



**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
28 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**SUBJECT: 21/01193/PAN - INSTALLATION OF SYNCHRONOUS
COMPENSATOR WITH ELECTRICAL CONNECTION TO ADJACENT
SUBSTATION WITH ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT AT
BLACKHILLOCK SUBSTATION KEITH MORAY AB55 5NY**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND
FINANCE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee that a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) was submitted on 2 August 2021 on behalf of TINZ Programme 1 ProjectCo 3 Limited.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (E) (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to exercising the statutory functions of the Council as a Planning Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that:

- (i) in noting the terms of this report, the Committee advise upon any provisional views/relevant issues that Members of this Committee (or any other Member(s) of the Council) wish to raise about the proposed development so that these matters can be recorded and thereafter fed back to the prospective applicant in order to inform the development of their proposed formal application for planning permission; and

- (ii) **the matters raised by the Committee also be forwarded to consultees likely to be involved in any formal application for planning permission for the proposal.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Scottish Government has published guidance which encourages elected members to highlight any issues with a proposed development at the pre-application stage which they would wish to see taken into account within any formal application for planning permission.
- 3.2 Following consideration by this Committee on 11 November 2014 it was agreed that any PAN received after this date would be reported to Committee to give Members of the Committee, and the Council, the opportunity to identify any key issues/provisional views about the proposed development and that these matters be reported back to the applicant (paragraph 4 of the Minute refers).
- 3.3 This current report is not about the merits of the proposed development but rather, based on local knowledge of local issues and wider concerns, etc. Members are invited to identify any matters relevant to the proposal. These will be reported back to the prospective applicant for their information and attention, and to inform the development of the proposed application. It is also proposed that, for information, Members' comments be forwarded to consultees likely to be involved in any formal application for planning permission for the proposal.
- 3.4 As described, this PAN relates to a proposal for an energy management facility. The purpose of synchronous compensators is to improve stability in the electricity network and to maintain voltages at a constant. Such facilities effectively assist the electricity network provider (currently SSE Transmissions) to smooth out the voltage in the national grid when, factors such as the output from renewables is not constant or wholly predictable.
- 3.5 The site extends to several hectares and is located on the north east side of Blackhillock Substation to the south of Keith. The site would also sit immediately adjacent to substation constructed for Beatrice Offshore Windfarm, which bring offshore energy to the location also. There are no specific designation affecting the site. It would sit amongst other significant electricity infrastructure at Blackhillock and upon an area currently forming landscaping for the Beatrice substation. **Appendix 1** shows the location of the proposed site, 2km south of Keith.
- 3.6 Planning permission is required for this proposal. Relevant to the current Hierarchy Regulations the proposal would comprise a major development for planning purposes. As such, the proposal would be subject to PAN and pre-application consultation with the local community procedures. The applicants

have also used the Council's pre-application advice service to assist in identifying key issues and information that would be expected to accompany any formal application.

- 3.7 Due to Covid 19, public consultation events are not being held, and in line with current temporary Covid 19 legislative arrangements, the Town and Country Planning (Miscellaneous Temporary Modifications) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020) an online consultation event as proposed. A formal response has been issued to the applicant's agent to confirm that the proposed online event arrangements for engaging with the local community are sufficient. The applicant proposes to consult with Strathisla Community Council and will advertise the online event in the local press in advance.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

Identifying key issues at an early stage to assist with front loading major planning applications is a vital aspect of supporting and facilitating the Council's priority for economic development in Moray.

(b) Policy and Legal

Scottish Government guidance on the role of councillors in pre-application procedures affords elected members the opportunity to offer general provisional views on forthcoming developments which are the subject of a PAN where the details of the development have yet to be finalised.

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

None.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

None.

(h) Consultations

Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), the Head of Economic Growth and Development, the Legal Services Manager,

Development Management and Building Standards Manager, the Equal Opportunities Officer, the Strategic Planning and Development Manager, and Lissa Rowan (Committee Services Officer) have been consulted, and comments received have been incorporated into the report.

Members of Moray Council who are not on the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee have also been consulted and any views received on the proposal will be made known at the meeting.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Council has received a PAN intimating that a formal application for planning permission will be submitted for a major development proposal, in this case for permission for synchronous compensator with electrical connection to adjacent substation with associated development. The Committee (and any other Member(s) of the Council) are asked to identify any provisional views/relevant issues which they would wish to see taken into account and inform the development of the proposal.**

Author of Report: Neal MacPherson, Principal Planning Officer

Background Papers:

Ref: 21/01193/PAN