

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

ABERDEEN, 24 August 2023. Minute of Meeting of the PLANNING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PRE-APPLICATION FORUM. Present:- Councillor McRae, Convener; Councillor Bouse, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Alphonse, Blake, Boulton, Clark, Cooke, Copland, Farquhar, Radley and Thomson.

**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 25 MAY 2023**

2. The Committee had before it the minute of the previous meeting of 25 May 2023, for approval.

#### **The Committee resolved:-**

to approve the minute as a correct record

### **LAND AT COAST ROAD, ST FITTICK'S PARK/ GREGNESS HEADLAND/DOONIES FARM, ABERDEEN - 230707**

3. The Forum had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning, on a submission of a Proposal of Application on behalf of ETZ Ltd, for the proposed business/industrial development (class 4/5/6); road infrastructure; active travel connections; landscaping and environmental works including drainage and other infrastructure, at land at Coast Road, St Fittick's Park/ Gregness Headland/Doonies Farm Aberdeen.

The report advised that development would consist of the erection of buildings and laying of external hard surfaced yard areas in business / office, industrial and / or

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storage and distribution use. This would be likely to include creating levels areas and buildings of relatively large footprint, representing a substantial change to the current undeveloped nature of the land. It was noted that the end users of the development were unknown and it was not therefore possible to provide further details about characteristics of the development at this stage.

The development site consisted of three linked areas – St Fittick’s Park (A), Gregness (B) and Doonies (C), and these areas were allocated for development in the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023.

The St Fitticks Park (A) area covered 15.5ha and includes the south east area of the park, with the Tullos Burn and wetlands, adjacent woodland, open space and a recreational area. The Scheduled Ancient Monument of St Fittick’s Church is close to the northern boundary of this site.

Gregness (B) covered an area of 8.67ha and was immediately adjacent to the coast and to a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), designated for geological reasons, with the Coast Road forming the boundary to the west. It was formerly coastal grassland but had been used more recently as a storage and production area in association with the construction of the new South Harbour in Nigg Bay immediately to the north of the site. Gregness was also covered by the Balnagask to Cove (Site 1) Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS) designation. The LNCS included mixed habitats supporting herb rich grasslands, heathland, rocky cliffs, insect fauna and nesting sea birds. Access onto the south breakwater is taken through this site.

Doonies (C) included a granite farmhouse and steading together with fields used by Doonies Rare Breeds Farm, a visitor attraction that was to close in August 2023. Two linear areas connect the main site to Peterseat Drive which was within the northern part of the Altens Industrial Area, to allow for potential future access linkages.

The River Dee Special Area of Conservation lies to the north of St Fittick’s Park.

Footpaths, including core paths, the railway, cycle routes and Coast Road run through the sites. Residential areas in Balnagask and Torry lie close to the St Fitticks Park site to the north west and further away to the south of Doonies (Burnbanks Village).

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

Mr Greene provided details on the relevant planning policies noting the policies that were relevant to the proposed application in regards to the Local Development Plan (2020) and National Planning Framework.

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:-

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- Health Impact Assessment
- Air Quality Impact Assessment
- Natural Heritage Assessment (see requirements of Policy NE3)
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA);
- Protected and Notable Species Report;
- Wintering Birds Survey;
- Breeding Birds Survey.
- Habitats Regulations Appraisal ;
- Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Construction environmental management plan
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Drainage Impact Assessment
- Replacement Planting and Protection Plan
- Landscape Strategy and Plan
- Design Strategy
- Transport Assessment
- Travel plans
- Landscape and Visual Assessment;
- Heritage Assessment.

The Committee then heard from Henry Farrar, agent for the application and Neil Young and Martin Forbes, applicants.

Mr Farrar began the presentation by explaining that the Aberdeen Local Development Plan was adopted in June 2023 following an extensive process of consultation, and along with National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), it comprised the Development Plan for Aberdeen.

Mr Farrar outlined that Policy B5 (Energy Transition Zone) provided a presumption in favour of the development, production, assembly, storage and or distribution of infrastructure required to support renewable energy related industries.

He also indicated that Opportunity Site 56 (OP56), along with OP61 would support renewable energy transition related industries in association with Aberdeen South Harbour, and noted that any development must have a functional association with the South Harbour which precluded it being located elsewhere.

In relation to OP61 (Doonies), Mr Farrar advised that this site along with OP56 would support renewable energy transition related industries in association with Aberdeen South Harbour. He explained that a joint masterplan was required for OP56, OP61 and OP62 and should consider the extent of developable/ undevelopable areas including mitigation measures around habitats and core path networks, options for waste-water treatment and measures to avoid, minimise, mitigate and compensate potential impacts on biodiversity and greenspace.

Mr Farrar advised that a Masterplan for Energy Transition Zone had been prepared and submitted to Council in Spring 2023, and following a meeting of Planning Development Management Committee in June 2023, an 8 week consultation had been ongoing. Also

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a Planning Permission in Principle application was being prepared for key sites at St Fitticks Park, Gregness and Doonies and these were aligned to the principles established through the Masterplan process.

In terms of consultation and awareness, Mr Farrar advised that three local consultation events had been held between December 2021 and November 2022 and two statutory pre-application consultation events in June and August 2023. Wider consultation had included meeting with Torry Community Council, site walkovers and visits with local representatives, online and email engagement plus ongoing future engagement with ETZ with schools and local groups. Mr Farrar noted that the focus of the feedback and comments were around the principle of the development and loss of greenspace within St Fittick's Park, local amenity, ecology and biodiversity, cumulative impacts of development and also local traffic concerns and transport.

Mr Farrar advised that the proposals would be subject to a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and this would consider a wide range of environmental topic areas. A Strategic Biodiversity Action Plan was also being prepared to include a range of measures to support overall enhancement of biodiversity across the site and integrate with surrounding landscape and habitats. It was noted that a Health Impact Assessment, full Transport Assessment and a Flood Risk Assessment were all currently being prepared. Subject to the completion of the technical assessments and the conclusion of the Masterplan consultation, the planning application submission was anticipated to be submitted in late September 2023.

The Forum then asked questions of both Ms Greene and the applicants/agent.

### **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 Farrar, Mr Young and Mr Forbes for their informative presentation; and
- (ii) to note the information provided at the meeting.

## **PROPOSED BATTERY STORAGE UNITS WITH ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE, CONTROL AND SWITCH BUILDING, CONTAINERS AND ASSOCIATED WORKS INCLUDING ACCESS - LAND AT RIGIFA FARM, COVE ROAD, ABERDEEN**

4. The Convener advised that this item would be heard at the next meeting on 21 September 2023.

- **Councillor Ciaran McRae, Convener**