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Your ref: 3585/AM

7 September 2020

Dear Mr Mott

ELECTRICITY ACT 1989

THE ELECTRICITY WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017 (AS AMENDED)

SCREENING OPINION OF THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS

IN RESPECT OF A PROPOSED APPLICATION FOR CONSENT UNDER SECTION 36 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT 1989 TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE THE GRID SERVICES FACILITY AT KINCARDINE IN THE PLANNING AUTHORITY AREA OF FIFE COUNCIL

Thank you for your letter dated 14 August 2020 requesting, on behalf of SpectrumReserve Limited, a screening opinion in respect of a proposed application under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to construct the Grid Services Facility.

The proposed development is the Grid Services Facility (“the Development”) located adjacent to the A876 at Kincardine, Fife, at National Grid Reference (‘NGR’) 292273, 689157 (‘the Site’), within the planning authority area of Fife Council (“the planning authority”).

The Development will consist of battery storage modules, a synchronous condenser housed in a building and other associated ancillary electrical infrastructure which is designed to provide grid stability services.

The proposal requires to be screened by the Scottish Ministers in accordance with regulation 7 of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (as amended) (“the regulations”). Following a request for a screening opinion made under regulation 8(1), Scottish Ministers are required to adopt an opinion on whether the Development is or is not EIA development.

The screening application letter was accompanied by supporting documentation which included a Site Layout map, details of the Development and surroundings with a review of the environmental baseline and assessment of effects including Use of Natural Resources; Production of Waste; Pollution and Nuisances: Air Quality, Contaminated Land and Water; Risk of Accidents and to Human Health; Landscape and Visual effects; Cultural Heritage and Archaeology; Community and Recreation; Ecology and Ornithology; Hydrology and Flood Risk; Noise and Vibration; Access, Traffic and Transport; and, Land Use.

The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment)(Scotland) Regulations 2017

The regulations set out (at 8(2)) the information that must accompany a request to the Scottish Ministers to adopt a screening opinion. Regulation 10 requires that the Scottish Ministers must seek that information if it is not included within the application documentation. Scottish Ministers consider the information included in the application letter and supporting documents is sufficient to meet the requirements set out in regulation 8(2), and that the submitted information has been compiled taking into account the selection criteria in schedule 3 of the regulations.

Statutory Consultation

Under regulation 8(5) of the regulations, Scottish Ministers are required to consult the planning authority within whose land the proposed application is situated. The planning authority were consulted and responded on 13 August 2020 advising that, in their view, the proposed development does not constitute EIA development. A copy of the planning authority's response is annexed to this screening opinion (**Annex A**).

Scottish Ministers' Considerations

EIA development is defined in the regulations, in respect of an application, as a proposed development which is either Schedule 1 development, or Schedule 2 development likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location.

The proposed development constitutes Schedule 2 development in terms of the regulations.

In adopting a screening opinion as to whether Schedule 2 development is EIA development, the Scottish Ministers must in all cases take into account such of the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the regulations as are relevant to the proposed development, and the available results of any relevant assessment.

Scottish Ministers have taken the selection criteria in Schedule 3 and all of the information submitted in respect of the screening request into account, and have taken account of the views of the planning authority. Scottish Ministers agree with the planning authority's view, and adopt the opinion that **the proposal does not constitute EIA development and that any application submitted for this development does not require to be accompanied by an EIA report.**

In accordance with regulation 7(2), this opinion is accompanied by the following written statement with reference to the relevant selection criteria within Schedule 3 of the regulations. In accordance with the regulations, a copy of the screening opinion has been sent to the planning authority.

Written Statement

Characteristics of Development

The key characteristics of the development are of buildings, plant and machinery associated with electricity generation and grid services. The proposed development is comprised of the following four main elements:

Development element	Detail
Battery storage modules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 x 50 MW modules (seven at 60m x 60 m and one at 45 m x 80 m). The modules would typically have a height of around 3 m.
Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) support infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BESS control compound (40 m x 30 m); BESS extra grid space (40 m x 30 m); BESS 275kV transformer (40 m x 30 m); and BESS 275kV switchgear (40 m x 30 m). All 3-4 m in height. Temporary BESS construction and laydown compound
Synchronous Condenser area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synchronous Condenser Building (42 m x 40 m x 15 m (h)); 275kV transformer (40 m x 30 m); and Temporary synchronous condenser construction and laydown compound (dimensions unknown).
EHV Electricity Substation area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substation and connection point (60 m x 50 m x 6 m (h)); 275kV control building and busbar (60 m x 40 m x 6 m (h)); and Temporary construction and laydown compound (dimensions unknown).

The Development also includes the construction of circa 0.40 hectares (ha) of access roads approximately 6 m wide, as well as security fencing and gates. Landscaping and planting will be included within the Development as screening from the dual carriageway and other receptors, which will also provide biodiversity enhancements. Whilst the area within the Site Boundary provided on Figure 2 is 14.45 ha, it is proposed that the total built area, including access roads, will be circa 3.25 ha.

The development is not proposed to be of such a scale or located within surroundings as to have a cumulative impact with other developments. There would be extremely limited use of natural resources in construction and during operation, and with the site being restored when the Development is decommissioned. There will be a minimal amount of waste during construction. The risks of pollution and nuisances are low and likely to be able to controlled or mitigated. The risks of major accidents and the risks to human health are considered low.

Location of Development

The Site is located adjacent to the east of the A876, at Kincardine, Fife, and is currently used for agriculture.

There are two development areas which are separated by a single carriage way road, Hawkhill Road, which is a flyover respective to the A876:

- The southern development area comprises 2.15 ha to the south of Hawkhill Road. This area contains a culverted monitor drain on the eastern boundary draining to the south, and tree planting on the southern boundary. It is expected the grid connection infrastructure and synchronous condenser building will be located in this area.
- The northern development area comprises 12.3 ha to the north of Hawkhill Road and the battery storage development plus ancillary grid apparatus is expected to be located on the southern half of this area. There is an access track running along the western boundary of this area which is partly within the landownership boundary, with some mature planting to the south and east of the area.

Scottish Ministers have considered the the existing and approved land use; the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground; and, the absorption capacity of the natural environment. The Site is located outwith any settlement boundary, in open countryside with some industrial infrastructure such as high voltage overhead electricity transmission lines, bridges and road infrastructure already crossing the site and a large waste operation to the north. The land surrounding the Development is rural in nature, consisting largely of extensive arable farming fields, scattered residential properties and smaller settlements. Kincardine, the nearest settlement, is located approximately 500 m east of the Site at the nearest point. The River Forth is located approximately 590 m south of the Site.

Whilst the River Forth has important natural heritage designations (Ramsar/SPA/SSSI), and an environmental report covering impacts expected from the construction process would be required, it is not expected that the nature of the proposed development will lead to impacts of significance on the Forth.

Characteristics of the Potential Impact

Given that the Development is located within an area with existing industrial development, and a lack of sensitive receptors within the immediate and surrounding vicinity (with the exception of the Firth of Forth designation), effects arising as a result of the Development will be very limited both in magnitude and in spatial extent. The nature of effects arising from the Development are not anticipated to be adverse, and it is not considered likely that significant effects on the environment will occur. Given the scale of the Development, the Development will result in limited effects in specific technical areas, all of which are unlikely to be significant.

This screening opinion does not constitute pre-application advice, and is provided without prejudice to the assessment of any future application under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989.

Yours sincerely
[REDACTED]

James McKenzie
A member of the staff of the Scottish Government

cc Fife Council

Annex A

From: Martin MCGroarty <Martin.McGroarty@fife.gov.uk>
Sent: 07 September 2020 15:55
To: Econsents Admin
Cc: McKenzie JR (James)
Subject: 20/01825/SCR - EIA Screening Opinion Consultation - Proposed Grid Services Facility by Kincardine-on-Forth, Fife

FAO James McKenzie

Good afternoon James.

I refer to your email dated 14th August regarding the request made to you by Arcus Consultancy Services Ltd. on behalf of SpectrumReserve Ltd. for a formal screening opinion on the above proposed development.

I can confirm that Fife Council agrees that the proposed development would not require a formal EIA application.

Electricity Storage does not presently fall within Schedule 1 or 2 of the EIA Regulations and, whilst the Forth within 120m of this location has important natural heritage designations (Ramsar/SPA/SSSI), and an environmental report covering impacts expected from the construction process would be required, it is not expected that the nature of the proposed development will lead to impacts sufficiently significant to merit a formal EIA process.

Kind regards,
Martin

Martin McGroarty

Lead Professional (Minerals)

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