
D5 – Landscape Design  
D6 – Historic Environment  
R2 – Degraded and Contaminated Land  
R5 – Waste Management  
R6 – Low and Zero Carbon Buildings, and Water Efficiency  
R7 – Renewable and Low Carbon Developments  
I1 – Infrastructure Delivery and Planning Obligations  
T2 – Sustainable Transport

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:-

- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, including of glint and glare
- Landscape Framework
- Ecology Assessment
- Transportation Statement
- Design & Access Statement
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Drainage Impact Assessment
- Pre-Application Consultation Report

The Forum then heard from William Shand, AECOM and Rhuary Campbell, BP, agents for the application.

Mr Campbell began the presentation by explaining about the project description and advised that phase one of the Aberdeen Hydrogen Hub involved building a hydrogen re-fuelling facility for buses and trucks, powered by a solar farm and linked underground by an underground solar grid connection. Mr Campbell explained that the renewable energy produced by the solar farm would be used to produce hydrogen via a process

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called electrolysis which splits water molecules into hydrogen and oxygen. The solar farm and hydrogen facility would be separate sites but linked by an underground solar grid connection. The hydrogen site has a substantial grid connection to power it in periods of low solar power production, while excess power could be returned to the grid when high solar power was generated but not needed by the hydrogen facility.

In terms of the hydrogen facility, Mr Campbell advised that the green hydrogen production and vehicle re-fuelling facility would be located at the southern extent of the site to the west of Hareness Road and the site would be approximately 1 hectare in area.

The proposed layout also highlighted site safety features such as fenced equipment, fire wall and containment barriers to restrict access and reduce the risk of damaging site equipment. Two access points from Hareness Road were proposed with an 'in' and 'out' system to improve road safety.

In relation to the solar farm, Mr Campbell advised that the farm would provide the power for the hydrogen facility and any surplus power would be provided to the grid. Photovoltaic panels would cover most of the site, capturing the sun's solar energy and allowing it to be converted into power. The quantity and position of the photovoltaic panels was subject to technical assessment and the energy generated by the panels would be sent to inverters at two locations on site which change direct current to alternating current. Electrical transformers then regulate the voltage. During consultation phase, further work was undertaken to refine the solar farm design and location of equipment. As a consequence, equipment had been relocated towards the site entrance and solar panels had been distributed further apart towards the south of the site to optimise light and ground conditions.

In relation to construction traffic, a Transport Assessment had been carried out to consider the potential impact of traffic associated with the construction of the proposed development. A Construction Traffic Management Plan would be produced for the planning application which would consider feedback from local residents and community groups to establish appropriate methods for controlling and minimising the impact of construction traffic arising from the proposed development.

Mr Campbell also provided details on ecology, landscape and drainage and noted that a Built Heritage Assessment would be carried out relating to the three Cairns which were scheduled monuments to the south, west and south west of the site.

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

- There would be no impact on Doonies Farm;
- Birds were often attracted to solar panels however the impact to birds would be minimal;

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- Any glint and glare for helicopters would be taken into account in the final design but no impact was envisaged;
- It was likely that the solar panels would be north facing but they were investigating the optimal location for the panels;
- They were also investigating bio diversity enhancement on site; and
- The public consultation events were well received, with 35 members attending the first one and 18 individuals at the second event.

### **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 Shand and Mr Campbell for their informative presentation; and
  - (ii) to request that the applicant consider the points raised above.
- **COUNCILLOR DELL HENRICKSON, Convener**