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Our Ref: 24/00163/EIASCR

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Chief Executive
Kathryn Lindsay

By email only to: - Lee.Stirrat@gov.scot

Dear Sir,

**THE ELECTRICITY WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)
(SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017**

**RESPONSE OF ANGUS COUNCIL TO REQUEST BY SCOTTISH MINISTERS FOR
CONSULTATION COMMENTS FOR A SCREENING OPINION FOR PROPOSED
TEALING TO ARBROATH 132KV OVERHEAD LINE TIE IN**

Angus Council has been consulted by Scottish Ministers under Regulation 8 of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 and asked to express their view on whether the installation of 2 replacement steel lattice towers and the installation of 132kV downloads on land close to Towers 20 and 21 at Braeside of Gagie, Kellas is EIA development or not.

The proposal falls within Schedule 2 Category 2(a), an electric line installed above ground with a voltage of 132 kilovolts or more, of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

In screening the development, it is necessary to consider the characteristics of the proposed development in combination with its proposed location to identify the potential for interactions between it and its environment and therefore determine whether the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment. In determining whether a particular development is likely to have such effects, this authority has taken account of the selection criteria in Schedule 3 to the Regulations. Three categories of criteria are listed:

1. Characteristics of the development
2. Location of the development
3. Characteristics of the potential impact

The council is mindful that regulation 8 of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 requires a request for a screening opinion to be accompanied by amongst other things, a description of the location of the proposed development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected; a description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development; and, a

description of any likely significant effects, to the extent of the information available on such effects, of the proposed development on the environment.

Available information indicates that there are no designated built, cultural or natural heritage designations within the site but there are within 5km of the site; the site is in proximity to the 'Brightly to west Wellbank' Core Path (no. 202) and Big Latch woodland which is within the NatureScot ancient woodland inventory; much of the site comprises prime quality agricultural land and the wider area is interspersed with residential property and other formal recreational routes.

The main issues which have emerged during the consideration of the proposal are: -

- Although precise details relating to the appearance of the replacement towers have not been provided, but on the basis the towers are described as 'of a similar height (current height 33m) and design and located adjacent to the existing tower locations', the landscape and visual impacts associated with the development are considered likely to be similar to those experienced as a result of the existing Towers 20 and 21. Any minor changes in appearance/location is unlikely to significantly alter the existing landscape. There would be no significant transboundary impacts. For clarity this Angus Council consultation response has been provided on the presumption that once works on the proposed replacement towers have been completed the existing Towers 20 and 21 are to be removed and the area of ground at those sites restored.
- There are no natural heritage designations within the site, but the Gagie Marsh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is approximately 1.3 km to the south of the site, the Big Latch area of ancient woodland is to the west and in proximity to the site and the development is within areas of prime quality agricultural land. That being said, it is noted that the submissions suggest that there is no direct connectivity between the proposal and the SSSI, and there are no watercourses within the immediate vicinity (100 m) of the proposed works that would lead to any potential indirect effect on the SSSI; there would be no requirement to fell any trees in the adjacent woodland as a result of the works; and a suite of Species Protection Plans (SPPs) would be implemented during construction to mitigate any effects on protected species. The submission of further/revised supplementary information as part of any subsequent consenting process and the inclusion of appropriate mitigation measures could ensure impacts would be appropriately considered/controlled. On that provision it is unlikely that any impacts upon protected species or sites or areas of natural value would be significant in terms of environmental impact assessment.
- In terms of amenity impacts, noise, vibration and traffic associated with the construction of the development is one of the main concerns, no detailed information has been provided in this regard, but given the scale of the development and as the submitted information suggests construction is only anticipated to last for up to 8 weeks, it is unlikely that impacts upon amenity arising from construction activities would be significant in terms of environmental impact assessment. Any impacts could be suitably considered/regulated through the consenting process.
- The proposal has the potential to directly impact upon the 'Brightly to west Wellbank' Core Path (no. 202) if this is used by construction traffic. However similar to the above bullet, it is unlikely these temporary impacts would be significant and impacts could be suitably considered/regulated through the consenting process.

In summary, whilst the development would give rise to environmental impacts those impacts are not considered to be significant in terms of environmental impact assessment. While limited information is provided with the screening request, the nature of the development proposed is not particularly complex and the development would mostly replace existing infrastructure of a similar height (current height 33m) and design and in a similar location. Landscape and visual changes would be relatively localised, and any construction impacts would be short lived. Furthermore, some impacts could potentially be mitigated, and others could be considered through the consenting process with the provision and consideration of relevant supporting information. Angus Council concludes that on the basis of available information they are satisfied that the proposed development is unlikely to have significant environmental effects. Accordingly, the Council is of the opinion that the proposal does not constitute Environmental Impact Assessment development and therefore does not require the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

The above response focuses on the screening request made for the replacement of 2 steel lattice towers and the installation of 132kV downleads and provides no comment on the acceptability of the referenced 100MW solar array forming part of the Tealing Solar Energy Park development. Comments in relation to this proposal do not prejudice the council's consideration of any proposal for other development in the area.

The council has not undertaken consultation with external bodies in relation to the screening request.

If calling or telephoning, please ask for Stephanie Porter on 01307 492378 or e-mail PorterSG@angus.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Porter
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