

# Planning Application: Supplementary Report



Reference No. 20/0793/PP

Renfrewshire  
Council

## KEY INFORMATION

**Ward: (7)**  
Paisley Southwest

**Applicant:** WP Grid  
Services Limited  
Fourth Floor  
2 Kingsway  
Cardiff  
CF10 3FD

**Registered:** 14  
December 2020

Report by Head of Economy & Development

**PROSPECTIVE PROPOSAL:** Erection of a grid stability facility including grid stability unit with associated ancillary equipment, access, landscaping, drainage, car parking, operations centre and boundary enclosures

**LOCATION:** Neilston Grid Electricity Sub-station Complex, Gleniffer Road, Paisley

**APPLICATION FOR:** Full Planning Permission

**This supplementary report should be read together with the original Report of Handling considered by the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 18 May 2021.**

## BACKGROUND

The Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board at its meeting on 18 May 2021 considered the attached Report of Handling and decided to continue the consideration of the report to allow a site visit to take place. The detailed assessment of the proposed development is included in the attached Report of Handling.

## SITE VISIT

A site visit took place on 10 August 2021 and those Members attending viewed the application site and its surroundings. The site visit was conducted in accordance with the Protocol for Site Visits (22 May 2018) and Members attending did not discuss the merits of the proposal.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It is considered that assessment of the proposed development, as detailed in the attached Report of Handling, together with the additional information provided by the applicant in respect of the late representation, is sufficient to recommend that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

For clarity the recommendation with reasons and conditions are set out below:

## RECOMMENDATION

Grant subject to conditions

Alasdair Morrison  
Head of Economy &  
Development

# Planning Application: Supplementary Report

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## Reason for Decision

The proposal accords with the provisions of the Development Plan and there are no material considerations which outweigh the presumption in favour of development according with the Development Plan.

## Conditions

- 1 That prior to the commencement of development on site, the developer shall submit a Peat Management Plan for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The management plan will set out the means by which the disturbance of peat has been avoided, and thereafter detail methods for the handling, storage and compensatory reinstatement of peat that will be disturbed taking cognizance of the recommendations within the ecology report. The approved Peat Management Plan shall thereafter be implemented on site to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure peat on the site is protected and any detrimental impacts are mitigated in the interests of safeguarding carbon rich soils.

- 2 All works associated with the implementation of a visibility splay measuring 4.5m x 215m x 1.05m shall be undertaken prior to the facility being brought into use. The splay shall thereafter be maintained throughout the life of the development to ensure that no features within the splay shall exceed 1.05m in height.

Reason: To ensure the site can be accessed safely.

- 3 That all planting as detailed within the approved Landscape Proposals drawing (including additional compensatory replanting required in association with condition 2) shall be completed on site within the first planting season following the facility hereby approved being brought into use.

Reason: To ensure the required landscaping is completed in a timely manner in the interests of natural heritage and visual amenity.

- 4 That prior to the completion of the landscape proposals hereby approved the developer shall submit a woodland management plan for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The management plan shall set out measures to be implemented on site to ensure that all woodland planting becomes established. This shall include restocking to replace any trees which are removed, become diseased or die. The measures within the management plan shall thereafter be implemented on site to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the woodland becomes established, in the interests of natural heritage and visual amenity.

- 5 That prior to the commencement of development on site, the developer shall submit a Construction Management Plan for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The approved Construction Management Plan shall thereafter be implemented on site during the construction phase to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the construction phase is managed appropriately in the interests

of the safe and efficient operation of the local road network.

- 6 That prior to the facility hereby approved being brought into use, the developer shall submit a traffic management plan for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The management plan shall identify measures to reduce the speed of vehicles along the stretch of Gleniffer Road conterminous with the visibility splay area, and a timetable for the installation of the measures. The measures shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the agreed upon timetable.

Reason: To reduce traffic speeds in the interests of traffic safety.

- 7 That prior to commencement of any works associated with the connecting cable between the site and the Neilston substation, the developer shall first submit a construction environmental management plan and methodology for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The methodology shall address any potential negative impacts on the Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), and shall also include measures to improve the habitat within the SINC taking cognisance of the recommendations within the approved ecology report and the drawing provided by Scottish Power Energy Networks titled FEED\_NE\_001 Rev 1 (16/03/2021). The installation of the connecting cable shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the approved methodology.

Reason: To ensure any detrimental impact on the SINC is mitigated in the interests of natural heritage.

- 8 That all aspects of the implementation of the development hereby approved shall be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations as set out in Section 5 of the ecology report.

Reason: In the interests of natural heritage.

- 9 That prior to the facility hereby approved becoming operational the developer shall submit a noise assessment for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The assessment shall demonstrate that the noise limits within the initial noise assessment have been complied with, and shall include a specification of the measures implemented on site to mitigate noise impact and any ongoing maintenance requirements thereafter. The facility shall thereafter operate in accordance with the noise assessment.

Reason: To ensure noise impact is mitigated in the interests of amenity.

- 10 That six months prior to the facility hereby approved ceasing operations the developer shall submit a site decommissioning and restoration plan with associated timetable for the written approval of the Planning Authority. All decommissioning and site restoration works shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the agreed timetable to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the site is restored following decommissioning in the interests of visual amenity.

- 11 That the tree protection measures outlined in section 8 of the approved tree survey shall be implemented on site prior to the commencement of the construction phase of the development, and maintained thereafter for the duration that construction activities are taking place. This includes provision for a construction exclusion zone around High Bardrain Woodland in accordance with BS 5837:2012.

Reason: To ensure that existing trees on the site are protected in the interests of natural heritage.

- 12 That all works associated with the implementation of the facility hereby approved shall be undertaken in accordance with SEPA Guidance for Pollution Prevention for works and maintenance in or near water: GPP5 Version 1.2 February 2018.

Reason: To ensure the risk of pollution is minimised in the interests of protecting the water environment.

- 13 No development shall take place within the development site until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, agreed by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Thereafter the developer shall ensure that the programme of archaeological works is fully implemented and that all recording and recovery of archaeological resources within the development site is undertaken to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority in agreement with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

Reason: To ensure any archaeological resources on site are recovered and/or recorded in the interests of safeguarding built heritage.

- 14 That prior to the facility hereby approved becoming operational the developer shall submit for the written approval of the Planning Authority a management and maintenance plan for the SUDS system hereby approved. The plan shall set out measures to be adopted to ensure the SuDS system remains fully functional for the lifetime of the development. The facility shall thereafter operate in accordance with the approved management and maintenance plan.

Reason: To ensure the SUDS system is managed appropriately in the interests of natural heritage and the water environment.

# Planning Application: Report of Handling



Renfrewshire  
Council

Reference No. 20/0793/PP

## KEY INFORMATION

**Ward: (7)**  
Paisley Southwest

**Applicant:** WP Grid Services Limited  
Fourth Floor  
2 Kingsway  
Cardiff  
CF10 3FD

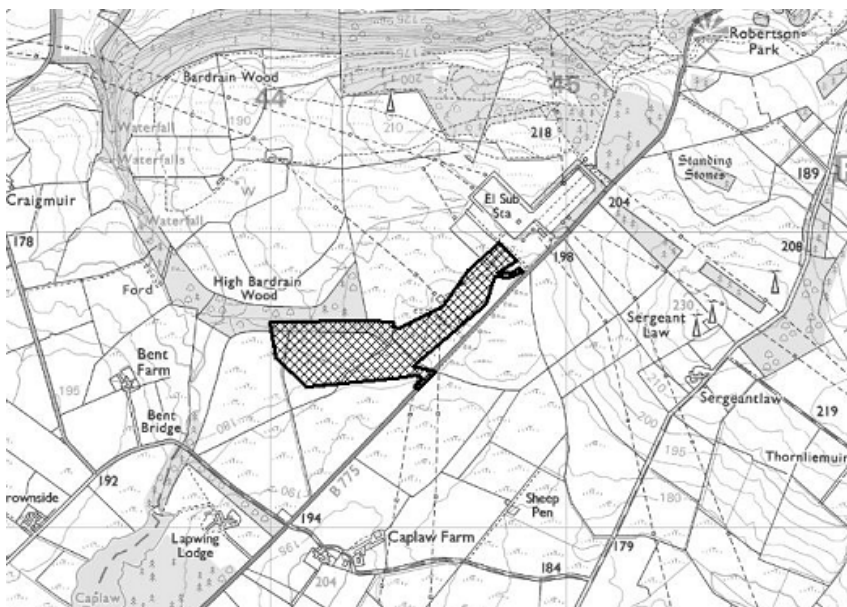
**Registered:** 14<sup>th</sup>  
December 2020

Report by Head of Economy & Development

**PROSPECTIVE PROPOSAL:** Erection of a grid stability facility including grid stability unit with associated ancillary equipment, access, landscaping, drainage, car parking, operations centre and boundary enclosures

**LOCATION:** Neilston Grid Electricity Sub-station Complex, Gleniffer Road, Paisley

**APPLICATION FOR:** Full Planning Permission



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## RECOMMENDATION

Grant subject to conditions

## IDENTIFIED KEY ISSUES

Alasdair Morrison  
Head of Economy & Development

- The site is identified within the Adopted Renfrewshire Local Development Plan (2014) as Policy P1 and the Proposed Renfrewshire Local Development Plan (2021 as modified) as Policy ENV1 – Green Belt.
- The proposed development complies with the Development Plan including the National Planning Framework, Clydeplan and the Local Development Plan as well as Scottish Planning Policy.
- Potential impacts on visual amenity, landscape character, natural heritage, built heritage and road safety have been considered and will not result in a significant impact.
- There have been no objections from consultees.
- There have been no representations.

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL  
 REPORT OF HANDLING FOR APPLICATION 20/0793/PP

APPLICANT:	WP Grid Services Limited Fourth Floor 2 Kingsway Cardiff CF10 3FD
SITE ADDRESS:	Neilston Grid Electricity Sub-station Complex, Gleniffer Road, Paisley
PROPOSAL:	Erection of a grid stability facility including grid stability unit with associated ancillary equipment, access, landscaping, drainage, car parking, operations centre and boundary enclosures
APPLICATION FOR:	Full Planning Permission

NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIONS AND SUMMARY OF ISSUES RAISED:	None received.
CONSULTATIONS:	<p><b>Elderslie Community Council</b> - Appreciate that developments such as the proposed grid stability facility are needed to support the move towards low and zero carbon sources of electricity, and ask that the following mitigation points are considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appropriate landscaping to ensure the site as far as possible does not adversely affect the character, landscape and setting of the area;</li> <li>- Checking, monitoring and ongoing maintenance of the drainage systems;</li> <li>- Seasonal flora and fauna could not have been accounted for in the ecology assessment, and landscaping should be sympathetic to the existing natural environment and wildlife;</li> <li>- Investment should be made to preserve and enhance peatlands within the surrounding areas of the country park.</li> </ul> <p><b>Response</b> - The applicant has submitted a comprehensive landscaping scheme which builds upon the existing landscape features at the site. The landscape proposals include 3 hectares of new woodland planting.</p> <p>A condition will be applied to ensure the drainage system is maintained in accordance with the recommendations in the Drainage Impact Assessment.</p> <p>A condition will also be applied to ensure the site is developed in accordance with the recommendations within the ecology</p>

statement.

The potential impact of the development on peat deposits has been considered by the applicant. There is a commitment by the applicant to ensure that abstracted peat is re-used within the landscape scheme. This will be managed in detail via the submission of a peat management plan.

Additionally, the ecology report identifies opportunities where the wetland habitat could be improved particularly within the corridor where the connecting cable will be laid. This will be addressed within a detailed methodology for the installation of the cable which can be requested via condition.

**NATS** - No objection.

**Scottish Water** - No objection.

**Glasgow Airport Safeguarding** - No objection.

**SP Energy Networks** – No objection subject to various controls being placed over the cable connection to the Neilston substation.

**Director of Communities and Housing (Environmental Protection)** –

Confirmation is sought regarding a number of assumptions that have been made in the noise assessment. Further comment on the gas risk from peat has also been requested prior to determination of the application.

**Response** - The applicant has provided further information on gas risk. This has been reviewed, and the Director of Communities and Housing has advised that they have no further comments to make. A further noise assessment will be undertaken prior to the development being brought into use.

**West of Scotland Archaeology Service** - The application site lies just out with the area that was covered by an archaeological survey in 1991-92. Recommended that a condition is applied to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation works.

**Response** - A programme of archaeological works will be implemented via a condition.

**Director of Environment and Infrastructure Service (Roads - Traffic)** - No objection subject to conditions regarding the provision of sightlines, submission of a traffic management scheme and submission of a construction traffic management plan.

**Response** - Conditions will be applied to address the matters raised by the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Service.

**Glenniffer Braes Country Park** – Object to the application for the following reasons:

- The adverse impact it would have on the locally designated SINC;
- It would not be in keeping with the appearance and character of the Rugged Upland Farmland or Greenbelt of Glenniffer Braes;
- That the removal and disturbance to the peatland goes against Renfrewshire Councils Climate Change Action and NatureScot's Peatland ACTION programme.

- Developers should follow the guidance within the Ecological Appraisal Report with regards to any works. This mainly relates to concerns over drainage of the wetland, but also in relation to other habitats.

- Clarification is sought over the site selection, where else has been considered, and if an assessment has been made of the amount of carbon that will be lost due to the construction of the facility and connecting cable on peatland at this location.

- A more detailed methodology is required to cover the installation of the cable, and clarification is sought over the exact route proposed for the cable.

- Protected and notable species have been witnessed further afield.

- Will there be restoration of peatland in the country park to mitigate for any loss of peat from the installation works.

**Response** – On the points of objection, it is considered that detrimental impacts associated with works within the SINC area can be mitigated through adherence to the recommendations within the ecology statement, and preparation of an additional methodology to control works within the SINC area.

The landscape of the area is characterised by existing electricity infrastructure including the sub station and several rows of large pylons. While the development will be visible within the landscape, it is not considered that it will be significantly out of keeping in terms of character or appearance of the adjacent use. The visual impact will also be mitigated by tree planting for example, and I am satisfied that the landscape can suitably absorb a development of this nature without significant detriment to its character.

Disturbance to peatland is noted. This issue will be addressed



	<p>in more detail through the submission of a Peat Management Plan, which can be secured by condition.</p>
<p>PRE-APPLICATION COMMENTS:</p>	<p>The proposed development has been the subject of extensive pre-application discussions between the applicant and Planning. The proposals were first presented by the agent in July 2020. Initial feedback was provided with respect to the applicable local development plan policies, the likely level of information that will be required to support a forthcoming planning application, and the process around major development community consultation.</p> <p>A proposal of application notice was accepted in September 2020. It was agreed that community consultation would take place electronically via the launch of a dedicated website which would contain information on the proposal and provide a means by which members of the public could provide feedback.</p> <p>The proposal was discussed again in October 2020 this time with the applicant as well as the agent. The background to the project was discussed in more detail.</p> <p>A visual inspection of the site and surrounding area was also undertaken by officers in October 2020. This included assessment of the site from external vantage points. This visit was used to inform scope for the landscape and visual assessment in terms of the key viewpoints that would need to be assessed.</p>

<p>APPLICANTS SUPPORTING INFORMATION:</p>	<p><u>Pre-application Consultation Report</u> - An online public exhibition event was progressed in due of restrictions in public gatherings arising from the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The public consultation website was launched on the 21st September, and there was an opportunity for visitors to complete a survey. A live question and answer session was undertaken on the 23rd September. Community Councils and local councilor's were also contacted ahead of the website launch.</p> <p>The website was viewed 129 times by 78 unique visitors. 2 members of the public took part in the live question and answer session, and 4 responses were received to the online survey.</p> <p>Of those who did engage with the consultation process there was an awareness of the need for the development and no objections were raised.</p> <p><b>Response</b> - The pre-application consultation report demonstrates compliance with the statutory requirements governing the pre-application process for major developments.</p> <p><u>Landscape and Visual Appraisal</u> - The report provides an appraisal of the landscape and visual effects likely to be associated with the proposed development, a summary of any</p>
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landscape and visual mitigation embedded within the site selection, layout and design, and a scheme of soft landscaping to help integrate the proposed development into its landscape setting.

The site is approx. 5 hectares, and the land cover is generally rough, damp grassland with some areas of young plantation woodland typically between 1m and 3m in height.

The site is wholly within the Rugged Upland Farmland landscape character type.

Existing electricity infrastructure within the surrounding landscape is very prominent.

The site has been selected for its proximity to the existing substation and relatively isolated position on low lying ground set back from the road. The presence of existing infrastructure makes the immediate landscape context better able to accommodate the proposed facility. Electricity infrastructure is already a key characteristic of the local landscape.

The siting has also been chosen to take advantage of existing mature woodland at High Bardrain Wood which provides a backdrop.

Tree removal would be limited to an area of 3 hectares of young, broadleaved plantation some of which is very sparse. A proposed area of new woodland planting is proposed the south of the site. The facility will become increasingly surrounded as the surrounding mature plantations.

**Response** - The appraisal provides a comprehensive assessment of the current landscape and its sensitivity to the new development. This is outlined in full in the assessment of the application.

Tree Survey and Arboricultural Constraints - A large proportion of the site is planted with mixed broadleaved woodland. However, the plantations are very poorly established with significant gaps and large areas of dead trees including Ash killed by Ash dieback disease.

The proposed development does not impact on the ancient woodland to the north, and adequate standoff distances can be maintained.

An area of replacement tree planting 3 hectares in area is proposed in mitigation for the removal of existing planting. The proposed planting will comply with Scottish Forestry requirements in terms of ground preparation, planting density and species mix.

**Response** - The survey highlights the poor condition of the existing plantation which has largely failed to establish.

The proposed development includes 3 hectares of new plantation. A management plan will be sought to ensure that the new plantation becomes established and is of better quality than the plantation being removed.

This will ensure that the new plantation contributes to screening the new development in the long term whilst also providing for biodiversity gain across the site.

Planning Statement - The proposed development is required as the UK's electricity system moves towards low and zero carbon sources.

As more renewable come online there is a requirement for stand-alone facilities to provide these stabilising qualities.

Renfrewshire has been selected as the preferred location for one of six similar developments across Scotland.

This will present an opportunity for Renfrewshire to play a significant and essential role in providing energy security and a transition towards a zero-carbon economy.

Renfrewshire has also been selected as the preferred location for an operations centre which would secure 10 full time skilled jobs.

**Response** - Provides a good quality introduction to the nature of the proposed development, its purpose and need.

The contribution the development will make to the transition towards a carbon economy is welcomed and is compatible with Scottish Government policy on net zero emissions.

Briefing Note February 2021 - An additional briefing note was provided to supplement the planning statement following a request from the Planning Authority for additional information.

The proposed technology will increase the capacity of the grid to run off renewable energy, make existing renewable generators more efficient, and enable more renewable energy to come on stream in the future.

The increase in capacity of the grid to accommodate more renewable energy sources will be of benefit as Scotland moves towards a low carbon economy with net zero emissions.

In terms of carbon reduction, the proposed development also provides stability to the grid in a way that is much less carbon intensive than having to with on gas peak power generators.

The applicant states that the lower estimate of carbon dioxide saving per year of approx. 240,000 tons. This is the equivalent annual carbon emissions total of 45,000 people in Scotland.

**Response** - The briefing note further reinforces the benefits of the proposed development.

Design and Access Statement - Considers the overall design and layout of the proposed development against local and national policy.

Access to the site will be restricted and the entrance to the site will be gated. Parking arrangements will be accommodated within the site.

During the operational phase the facility would be visited on average 8 times per month. Two staff members will always be present on site.

Several sustainable elements have been incorporated into the design of the proposed development including EV charging points, new planting, and sustainable drainage.

**Response** - The design and access statement further demonstrates how the applicant has developed the site with respect to its constraints, and the measures employed to mitigate the visual impact of the development.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report - The scope of the survey is to establish a baseline of ecological information and thereafter ascertain whether the proposed development activities have the potential to adversely affect any designated sites and/or notable habitats or species.

There are no statutory designated sites within the site.

There is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) adjacent to the site through which the grid connection corridor will pass.

Three groups of trees were identified during the site visit as having roost potential.

There were no signs of badger, otter, water vole, amphibians, or reptiles.

Two priority habitats are present within the grid connection corridor route. The habitats are highly damaged and degraded and no longer function as active bog. There is an opportunity to improve the quality of habitats within the area.

There is an opportunity for biodiversity gain to be achieved by reinforcing the existing woodland habitat and by planting

	<p>hedgerows.</p> <p><b>Response</b> - The ecology report does not identify any protected species or habitats of national importance.</p> <p>Locally significant habitats are located within the grid connection corridor. The ecology report makes several recommendations for the implementation of the development ranging from prestart checks for protected species to methods by which habitats can be enhanced. These recommendations will be implemented on site via condition.</p> <p><u>Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Impact Assessment</u> - Flood risk is low.</p> <p>Surface water will be discharged to an existing ditch to the south of the site via an attenuation basin. Discharge from the site does not increase off-site flood risk as surface water is restricted to greenfield run-off rates. Three states of treatment are provided for water quality purposes. The basin will also be lined to minimise vegetation growth and deter birds.</p> <p><b>Response</b> - Presents a suitable drainage system for the site. Maintenance of the drainage system will be required via condition to ensure it performs appropriately for the lifetime of the development.</p> <p><u>Acoustic Technical Report</u> - A noise survey was undertaken in order to determine the existing noise conditions in the area.</p> <p><b>Response</b> - The acoustic report is based on the minimum specification for acoustic mitigation that will be applied to the development. This minimum specification will ensure that adequate sound levels within the nearest sensitive receptors are achieved. A further noise assessment will be undertaken once a detailed acoustic specification has been prepared.</p> <p><u>Accessibility Statement</u> - The assessment considers the access for vehicles associated with the proposed development both in relation to the external highway network and within the site itself.</p> <p><b>Response</b> - Routing options for vehicles during the construction phase are noted, and these will be discussed with The Director of Environment and Infrastructure to ensure the local road network is protected.</p>
<p>CLYDEPLAN POLICIES:</p>	<p><u>Clydeplan Strategic Development Plan 2017</u>  Policy 1 - Placemaking  Policy 10 - Delivering Heat and Electricity  Policy 13 - Forestry and Woodland  Policy 14 - Green Belt</p>

	<p>Schedule 14 - Strategic Scales of Development  Schedule 15 - Indicative Compatible Development</p> <p>Diagram 10 - Assessment of Development Proposals</p>
<p>LOCAL DEVELOPMENT  PLAN POLICIES/  OTHER MATERIAL  CONSIDERATIONS</p>	<p><u>Adopted Renfrewshire Local Development Plan 2014</u>  Policy ENV1 - Green Belt  Policy ENV2 - Natural Heritage  Policy ENV3 - Built Heritage  Policy ENV4 - The Water Environment  Policy I1 - Connecting Places  Policy I5 - Flooding and Drainage  Policy I6 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments  Policy I7 - Low Carbon Developments</p> <p><u>New Development Supplementary Guidance 2014</u>  Delivering the Environment Strategy - Environment  Development Criteria, Green Belt, Archaeological Sites, Natural  Heritage, Trees, Woodland and Forestry, Biodiversity, Local  Designations, Contaminated Land and The Water Environment  Delivering the Infrastructure Strategy - Connecting Places,  Flooding and Drainage and Renewable and Low Carbon  Energy Developments</p> <p><u>Proposed Renfrewshire Local Development Plan 2021 (as  modified)</u>  Policy ENV1 - Green Belt  Policy ENV2 - Natural Heritage  Policy ENV3 - Built and Cultural Heritage  Policy ENV4 - The Water Environment  Policy ENV6 - Natural Resources (Minerals and Soil)  Policy I1 - Connecting Places  Policy I3 - Flooding and Drainage  Policy I4 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments</p> <p><u>New Development Supplementary Guidance</u>  Delivering the Environment Strategy - Green Belt, Natural  Heritage, Archaeological Sites, Local Designations,  Contaminated Land, The Water Environment and Natural  Resources (Soil)  Delivering the Infrastructure Strategy - Connecting Places,  Flooding and Drainage and Renewable and Low Carbon  Energy Developments</p> <p><u>Material Considerations</u></p> <p><u>National Planning Framework 3 (NPF)</u>  States that planning will play a key role in delivering on the  Scottish Governments targets on carbon emission reduction  and facilitating the transition to a low carbon economy.</p> <p>Electricity grid enhancements will facilitate increased renewable  electricity generation across Scotland. However, the</p>

	<p>environmental impacts of this type of infrastructure require careful management.</p> <p><u>Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)</u>  The planning system should support the transformational change to a low carbon economy and support the development of a diverse range of electricity generation including the expansion of renewable energy generation capacity.</p>
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<p>PLANNING HISTORY</p>	<p>20/0424/NO - Erection of grid stability facility with associated landscaping, access, parking and grid connection. Accepted 11/09/2020.</p>
<p>DESCRIPTION</p>	<p>This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a grid stability facility including grid stability unit with associated ancillary equipment, access, landscaping, drainage, car parking, an operations centre and boundary enclosures.</p> <p>The site comprises of rough grassland approx. 9 hectares in area.</p> <p>It is bound by Gleniffer Road to the south east, rough grassland to the south west and High Bardrain Wood to the north west.</p> <p>The facility will be connected via an underground cable to the Neilston substation which is approx. 400m to the north east. The intervening land is also rough grassland some of which is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).</p> <p>There is an existing informal access onto Gleniffer Road which will be upgraded to form the access to the proposed facility.</p> <p>The facility is laid out in a linear fashion east to west across the site. The western end of the facility comprises of the main plant building which is 12m in height at the apex. The main building is flanked by colling equipment and backup generators. A transformer adjoins the main plant building to the east. The proposed operations centre is detached from the main compound to the east.</p> <p>The purpose of the development is to provide stability to the national grid with respect to electricity supply. Stability within the grid was previously provided by large power stations which would operate continuously. However, these power stations are being brought offline and a larger proportion of electricity is now generated by renewable sources.</p> <p>Renewable sources are intermittent in terms of supply, and do not provide the same stabilising qualities. Additional infrastructure is therefore required to ensure stability is maintained across the national grid.</p>

<p>PLANNING ASSESSMENT</p>	<p><b><u>National Planning Framework 3 (NPF)</u></b>  The proposed development complies with the NPF aspirations for the planning system to facilitate the transition to a low carbon economy.</p> <p>The proposed infrastructure is required as it will support the transition away from large centralised power stations to a mix of renewable energy sources.</p> <p><b><u>Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)</u></b>  The proposed development complies with SPP in principle as it will support the transformational change to a low carbon economy.</p> <p>While the development does not generate electricity, it will play a vital role in the transition towards more energy being generated from renewable sources.</p> <p>The development will therefore allow Renfrewshire to further contribute towards the achievement of national renewable energy targets.</p> <p>In addition to creating greater capacity for renewable energy within the national grid, the development has a direct impact on the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions as it negates the need for grid stability to be provided by gas peaking plants.</p> <p>The applicant estimates this saving to be in the region of 240,000 tons of carbon dioxide per year.</p> <p><b><u>Clydeplan Strategic Development Plan 2017</u></b>  The proposed development contributes towards supporting the transition towards the generation of more electricity by renewable sources.</p> <p>At a strategic level this will contribute towards the creation of a safe and pleasant, resource efficient and resilient city region.</p> <p>The proposed development is an important and necessary piece of infrastructure in this regard.</p> <p>The development will therefore support the Clydeplan vision and spatial development strategy.</p> <p><b><u>Adopted Local Development Plan 2014</u></b>  Policy ENV1 states appropriate development within the green belt will be considered acceptable where it can be demonstrated that it is compatible with the provisions of the new development supplementary guidance.</p> <p>The supplementary guidance lists several forms of development which are acceptable within the green belt in principle. This includes essential infrastructure such as</p>
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	<p>electricity equipment.</p> <p>The development is considered to constitute essential infrastructure as it will provide stability and security to the national grid.</p> <p>This will increase the capacity of the grid to accommodate energy generated from renewable sources, and thus facilitate the transition towards a low carbon economy.</p> <p>The site has been selected primarily for its proximity to the Neilston substation which allows for a connection to be formed to the national grid. A green belt location is therefore considered to be necessary in this instance.</p> <p>Detailed site selection thereafter has been informed by topography and the presence of existing natural heritage features to ensure the physical impact of the development on the green belt is reduced as much as possible.</p> <p>The development will not result in the loss of prime quality agricultural land or agricultural land of lesser quality that is locally important.</p> <p>The site is located within the Rugged Upland Farmland landscape character type. However, the landscape in this area is also characterised by existing electricity infrastructure associated with the Neilston substation.</p> <p>The landscape is of low sensitivity to the development in this regard, and there is capacity within the landscape to accommodate additional electricity infrastructure of this nature.</p> <p>The site for the proposal is a low-lying point within the landscape that is set back from Gleniffer Road. The existing woodland to the north provides a backdrop to the development, and additional planting will over time provide a screen to the south and west.</p> <p>The grouping of the buildings and the overall design is functional. However, consideration has been given to the finish colour for the external cladding to help anchor the building into the site.</p> <p>In terms of landscape and visual impact, the applicant has submitted a comprehensive landscape and visual appraisal of the proposed development.</p> <p>The landscape will therefore be able to absorb the proposed development with a low impact on the existing character and visual amenity.</p> <p>As noted above the existing plantation is very poorly</p>
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	<p>established. The landscape proposals therefore provide an opportunity to deliver woodland planting that will establish at the site.</p> <p>Over time the landscape proposals will improve overall woodland coverage at the site. In addition to screening the site, the additional woodland coverage will also contribute towards biodiversity gain and carbon capture.</p> <p>The SINC designation does not cover the area in which the facility will be developed. However, it does cover the corridor in which the cable connection to the Neilston substation will be formed.</p> <p>The exact route for the cable has not yet been identified. A methodology for the laying of the cable will be developed to ensure that the associated works do not have a detrimental effect on the SINC. The methodology shall be informed by the recommendations within the ecology report.</p> <p>On balance it is considered that the development will not have a significant detrimental effect on identified nature conservation interests at the site provided the relevant conditions as discussed above are applied. Furthermore, the ecology report also identifies opportunities for habitat enhancement and biodiversity gain at the site.</p> <p>The proposed development will comply with Policy ENV1.</p> <p>Policy ENV2 states that developments must not have an adverse effect on the integrity of sites protected for their natural conservation interest.</p> <p>The development will not have a significant effect on existing species, habitats, and ecosystems. The area on which the facility will be developed is not a priority habitat, and the ecology report found little evidence of protected species in the vicinity of the site.</p> <p>In this instance the development includes the planting of 3 hectares of native broadleaved trees. The proposed planting will form an integral part of the development, and the establishment of the additional woodland creates an opportunity for significant biodiversity gain at the site.</p> <p>On balance it is considered that the impact of the development on natural heritage resources will not be significant. Any potential impact can be suitably managed by conditions. The development will also enhance the natural heritage value of the site on the long term. I am therefore satisfied that the development complies with Policy ENV2 and the associated supplementary guidance.</p>
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	<p>Policy ENV4 states that there will be support for the protection of the existing water environment and the enhancement of biodiversity, flora and fauna.</p> <p>Mitigatory measures will ensure the water environment is protected. These habitats could also be improved by drain blocking and reducing grazing pressure for example.</p> <p>In view of the above I am satisfied that the development complies with Policy ENV4 and the associated new development supplementary guidance.</p> <p>Policy I6 states that renewable and low carbon developments will be supported in principle where they are appropriate in terms of location, siting and design having regard to both individual and cumulative effects.</p> <p>While the development does not generate energy, it is a necessary component of an electricity grid that is based on energy from renewable and low carbon sources.</p> <p>The supplementary guidance on renewable and low carbon technologies states that the transition to a low carbon economy must include maintaining an effective supply of affordable energy and other resources. The Council is supportive of an increase in the proportion of electricity produced from renewable sources provided several criteria are met.</p> <p>The proposed development is considered to comply with Policy I6 and the associated supplementary guidance.</p> <p>Policy I7 aims to reduce the predicted carbon dioxide emissions from proposed developments.</p> <p>As noted above the proposed development will play a key role in modernising the electricity network and improving capacity for renewable energy generation.</p> <p>Infrastructure such as the proposed grid stability facility are a necessary component of a low carbon electricity supply. The development is therefore vital with respect to addressing the climate change emergency. The proposal would therefore fully accord with the provisions of Policy I7.</p> <p><b><u>Proposed Local Development Plan 2021 (as modified)</u></b></p> <p>The policies within the Proposed Local Development Plan and the associated Supplementary Guidance generally reflect those of the currently adopted plan.</p> <p>The proposed Local Development Plan introduces an additional Policy ENV6 which refers to natural resources including minerals and soils. This policy is relevant given the presence of peat deposits at the site.</p>
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	<p>Policy ENV6 states that new developments should avoid the unnecessary disturbance of areas of peatland or carbon rich soils.</p> <p>The peat encountered on site falls into two classifications which do not indicate priority peatland habitat as defined by the Carbon and Peatland Map 2016 prepared by Nature Scotland (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage).</p> <p>The developer has considered peat disturbance as part of the design process. The development footprint has been designed to minimise peat disturbance and to ensure that the areas of deepest peat deposits have been avoided. Where peat will be excavated it will be reused on site as part of the restoration of landscaped areas.</p> <p>Detailed measures relating to the excavation, storage and reuse of peat will be encompassed within a Peat Management Plan. The plan shall be prepared in accordance with SEPA guidelines on peat management and the recommendations within the ecology report, and restoration of peatland through rewetting for example will also be sought. The requirement for the submission of a Peat Management Plan will be secured via a condition.</p>
<p><b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION</b></p>	<p>The proposed development will contribute towards the continued de-carbonisation of the electricity network.</p> <p>The development should be considered as a necessary piece of infrastructure with respect to addressing the climate change emergency. It provides an opportunity for Renfrewshire to contribute positively towards the renewable energy generation and carbon reduction targets set by the Scottish Government.</p> <p>Having considered the above assessment, it is found that the proposal complies with the policies and guidance of the Strategic Development Plan, the Local Development Plan and all material considerations. It is therefore recommended that the application is approved subject to conditions.</p>

**Reason for Decision**

The proposal accords with the provisions of the Development Plan and there were no material consideration which outweighed the presumption in favour of development according with the Development Plan.

**Conditions**

- 1 That prior to the commencement of development on site, the developer shall submit a Peat Management Plan for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The management plan will set out the means by which the disturbance of peat has been avoided, and thereafter detail methods for the handling, storage and compensatory reinstatement of peat that will be disturbed taking cognizance of the

recommendations within the ecology report. The approved Peat Management Plan shall thereafter be implemented on site to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure peat on the site is protected and any detrimental impacts are mitigated in the interests of safeguarding carbon rich soils.

- 2 All works associated with the implementation of a visibility splay measuring 4.5m x 215m x 1.05m shall be undertaken prior to the facility being brought into use. The splay shall thereafter be maintained throughout the life of the development to ensure that no features within the splay shall exceed 1.05m in height.

Reason: To ensure the site can be accessed safely.

- 3 That all planting as detailed within the approved Landscape Proposals drawing (including additional compensatory replanting required in association with condition 2) shall be completed on site within the first planting season following the facility hereby approved being brought into use.

Reason: To ensure the required landscaping is completed in a timely manner in the interests of natural heritage and visual amenity.

- 4 That prior to the completion of the landscape proposals hereby approved the developer shall submit a woodland management plan for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The management plan shall set out measures to be implemented on site to ensure that all woodland planting becomes established. This shall include restocking to replace any trees which are removed, become diseased or die. The measures within the management plan shall thereafter be implemented on site to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the woodland becomes established, in the interests of natural heritage and visual amenity.

- 5 That prior to the commencement of development on site, the developer shall submit a Construction Management Plan for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The approved Construction Management Plan shall thereafter be implemented on site during the construction phase to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the construction phase is managed appropriately in the interests of the safe and efficient operation of the local road network.

- 6 That prior to the facility hereby approved being brought into use, the developer shall submit a traffic management plan for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The management plan shall identify measures to reduce the speed of vehicles along the stretch of Gleniffer Road conterminous with the visibility splay area, and a timetable for the installation of the measures. The measures shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the agreed upon timetable.

Reason: To reduce traffic speeds in the interests of traffic safety.

- 7 That prior to commencement of any works associated with the connecting cable between the site and the Neilston substation, the developer shall first submit a construction environmental management plan and methodology for the written

approval of the Planning Authority. The methodology shall address any potential negative impacts on the Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), and shall also include measures to improve the habitat within the SINC taking cognisance of the recommendations within the approved ecology report and the drawing provided by Scottish Power Energy Networks titled FEED\_NE\_001 Rev 1 (16/03/2021). The installation of the connecting cable shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the approved methodology.

Reason: To ensure any detrimental impact on the SINC is mitigated in the interests of natural heritage.

- 8 That all aspects of the implementation of the development hereby approved shall be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations as set out in Section 5 of the ecology report.

Reason: In the interests of natural heritage.

- 9 That prior to the facility hereby approved becoming operational the developer shall submit a noise assessment for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The assessment shall demonstrate that the noise limits within the initial noise assessment have been complied with, and shall include a specification of the measures implemented on site to mitigate noise impact and any ongoing maintenance requirements thereafter. The facility shall thereafter operate in accordance with the noise assessment.

Reason: To ensure noise impact is mitigated in the interests of amenity.

- 10 That six months prior to the facility hereby approved ceasing operations the developer shall submit a site decommissioning and restoration plan with associated timetable for the written approval of the Planning Authority. All decommissioning and site restoration works shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the agreed timetable to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the site is restored following decommissioning in the interests of visual amenity.

- 11 That the tree protection measures outlined in section 8 of the approved tree survey shall be implemented on site prior to the commencement of the construction phase of the development, and maintained thereafter for the duration that construction activities are taking place. This includes provision for a construction exclusion zone around High Bardrain Woodland in accordance with BS 5837:2012.

Reason: To ensure that existing trees on the site are protected in the interests of natural heritage.

- 12 That all works associated with the implementation of the facility hereby approved shall be undertaken in accordance with SEPA Guidance for Pollution Prevention for works and maintenance in or near water: GPP5 Version 1.2 February 2018.

Reason: To ensure the risk of pollution is minimised in the interests of protecting the water environment.

- 13 No development shall take place within the development site until the developer

has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant, agreed by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Thereafter the developer shall ensure that the programme of archaeological works is fully implemented and that all recording and recovery of archaeological resources within the development site is undertaken to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority in agreement with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

Reason: To ensure any archaeological resources on site are recovered and/or recorded in the interests of safeguarding built heritage.

- 14 That prior to the facility hereby approved becoming operational the developer shall submit for the written approval of the Planning Authority a management and maintenance plan for the SUDS system hereby approved. The plan shall set out measures to be adopted to ensure the SuDS system remains fully functional for the lifetime of the development. The facility shall thereafter operate in accordance with the approved management and maintenance plan.

Reason: To ensure the SUDS system is managed appropriately in the interests of natural heritage and the water environment.

Alasdair Morison  
Head of Economy and Development

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - Background Papers  
For further information or to inspect any letters of objection and other background papers, please contact Sharon Marklow on 0141 618 7835.