
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

19th May 2021

Planning Committee

Locality	North Coast and Cumbraes
Reference	21/00159/PP
Application Registered	15th March 2021
Decision Due	15th May 2021
Ward	Dalry And West Kilbride

Recommendation	Approved with no Conditions
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Location	Site To South East Of Hunterston B Power Station West Kilbride Ayrshire
Applicant	Scottish Power Energy Networks Fao Mr Brendan Tinney
Proposal	Erection of 132kV substation, including detailed siting, design, external appearance, landscaping and means of access

1. Description

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a 132kV substation including landscaping and means of access. Permission for the principle of a substation was granted 24th February 2017 (ref: 16/01053/PPP). The site is to the south-east of the Hunterston B Nuclear Power Station. Immediately to the north-west is an existing substation. The site is currently an area of hardstanding formed in association with a convertor station and substation (ref: 12/00643/MSCM) sited to the south of the proposed location.

The site is approx. 0.66ha in area. It would be accessed in the southern corner from an existing road within the convertor station complex. The substation building would be within the northern corner of the site with plant along the south-western boundary. The site would be enclosed by a 3m high security fence. The plant would be approx. 9.5m in height. The substation building which would have a footprint of some 400sqm, would be some 8m in height.

The proposal was subject to EIA Screening as part of the permission in principle application process and found not to require an EIA. The application has been supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and an Archaeology Impact Assessment.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal found that the principal habitat was the gravel hardstanding with some poor semi-improved grassland surround the hardstanding. There is some woodland and scrub on the borders. Neither any bat nor badger features were recorded on site. The woodland and scrub provide bird breeding opportunities and a barn owl nest box was recorded on a tree. Recommendations are made to minimise any impacts on protected species during construction.

The Archaeology Impact Assessment relates to the application site and a further area some 100m to the south. The Assessment states that due to previous ground disturbance, the application site has 'low to negligible' archaeological potential and does not recommend any mitigation measures. Recommendations are made for the southern area. However, this area does not form part of the planning application.

The application site is identified by the Local Development Plan adopted 2019 ("the LDP") as part of the Hunterston Development Area. It is identified as Countryside. The site and surrounding area have been developed as a convertor station, substation and associated infrastructure (ref. 12/00643/MSCM) and now form part of the wider Hunterston energy generation and supply uses.

It is considered that the relevant policies of the LDP are Strategic Policy 2: Placemaking, Strategic Policy 3: Hunterston Strategic Development Area and Policy 29: Energy Infrastructure Development.

Relevant Development Plan Policies

SP3 Strategic Development Area 1: Hunt
Strategic Development Area 1: Hunterston

Hunterston

We recognise the strategic national importance of Hunterston as an energy hub and deep water port. We strongly support the inclusion of Hunterston in the National Planning Framework 4. In particular we will support the following uses:

Hunterston Deep Water Port

- o Renewables generation, manufacture, maintenance, research and development, testing and training (including support for a renewables skills academy)
- o Strategic grid connections recognising its importance as a landfall to support the offshore renewable energy sector
- o Maritime construction and decommissioning (including oil and gas structures)
- o Bulk handling facilities for importing, processing and distributing all dry and bulk liquid cargoes
- o Local scale Bio-mass energy generation developments as per Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009
- o Other storage, processing and distribution uses and general light industrial activities where they would not undermine the strategic importance of, and unique assets of Hunterston as a deep water port.

Hunterston Nuclear

- o Appropriate development to support the operational life of the existing facility
- o Nuclear decommissioning and radioactive waste management from within the site
- o Other facilities for large and small scale power generation

Energy Sector & Nuclear Facilities

Hunterston provides a unique combination of energy generation, infrastructure and network accessibility.

The decommissioning of Hunterston A is ongoing and will be followed at some point after 2023 by the

decommissioning of Hunterston B. We want to support the retention of the high value jobs in the energy industry at Hunterston.

Hunterston is an area where co-ordinated action and a masterplanned approach is required.

We would expect all development to take account of the special environmental and safety constraints of Hunterston including detailed transport studies to identify options for enhancing port/rail/road accessibility, and management of impact of uses on nearby communities and the natural and built heritage assets in the area.

Strategic Policy 2

Placemaking

Our Placemaking policy will ensure we are meeting LOIP priorities to make North Ayrshire safer and healthier by ensuring that all development contributes to making quality places. The policy also safeguards, and where possible enhances environmental quality through the avoidance of unacceptable adverse environmental or amenity impacts. We expect that all applications for planning permission meet the six qualities of successful places, contained in this policy. This is in addition to establishing the principle of development in accordance with Strategic Policy 1: Spatial Strategy. These detailed criteria are generally not repeated in the detailed policies section of the LDP. They will apply, as appropriate, to all developments.

Six qualities of a successful place

Distinctive

The proposal draws upon the positive characteristics of the surrounding area including landscapes, topography, ecology, skylines, spaces and scales, street and building forms, and materials to create places with a sense of identity.

Welcoming

The proposal considers the future users of the site and helps people to find their way around, for example, by accentuating existing landmarks to create or improve views (including sea views), locating a distinctive work of art in a notable place or making the most of gateway features to and from the development. It should also ensure that appropriate signage and lighting is used to improve safety and illuminate attractive buildings.

Safe and Pleasant

The proposal creates attractive places by providing a sense of security, including by encouraging activity, considering crime rates, providing a clear distinction between private and public space, creating active frontages and considering the benefits of natural surveillance for streets, paths and open spaces.

The proposal creates a pleasant, positive sense of place by promoting visual quality, encouraging social and economic interaction and activity, and by considering the place before vehicle movement.

The proposal respects the amenity of existing and future users in terms of noise, privacy, sunlight/daylight, smells, vibrations, glare, traffic generation, and parking. The proposal sufficiently investigates and responds to any issues of ground instability.

Adaptable

The proposal considers future users of the site and ensures that the design is adaptable to their needs. This includes consideration of future changes of use that may involve a mix of densities, tenures, and typologies to ensure that future diverse but compatible uses can be integrated including the provision of versatile multi-functional greenspace.

Resource Efficient

The proposal maximises the efficient use of resources. This can be achieved by re-using or sharing existing resources and by minimising their future depletion. This includes consideration of technological and natural means such as flood drainage systems, heat networks, solar gain, renewable energy and waste recycling as well as use of green and blue networks.

Easy to Move Around and Beyond

The proposal considers the connectedness of the site for people before the movement of motor vehicles, by prioritising sustainable and active travel choices, such as walking, cycling and public transport and ensuring layouts reflect likely desire lines, through routes and future expansions.

Detailed Policy 29 - Energy Infrastructure

Policy 29:

Energy Infrastructure Development

We will support development proposals for energy infrastructure development, including wind, solar, tidal, cropping and other renewable sources, where they will contribute positively to our transition to a low carbon economy and have no unacceptable adverse environmental impacts, taking into consideration (including cumulatively) the following:

Environmental

- o Communities and individual dwellings - including visual impact, residential amenity, noise and shadow flicker;
- o Water quality;
- o Landscape - including avoiding unacceptable adverse impacts on our landscape designations;
- o Effects on the natural heritage - including birds;
- o Carbon rich soils including peat;
- o Impacts on the historic environment - including scheduled monuments, listed buildings and their settings.

Community

- o Establishing the use of the site for energy infrastructure development;
- o providing a net economic impact - including socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities;
- o Scale of contribution to renewable energy generation targets;
- o Public access - including impact on long distance walking and cycling routes and scenic routes identified in the National Planning Framework;

- o Impacts on tourism and recreation;
- o Specific locational opportunities for energy storage/generation.

Public Safety

- o Greenhouse gas emissions;
- o Aviation and defence interests and seismological recording;
- o Telecommunications and broadcasting installations - particularly ensuring that transmission links are not compromised; radio telemetry interference and below ground assets;
- o Road traffic and adjacent trunk roads;
- o Effects on hydrology, the water environment and flood risk including drinking water quality and quantity (to both the public and private water supplies);
- o Decommissioning of developments - including ancillary infrastructure, and site restoration and aftercare.

Proposals should include redundancy plans which will demonstrate how apparatus will be timeously removed as reasonably soon as the approved scheme ceases operation. There may be a requirement for financial bonds to ensure that decommissioning can be achieved. Taking into consideration the above, proposals for wind turbine developments should accord with the Spatial Framework (as mapped) and consider the current Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Farm Development in North Ayrshire. This study will be used as a point of reference for assessing all wind energy proposals including definitions of what small to large scale entails.

Buildings: Low and Zero Carbon Generating Technology

Proposals for all new buildings will be required to demonstrate that at least 10% of the current carbon emissions reduction set by Scottish Building Standards will be met through the installation and operation of low and zero-carbon generating technologies. A statement will be required to be submitted demonstrating compliance with this requirement. The percentage will increase at the next review of the local development plan.

This requirement will not apply to:

1. Alterations and extensions to buildings
2. Change of use or conversion of buildings
3. Ancillary buildings that stand alone and cover an area less than 50 square metres
4. Buildings which will not be heated or cooled, other than by heating provided solely for frost protection.
5. Buildings which have an intended life of less than two years.

2. Consultations and Representations

The application was subject to statutory neighbour notification procedures. There have been no comments received. The following consultations were undertaken:

Office for Nuclear Regulation - no comments.

Response: Noted.

NAC Active Travel and Transport - No objections. It is suggested that Transport Scotland be consulted in relation to any matters relating to the access and junction from the A78.

Response: Noted. There no proposed alterations in respect of the access and junction from the A78. As the proposal is more than 67m from the trunk road (it is approx. 1.6km distant) Transport Scotland would not wish to be consulted.

NAC Environmental Health - No objections.

Response: Noted.

West of Scotland Archaeology Service - No objections and agree with the submitted assessment. A condition relating to the southern area is suggested.

Response: Noted. However, the southern area, where archaeological mitigation may be required, does not form part of this application and therefore a condition is neither necessary nor relevant.

West Kilbride Community Council - No comments.

Response: Noted.

3. Analysis

Strategic Policy 3, in respect of Hunterston, recognises the strategic national importance of Hunterston and sets out the type of development which will be supported, which includes energy sector development. The Policy states that a masterplanned approach is required. To date a masterplan has not been submitted to the Council for approval. In the absence of a masterplan, development proposals require careful consideration in order to ensure the site is not sterilised for future development.

The proposal site is some 0.66ha in area which equates to roughly 0.5% of the Strategic Development Area, not including the areas identified as Hunterston Nuclear or Marketable Employment Land in the LDP. The proposal is for the installation of plant, relating to the energy sector, on an existing hardstanding associated with similar existing development. Therefore, despite the lack of a masterplan, it is considered the proposal accords with the identified suitable uses for the area and would not interfere with any wider development proposals.

Policy 29 of the LDP states that support will be given to energy infrastructure development where it will contribute to the transition to a low carbon economy and have no unacceptable adverse environmental impacts. The relevant factors in this instance are considered to be impacts on residential amenity by way of noise, landscape and impact on trees and habitats.

Strategic Policy 2 of the LDP sets out the qualities of a successful place including the visual and amenity considerations for a development. The substation would be used to support the ongoing export of energy from Hunterston and connections to the National Grid. The development would be located adjacent to the existing Hunterston Converter Station and substation and would complement and facilitate the ongoing use of the site.

The nearest residential property is approx. 580m to the east over the northern shoulder of Campbellton Hill with woodland plantation in between. Environmental Health has no

objection to the application. The development would have a utilitarian appearance, as may be expected in an industrial area. It would be viewed only in the context of the existing electricity buildings and plant. As such it is not considered there would be any adverse visual impact from the development.

The development is for energy infrastructure. It is not considered that the development would have any unacceptable environmental impacts. The proposal therefore accords with Strategic Policy 2 and Policy 29 of the LDP. The proposal also accords with the aims of Strategic Policy 3 for the development of Hunterston. The lack of a masterplan for the wider site means that the proposal does not fully comply with Strategic Policy 3. However, given the other material considerations, including compliance with other policies, the scale and location of the proposal, that it will not lead to the neutralisation of the wider site for development, and the planning history, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

4. Full Recommendation

Approved with no Conditions

James Miller
Chief Planning Officer

For further information please contact Mr Iain Davies on 01294 324320.

Appendix 1 – Location Plan

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