



ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE

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Your reference: 13902

Our reference: 20/00962/SCN/NM/LMC

Emailed to :
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13 November 2020

Dear Sir

THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 1999: SCREENING DIRECTIONS OF THE PLANNING AUTHORITY (REGULATION 6)

PROPOSAL: 20/00962/SCN Installation of a synchronous compensator and ancillary infrastructure at Land South of Blackhillock Substation Keith Moray

A formal screening opinion has been requested from ESB Asset Development (UK) Limited TNEI Services Ltd regarding the possibility of the above development (which fall under Schedule 2, Category 3 'Energy Industry', over 0.5 hectares possibly requiring EIA.

Apologies for the considerable delay in replying to the request.

The applicant has provided sufficient information for Moray Council to be able to determine whether EIA is required under the current regulations. This has been assessed against the criteria within the Schedule 3 of the above EIA Regulations as to whether or not EIA is required for any subsequent planning application.


It is noted that the site is not subject to any international, national or local environmental or landscape designations. The locality through the presence of significant national grid infrastructure, pylons, other energy infrastructure (with some consented but not yet built) and quarrying activity is already the subject of significant intervention in the landscape. There are no water courses in the immediate vicinity of the site, and nor does the site occupy any woodland. Considering these factors against the submitted report to inform screening by the applicant, we would concur with its assessment and conclusions and overall assessment of significance.

On the basis of the above, Moray Council consider there to be no significant effects on the Environment and that Environmental Impact Assessment procedures are not required for the proposed development. In terms of mitigation, we do note that there are several

residences in the immediate locality, and some noise generated already by the nearby facilities referred to above. We would strongly suggest that any planning application is supported by a noise impact assessment, taking into consideration existing background noise levels, anticipated noise from the plant proposed, cumulative noise issues and any noise mitigation required. As the area is currently open agricultural land, pre-construction ecological surveys would be also be recommended.

Lastly, with the large extent of development in the area is beginning to have cumulative visual effects but given the scale of the development proposed it would not trigger the need for EIA. Suitable mitigation of visual impact could be propose some permanent landscaping within the construction layout area post construction to screen the facility from views on the public road to the east.

Yours faithfully

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Neal MacPherson
Principal Planning Officer