



**STEPHENSON
HALLIDAY**

Planning, Landscape & Environment
an **RSK** company

GLENSAUGH RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT, NEAR LAURENCEKIRK, ABERDEENSHIRE, AB30 1HB

**PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
FOR A HYDROGEN PRODUCTION FACILITY AND
ASSOCIATED GROUND AND ROOF MOUNTED
SOLAR ARRAYS**

**On behalf of ITP Energised/The James Hutton
Institute**

December 2023

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Document history

	Name	Date
Author	Holly Robinson	14/12/2023
Technical Reviewer	Nick Edwards	14/12/2023
Approved	Charlotte Kenyon	18/12/2023

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Stephenson Halliday (SH) on behalf of the James Hutton Institute and relates to a proposed renewable energy development at the Applicant's Glensaugh Farm situated near Laurencekirk, Aberdeenshire.

1.2 The Applicant

1.2.1 The Applicant for the Proposed Development is the James Hutton Institute, and the Proposed Development relates directly to one of their research farms, Glensaugh Research Farm.

1.2.2 The James Hutton Institute is a globally recognised research organisation delivering fundamental and applied science to drive sustainable use of land and natural resources. The Institute's research farms have been at the forefront of innovation in agricultural practices; trialling and testing transformative ways of managing their land.

1.2.3 Glensaugh Research Farm is managed as an upland livestock farm, at just over 1,000 hectares (ha) in area and is the home of the Institute's Climate-Positive farming initiative. Innovative research into agricultural practices and environmental management has been carried out at Glensaugh for 80 years.

1.2.4 The Institute has secured funding from the Scottish Government's Just Transition Fund to design and build *HydroGlen*, a green hydrogen powered farming community demonstration facility. The facility is aiming to showcase how farming and other rural communities can become self-reliant, low-carbon energy producers and exporters, generating 100%+ of their energy requirements (electricity, heating, and transport) through a combination of renewable electricity and green hydrogen production.

1.3 The Proposed Development

1.3.1 The Proposed Development that comprises *HydroGlen* consist of three separate distinct elements as follows:

- A single wind turbine with an anticipated installed capacity of up to 1 MW, a proposed maximum hub height of 50 m and maximum tip height of 76 m with associated access track and cable;
- A green hydrogen production facility with electrolyser, fuel cell (expected capacity 100-200 kW, subject to final design) including a hydrogen storage facility and associated Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility, and hydrogen fuelling station;
- A small-scale mix of ground and/or roof mounted solar array with a maximum installed capacity of 210 kW;

1.3.2 There are two separate areas at the Glensaugh Estate proposed to be developed. The first development area relates to the main Glensaugh Farm building complex and surrounding

agricultural fields to the east, where the proposed hydrogen and solar development will be located.

- 1.3.3 The Proposed Turbine Development is located on Loch Hill, within the Glensaugh Estate and approximately 2 km north of the Proposed Hydrogen and Solar Development. The green hydrogen production and storage facility and the roof mounted solar arrays would be located within the main Glensaugh Research Farm complex directly adjacent to the farm buildings. The proposed ground mounted solar array would be located in the field adjacent to the farm complex to the East.
- 1.3.1 Following pre-application advice from Aberdeenshire Council it has been concluded that the most effective approach for the determination of the schemes various components would be through the submission of two separate planning applications. **Therefore, this planning statement relates to the one of these components – the Proposed Development that comprises the solar and hydrogen components.** Hereafter referred to in this Planning Statement as the 'Proposed Development'.
- 1.3.2 This planning application submission is in parallel to a separate application for the single wind turbine (including access track and cable route).

1.4 Application Documentation

- 1.4.1 This planning statement forms part of a suite of documents prepared in support of the application and should be read in conjunction with the following technical reports and supporting drawing.
- 1.4.2 Planning drawings submitted to Local Planning Authority (LPA) to support the planning application include:
- Site Location Plan
 - Site Location Plan - Hydrogen and Solar Development Area
 - Site Layout Plan - Solar, BESS, Hydrogen, EV Chargers
 - Residential Receptors in 2km
- 1.4.3 Reports submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to support the planning application include:
- Noise Impact Assessment
 - Ecological Impact Assessment
 - Transport Statement and Construction Traffic Management Plan
 - Environmental Appraisal (Focusing on Cultural Heritage)
 - Landscape and Visual Appraisal
 - Flood Risk & Drainage Statement

- Glint and Glare Briefing Note

1.5 EIA Screening Request

- 1.5.1 The scheme as whole falls under Schedule 2, 3 *Energy Industry* of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. Schedule 2 Class 3(a) is for the production of electricity, and Class 3 (j) is specifically for installations for harnessing wind power for energy production. The Proposed Development exceeds the threshold of Class 3(a) as the site area exceeds 0.5 ha and the Wind Turbine component of the overall proposal exceeds the threshold of Class 3 (j) with the hub height of the turbine exceeding 15 metres. Consequently, the scale and nature of the overall development meant it had to be 'screened' to assess whether it constituted Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development. If the LPA deemed the project as 'EIA development' it would need to have been the subject of an environmental impact assessment and the applications accompanied by EIA reports.
- 1.5.2 An EIA screening request was submitted to Aberdeenshire Council in February 2023. The information provided as part of the Screening Request was considered to provide sufficient information for the LPA to adopt an opinion as to whether the scheme constitutes EIA development.
- 1.5.3 On the 6th April 2023 Aberdeenshire Council adopted an EIA Screening Opinion (Ref: ENQ/2023/0425). It was concluded:
- "...As the Proposed Development will largely lie within the area covered by existing farm buildings apart from the field where the solar panels would be sited and Lochhill where the turbine will be sited, the Proposed Development is unlikely to have any significant impact upon the Local Nature Conversation Site. As such, based on the information available at the time of assessment, the Planning Service is satisfied that the proposal does not suggest significant environmental impacts would occur and therefore no formal EIA is required."*
- 1.5.4 As such the Local Planning Authority does not consider that the scheme requires an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) and no EIA report need accompany either application.

1.6 Pre-application Request

- 1.6.1 Two Pre-Application Advice requests were submitted to Aberdeenshire Council to ascertain the Planning's Authority's view on the likelihood of planning permission being granted for the Proposed Development. Each pre-application submission was tailored to address the specific components of the overall scheme.
- 1.6.2 On 25th May 2023 Aberdeenshire Council responded to say that the principle of the Proposed Development that comprises the solar and hydrogen components would be accordance with the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023 and National Planning Framework 4, subject to detailed scheme and supporting information addressing the key issues such as impact on landscape, built and natural heritage and the amenity of those living in the area proving to be acceptable.
- 1.6.3 In the case of the hydrogen facility, in order to accord with policy R2 Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023 and Policy 9 of the NPF4 for the redevelopment of brownfield sites,

adequate justification would need to be required to demonstrate that the existing buildings are vacant and / or derelict.

2 THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The Site

- 2.1.1 The application site is sited within the Glensaugh Farm complex. The James Hutton Institute's Glensaugh Research Farm is managed as a 1,000 ha upland livestock farm and a Climate-Positive Farming Initiative. The nearest settlement Auchenclochy, is located approximately 3.7km east from the site and approximately 6.3km north-west of the village of Laurencekirk.
- 2.1.2 The main farm complex comprises several modern agricultural buildings including sheep and cattle building and a number of residential properties.
- 2.1.3 Access to the site is the existing Glensaugh Farm access. This is via the rural road which bisects the farm and connects to the B974 road to the west leading onto surrounding villages and the A90, and east to Drumtochty Castle and on to the B966 and A90.

2.2 Surroundings

- 2.2.1 The Proposed Development site is located within the Braes of the Mearns Special Landscape Area; a local landscape designation placed on an area that exhibits qualities and characteristics within them that are valued locally.
- 2.2.2 The landscape of the Braes of the Mearns features a juxtaposition of flat farmland and wooded areas, highlighted by a dramatic and rugged ridge to the north that indicates the presence of the Highland Boundary Fault.
- 2.2.3 There are no national landscape designations, such as National Scenic Areas (NSAs) or National Parks in the nearby area.
- 2.2.4 Within the site is the Strathfinella Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS), this is a non-statutory designation, designated for its geological and botanical interest.
- 2.2.5 There are no World Heritage Sites or Historic Battlefields located within or close to Glensaugh Farm.
- 2.2.6 There are, however, a number of nationally designated sites of high national importance in the immediate vicinity (Scheduled Monuments). These are:
- Cairn o' Mount Cairns - two burial cairns dating from the Neolithic and Bronze Age (SM4968). The Scheduled Monument is located 125m and 175m to the northeast of the summit of Cairn o' Mount.
 - Glensaugh Farmstead and Field System (SM4842) is located approximately 1 km north-west of the Glensaugh Farm

- 2.2.7 Further designated sites (Scheduled Monuments) of national importance are sited within 5 km of Glensaugh Farm include:
- Kincardine Deer Dyke and Settlements N of Burn of Garrol” (SM 7881 & SM 7882)
 - Arnbarrow, Farmstead and Field System 900m NW of” (SM 4960)
 - Green Castle, earthwork (SM 4264)
 - The Ring, Enclosed Cairn 750 m SE of Arnbarrow (SM 4967)
- 2.2.8 There nearest listed buildings are Clatterin Bridge over Devilly Burn (B-listed) (LB 10741) and Clatterin Bridge Limekiln (C-listed) (LB 10741), both are located approximately 500m west of Glensaugh Farm.
- 2.2.9 Numerous scattered dwellings lie within 5km to the south and east of the site. The closest residential property outside the boundary and ownership of Glensaugh Farm is No 2 Cottage, located on the north side of the road immediately opposite the farm entrance. The other closest property is Old Lodge west of the access road.

3 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The Proposed Development

- 3.1.1 The operational development that is subject to this application is for a green hydrogen production facility with electrolyser, fuel cell, including a hydrogen storage facility and associated Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility and hydrogen fuelling station, and small-scale mix of ground and/or roof mounted solar array with a maximum installed capacity of 210 kW.

Hydrogen Facility

- 3.1.2 The hydrogen plant would be connected via cabling to the single turbine which would be located on Loch Hill which is subject to separate planning application. The hydrogen facility would be sited in the north-west corner of the main farm complex and would require the demolition of some existing buildings and the construction of the new facility in their place.

Project Components

- 3.1.3 The hydrogen facility is proposed to include storage of compressed hydrogen and the Proposed Development would comprise the following components:
- Electrolyser stack consisting of 6 x 28.6 kW units;
 - Six invertors (one per unit);
 - Water treatment unit and treated water tank;
 - 400 kWh of battery energy storage system (BESS) capacity;
 - High pressure hydrogen refuelling station, including a compressor;

- Hydrogen fuel cell;
- Associated necessary electrical infrastructure including Distribution Network Operator (DNO) substation and private substation;
- Hydrogen storage facilities, likely to be storage cylinder tube racks, including a medium pressure buffer tank (main store), high pressure compressor and high pressure tanks associated with the refuelling station;
- Electrical connections to wider renewable energy operations (existing and proposed solar and proposed wind turbine elements).

3.1.4 The Proposed Development is of a low scale with the maximum height of its structures not exceeding 17m. Of the structures proposed, the tallest is the vent stack of the hydrogen production facility (17m), with the majority of the buildings and infrastructure at a level lower than the existing agricultural buildings on site,

Substation and BESS

3.1.5 The Proposed Development would include a BESS, DNO substation and Private substation. The buildings would be sited side by side in a single compound area to the west of the hydrogen plant. The BESS container would reach a total height of up to 2.9 m and would be approximately 2.4m wide and 12.2m in length, whilst the DNO Substation would comprise an approximate area of 2.5m in width and 2.8m in length, with an approximate height of 2.4m. The indicative dimensions for the Private substation comprise a width of 3.2m, length of 6m and total height of 3.3m.

Solar Development

3.1.6 The Applicant is seeking permission for both ground-mounted and roof-mounted solar, however it is anticipated that only one of these will be required (pending final turbine selection and its capacity).

Ground Mounted Solar

3.1.7 The installation of ground mounted solar photovoltaic modules (if required) will be orientated in a southerly direction on land to the east of the existing farm buildings in an existing agricultural field covering an area of approximately 0.47 ha.

3.1.8 250 modules are proposed with the existing field. The modules would be raised approximately 0.8 metres above ground level at their lowest level and 2.9 metres above ground at their highest level. The modules would be mounted on fabricated aluminium frames anchored to the ground. No foundations would be required for the installation of the ground mounted solar photovoltaic modules. The modules would be laid out in rows with 5 metres spacing between each row for ease of access and to prevent any overshadowing. A 2.4 metre high security fence would be erected around the perimeter of the site to enclose the proposed solar array to support farmland management within the application site. Four CCTV cameras are proposed in each of the corners of the area of the Proposed Development. The camera would be mounted on posts each measuring approximately 4.5m in height.

Roof Mounted Solar

- 3.1.9 The proposed solar photovoltaic modules (if required) would be located on two existing modern agricultural buildings. A total of 98 modules are proposed for both agricultural barns. The roof mounted solar photovoltaic modules would be orientated in a south and south easterly direction. The modules would be positioned on a trapezoidal roof mounting system and angled at approximately 12.5° to the horizontal, arranged in rows.
- 3.1.10 The north-western corner of the site would house the invertors and control switchgear. This associated infrastructure is required to convert the Direct Current (DC) produced by solar modules into an Alternating Current (AC) which is compatible with the local electricity distribution network.

Site Access

- 3.1.11 Access to the proposed hydrogen facility would be obtained via the entrance to the existing Glensaugh Farm along the existing access track. This is via the rural road which bisects the farm and connects to the B974 road to the west leading to the A90, or east to the B966 and A90.

4 DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Sections 25 and 37(2) of The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 require applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.2 The Development Plan

- 4.2.1 The Development Plan for the application site consists of:

- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) adopted 2023;
- Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (ALDP) adopted 2023.

National Planning Framework 4

- 4.2.2 The NPF4 was published by the Scottish Government on 13 February 2023. The NPF4 sets out the spatial principles, regional policies, national developments and national planning policy. NPF4 replaces the NPF3 and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). Unlike NPF3, NPF4 now forms part of the statutory Development Plan.
- 4.2.3 The NPF4 sets out in its introduction that ‘Scotland’s future places will be Net Zero.’

Sustainable Places

- 4.2.4 The national spatial strategy for sustainable places states:

“Scotland’s future places will be net zero, nature-positive places that are designed to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change, whilst protecting, recovering and restoring our environment.

Meeting our climate ambition will require a rapid transformation across all sectors of our economy and society. This means ensuring the right development happens in the right place.

Every decision on our future development must contribute to making Scotland a more sustainable place. We will encourage low and zero carbon design and energy efficiency, development that is accessible by sustainable travel, and expansion of renewable energy generation.”

Applying NPF4

4.2.5 In terms of applying NPF4, the Chief Planner’s letter - transitional arrangements for National Planning Framework 4 (February 2023) sets out that the NPF4 should be read as a whole and that conflicts between policies are to be expected. Factors for and against development will be weighed up in the balance of planning judgement.

4.2.6 The Chief Planner’s letter also outlines that:

“Whether an LDP [Local Development Plan] has been adopted prior to or after the adoption and publication of NPF4, legislation states that in the event of any incompatibility between a provision of NPF and a provision of an LDP, whichever of them is the later in date is to prevail (Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (“the 1997 Act”); section 24(3)).”

NPF4 Relevant Policies

4.2.7 It is considered the following policies in the National Planning Framework 4 are relevant to the Proposed Development:

- Policy 1: Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises
- Policy 2: Climate Mitigation and Adaptation
- Policy 4: Natural Places
- Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places
- Policy 9: Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings
- Policy 11: Energy
- Policy 22: Flood risk and water management
- Policy 29: Rural Development

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (2023)

4.2.8 It is considered the following policies in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan are relevant to the Proposed Development:

- Policy C2: Renewable Energy

- Policy C4: Flooding
- Policy P1: Layout, siting and design
- Policy R2: Development Proposals Elsewhere in the Countryside
- Policy RD1: Providing Suitable Services
- Policy E1: Natural Heritage
- Policy E2: Landscape
- Policy HE1: Protecting Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Archaeological Sites (including other historic buildings)

Supplementary Planning Guidance

4.2.9 Alongside the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan there is detailed guidance on particular issues and policies, which help inform the planning application decisions known as Supplementary Planning Documents. The most relevant Supplementary Planning Documents are set out below:

Landscape Character Advice for Small Scale Development Planning advice PA2023-07

4.2.10 In support of Policy E2 Landscape of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (LDP) 2023 this Planning Advice describes the character of different landscape types across Aberdeenshire, explaining what makes each landscape distinctive. Although targeted at small-scale development, the guidance has relevance to all scales of development.

Securing positive effects for biodiversity in new development Planning advice PA2023-10

4.2.11 This Planning Advice has been designed to provide stakeholders, developers, landowners and communities with details of the requirements for biodiversity enhancement as outlined in Policy P1 Layout, Siting and Design of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023 (LDP).

Development in the Countryside Policies R1 and R2 including Organic Growth of Settlements Planning advice PA2023-11

4.2.12 This Planning Advice has been designed to give best practice guidance in support of the delivery of developments that are appropriate to Aberdeenshire's countryside. It sets out what applicants may be expected to provide in order to support an application and demonstrate compatibility with the frequently used aspects of Policies R1 'Special Rural Areas' and R2 'Development Proposals Elsewhere in the Countryside' of the Aberdeenshire Local Development (LDP) 2023.

Baseline Ecological Survey Planning advice PA2023-17

4.2.13 The purpose of this planning advice is to detail the requirements of a baseline ecological survey in order to allow a full assessment of the impact of a Proposed Development on both habitats and species but also the wider ecosystem services provided by the site.

4.3 Material Considerations

4.3.1 This section of the Planning Statement sets out the relevant material considerations for the Proposed Development.

Scottish Government Planning Advice

4.3.2 The Scottish Government produces Planning Advice Notes (PANs) and online advice which provide advice on planning matters. The PANs and Scottish Government online advice considered relevant to the Proposed Development are:

- Flood risk: planning advice published 22 June 2015.
- Onshore wind turbines: planning advice 28 May 2014.
- Hydro schemes: planning advice Published 12 December 2013
- Energy storage: planning advice last updated 12 December 2013.
- Transport Assessment guidance published March 2012.
- PAN 2/2011: Planning and archaeology published July 2011
- PAN 1/2011: planning and noise published 3 March 2011.
- PAN 3/2010: community engagement published 31 August 2010.
- PAN 79: water and drainage published 27 September 2006.
- PAN 75: planning for transport published 15 August 2005.
- PAN 68: design statements published 18 August 2003.
- PAN 60: natural heritage published 1 January 2000.

Climate Emergency, Carbon and Energy Legislation Policy and Targets

4.3.3 This section of the Planning Statement outlines the climate emergency declared by the Scottish Government. It sets out the legal framework for Net Zero carbon emissions within the UK and Scotland and provides a high-level review of some of the most recent publications from the UK and Scottish Governments. It is clear that the planning system has a key role in delivering Net Zero and the energy policy commitments as is evidenced in NPF4.

4.3.4 The recently published Scottish Government Programme for Government 2023-24 outlines on page 21 in relation to green growth and energy that the Scottish Government aims to:

“Develop a Green Industrial Strategy, setting out how we will help businesses and investors to realise the enormous economic opportunities of the global transition to net zero and create

good, well-paid jobs across Scotland in sectors such as offshore wind and hydrogen, and support the development of sectoral Just Transition Plans.”

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.5 In May 2019, the Scottish Government declared a climate emergency. At the same time, in Westminster, the Environment Secretary acknowledged a climate change emergency. In a speech to the Scottish Parliament the Climate Change Secretary stated:

“The Climate Change Committee has been stark in saying that the proposed new targets will require “a fundamental change from the current piecemeal approach that focuses on specific actions in some sectors to an explicitly economy wide approach”. To deliver the transformational change that is required, we need structural changes across the board: to our planning, procurement, and financial policies, processes and assessments. And as I’ve already said, that is exactly what we will do.”

- 4.3.6 The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 was amended by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019, increasing the ambition of Scotland’s emissions reduction targets to net zero by 2045 and revising interim and annual reduction targets.

Climate and renewable energy framework

- 4.3.7 The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 was passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2019 and its measures were brought into force in March 2020. It amends the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and sets targets to reduce Scotland’s emissions of all greenhouse gases to net zero by 2045 at the latest, with interim targets for reductions of at least 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030, 90% by 2040. The interim target of 75% by 2030 requires the current decade to be a transformative one. It also provides annual targets, which are not currently being met.
- 4.3.8 The Proposed Development is being brought forward in an environment where the need for renewable energy is critical to reach the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets set by law and the renewable energy generation targets set by the Scottish Government.
- 4.3.9 Also, the importance of energy security and affordability has been heightened by recent geopolitical events.

Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan

- 4.3.10 The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (DESJTP) was published for consultation on 10 January 2023. Whilst this is not formal energy policy, given it has not been adopted, it still indicates the direction of travel for future policy and reinforces the need to meet targets. The Ministerial Foreword states:

“The evidence has never been stronger on the need for transformation of our energy system. We are publishing this draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan at a time of unprecedented uncertainty and change in global and national energy systems. The imperative is clear: in this decisive decade, we must deliver an energy system that meets the challenge of becoming a net zero nation by 2045, supplies safe and secure energy for all, generates economic opportunities, and builds a just transition.”

- 4.3.11 The Scottish Government are continuing to work through the details of the analysis and plan to publish the final version of the Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan by Summer 2024.
- 4.3.12 The plan states that hydrogen as an emerging sector is perfectly placed to support a just transition for existing oil and gas workforces and it sets out the plans to rapidly grow Scotland's hydrogen economy.

UK Hydrogen Strategy

- 4.3.13 The UK Government released the UK Hydrogen Strategy in August 2021 which sets out how progress will be delivered in the 2020s to meet the goal of 5 GW capacity by 2030 (which has now been doubled to 10 GW as set out in the British Energy Security Strategy published in April 2022) and meet the Sixth Carbon Budget and net-zero commitments. The Strategy states:
- “As part of a deeply decarbonised, deeply renewable energy system, low carbon hydrogen could be a versatile replacement for high-carbon fuels used today – helping to bring down emissions in vital UK industrial sectors and providing flexible energy for power, heat and transport.”*
- 4.3.14 The key role of Scotland in the development of a UK hydrogen economy is noted and The UK Hydrogen Strategy states that the UK Government is:
- “working closely with the devolved administrations to help hydrogen contribute to emissions reductions and deliver local economic benefits across the UK.”*

Hydrogen Action Plan

- 4.3.15 The Hydrogen Action Plan was published by the Scottish Government in December 2022. It sets out the actions that will be taken over the next five years to support the development of a hydrogen economy.
- 4.3.16 The Hydrogen Action Plan reflects the pipeline of renewable energy generation expected to come forward in Scotland and sets ambitions for the future of Scotland in becoming a future export market for hydrogen which:
- “could present Scotland's greatest industrial opportunity since oil and gas was discovered in the North sea.”*
- 4.3.17 Part 4 of the Hydrogen Action Plan sets out the following actions:
- *“Scaling up hydrogen production in Scotland*
 - *Facilitating the development of a domestic market*
 - *Maximising the benefits of integrating hydrogen into our energy system*
 - *Enabling the growth and transition of Scotland's supply chain and workforce*
 - *Establishing and strengthening international partnerships and markets*
 - *Strengthening research and innovation”*

- 4.3.18 This action plan sets ambitious targets for the development of hydrogen in Scotland as a key part of emissions reduction and sets out the funding and policy to achieve them.

5 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Introduction

- 5.1.1 Planning applications are legally required to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.1.2 This chapter of the Planning Statement outlines the principle of the Proposed Development and assesses the Proposed Development against the relevant provisions of the development plan and relevant material considerations.
- 5.1.3 The chapter considers the outcomes of the technical and environmental reports which accompany this application and therefore the following section cross references these reports to assess against the Proposed Development.

5.2 Principle of Development

- 5.2.1 The Proposed Development subject to this application is for operational development that would produce renewable energy. It is therefore considered that the policies supporting the principle of the development in the NPF4 are:
- Policy 1: Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises
 - Policy 2: Climate Mitigation and Adaptation
 - Policy 9: Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings
 - Policy 11: Energy
 - Policy 29: Rural development
- 5.2.2 Policy 1 is an overarching policy that gives significant weight to the global climate emergency to ensure that it is recognised as a priority in all plans and decisions. The NPF4 specifically states:
- “When considering all development proposals significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises”.*
- 5.2.3 Policy 2 encourages development proposals that minimises emissions and adapts to the current and future impacts of climate change.
- 5.2.4 Policy 11 supports all forms of renewable energy development. The policy is intended to support all types of renewable energy.
- “To encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development onshore and offshore. This includes energy generation, storage, new and replacement transmission and distribution infrastructure and emerging low-carbon and zero emissions technologies including hydrogen and carbon capture utilisation and storage (CCUS).”*

- 5.2.5 The wording in the NPF4 specifically states that the Local Development Plans should realise their area's potential for electricity and heat derived from renewable, low-carbon, and zero-emission sources by exploring various opportunities for energy development.
- 5.2.6 Development for all forms of renewable energy, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies will be supported this includes, wind farms, energy storage, such as battery storage, small scale renewable energy generation technology and solar arrays will only be supported provided where they maximise net economic impact, local and community socio-economic advantages like employment, related business opportunities, and opportunities within the supply chain.
- 5.2.7 NPF4 Policy 29 encourages economic activity, innovation and diversification in rural setting providing that the unique character of the rural area, the functional role of small towns, natural assets, and cultural heritage are safeguarded and enhanced. Specifically, development proposals that enhance the resilience and the diversification of the working farms providing that the main business outputs are not adversely affected by the development are supported.

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan

- 5.2.8 Policy C2: Renewable Energy within the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan provides support for proposals related to the development of renewable energy.
- 5.2.9 Policy C2.1 states that that authority will support renewable energy development including solar and wind providing that assessments are undertaken that would address significant planning considerations and assess the impact that the development may have on the surrounding landscape. These considerations include landscape and visual aspects, natural heritage, and the historic environment and the amenity of those living in the surrounding area.
- 5.2.10 C2.5 specifically sets out that development for solar panels greater than 4kW will be supported where a comprehensive assessment of their cumulative impact with other arrays, including careful consideration of siting and design has been appropriately assessed, where glint and glare issues have been overcome and where it has been demonstrated that any significant impacts will be of a duration lasting less than five minutes on any receptor within a single day. Additionally, approval is subject to the absence of objections from the Ministry of Defence, the National Air Traffic Services, or civil airport operations.
- 5.2.11 Policy R2 relates to Development Proposals Elsewhere in the Countryside. Policy R2.2 states that small-scale development would be permitted where the proposals align with the requirements of the green belt development as set out in R1.2 (Policy R1 Special Rural Area). Development will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances where it can satisfy at least one of the following requirements:
- Development associated with agriculture, woodland and forestry, fishing and horticulture;
 - Development for a recreational use that is compatible with its agricultural or natural setting;

- The development of single huts not associated with a tourist proposal under Policy B3 Tourist Facilities will be prohibited; development meeting a national requirement or established need, if no other suitable site is available;
- Intensification of an established use subject to the new development being of a suitable scale and form;
- Accommodation within the immediate vicinity of the place of employment required for a worker in a primary industry, where the presence of a worker is essential to the efficient operation of the enterprise, and there is no suitable alternative residential accommodation available; and
- Essential infrastructure such as digital communications infrastructure and electricity grid connections.

5.2.12 In this case the development is associated with agriculture. The Proposed Development is essential to support the existing farm and will be used to demonstrate how farming and other rural communities can become self-reliant, low-carbon energy producers and exporters, generating 100%+ of their energy requirements (electricity, heating, and transport) through a combination of renewable electricity and green hydrogen production.

Demolition of the Existing Agricultural Buildings

5.2.13 Additionally, the Proposed Development includes the installation of a hydrogen facility. The hydrogen facility is proposed to be sited in the north-west corner of the farm complex. The Proposed Development would require the dismantling of the current modern agricultural buildings and the erection of a building to house the hydrogen facility.

5.2.14 Policy R2.6 of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan states that:

5.2.15 *'We will permit the small-scale development of brownfield sites that involve the conversion or replacement of a redundant or derelict non-domestic building or the redevelopment of vacant land.'*

5.2.16 Photographs have been provided in **Appendix 1** that demonstrates that the buildings are no longer fit for purpose for their original use and have ceased being used for such. Consequently, these buildings are redundant, and the Proposed Development would comply with Policy R2 and Policy 9 of NPF4.

5.2.17 In summary, there is substantial support for the principle of the development as set out in both the National Planning Framework 4 and the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. Both policy documents recognise that the principle of renewable energy development proposals are supported provided that a thorough evaluation of their impact on other relevant planning considerations has been assessed.

5.2.18 The following chapter considers the outcomes of the technical and environmental reports which accompany this application and assess the Proposed Development in relation to the other policy requirements.

5.3 Design

- 5.3.1 Policy P1 Layout, Siting and Design is primarily intended for residential development. The nature of the components of the Proposed Development – solar panels and the hydrogen production facility are functional in design and appearance. Their location is driven by the need to be sited within the existing farm complex where that energy would be used. The number of solar modules has been arrived at as meeting the energy needs of the farm when used in tandem with the wind turbine. Given the nature of the Proposed Development it is considered that the development accords with the aims of ALDP Policy P1.

5.4 Landscape and Visual Impacts

Introduction

- 5.4.1 The application site and its immediate surrounds are located within the LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire Landscape Character Type (LCT) and the Braes of the Mearns Special Landscape Area. There are no National Scenic Areas (NSAs) or National Parks in the vicinity.
- 5.4.2 The Proposed Development would introduce new infrastructure into a landscape currently utilised for agricultural purposes and it is acknowledged that there would be some landscape and visual effects arising as a result.
- 5.4.3 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) submitted with the application. The assessment was undertaken by the Chartered Landscape Architects at Brindleys Associates LTD. This assessment defines the existing landscape and visual baseline environments; assesses their sensitivity to change and assesses the effects of the development arising during construction and once operational. The key findings are summarised below.

Policy Context

- 5.4.4 NPF4 Policy 11 supports renewable energy proposals recognising that development proposals may result in some landscape and visual impacts, recognising that such impacts are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy. Where impacts are localised and appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable.
- 5.4.5 ALDP Policy C2 encourages renewable energy proposals including solar ... as well as energy storage projects, which are in appropriate sites and of the appropriate design.
- 5.4.6 ALDP Policy C2.5 specifically supports solar panel arrays greater than 4kW if:
their cumulative impact with other arrays, including siting and design, has been assessed and can be dismissed.
- 5.4.7 ALDP Policy E2, Landscape states that development that causes unacceptable effects through its scale, location or design on key characteristics, natural landscape elements, features or the composition or quality of the landscape character as defined in the Landscape Character Assessments would be refused.

Assessment

- 5.4.8 The Proposed Development would be located within and immediately around the Glensaugh Farm. The roof-mounted solar PV arrays would be attached to two existing farm buildings to the south-east and south of the farm. The ground-mounted solar PV array would be installed to the south-east of the farm buildings, in a field which adjoins the site and abuts the Glen Burn to the east. The LVA has concluded that the Proposed Development would bring about some local changes in the perception of the landscape by altering the agricultural character of Glensaugh Farm by increasing the presence of energy generation elements. However, given their size and the location of these in relation to the existing farm these are considered to be in keeping with the current use of the site.
- 5.4.9 The value of the landscape is considered to be high as the Proposed Development falls within the LCT 29: Summits and Plateaux – Aberdeenshire Landscape Character Type (LCT) and the Braes of the Mearns Special Landscape Area . However, given the nature of the Proposed Development the overall the magnitude of change is considered to be low during both the construction and operational phases.
- 5.4.10 The relatively minor change in landcover resulting from the addition of ground-mounted solar PV array would not cause an unacceptable effect on the host landscape or the Braes of the Mearns Special Landscape Area .

Summary

- 5.4.11 Overall, the effects upon the landscape fabric are therefore considered to be minor adverse in the case of the solar and hydrogen elements. It is considered that visual impacts of the development would not cause unacceptable visual harm to the wider surrounding landscape character. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable in respect of NPF4 Policy 11 and ALDP Policy E2.

5.5 Ecology and Biodiversity

Introduction

- 5.5.1 An Ecological Impact Assessment has been undertaken by ITP Energised to identify potential ecological constraints to the Proposed Development.

Policy Context

- 5.5.2 NPF4 outlines the duty of planning authorities to further the conservation of biodiversity as defined in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. It places climate and nature at the forefront of the planning system and includes a cross-cutting outcome to improve biodiversity.
- 5.5.3 NPF4 Policy 1 gives significant weight to the global climate and nature crises to ensure that they are recognised as a priority in all plans and decisions.
- 5.5.4 NPF4 Policy 3 plays a critical role in ensuring that development will secure positive effects for biodiversity. It rebalances the planning system in favour of conserving, restoring and enhancing biodiversity and promotes nature-based solutions, benefiting people and nature. This policy intends to protect biodiversity, reverse biodiversity loss, deliver positive effects from development and strengthen nature networks.

- 5.5.5 This is further supported by ALDP Policy E1 that states that new development will not be supported where it may have an unacceptable adverse effect on a nature conservation site designated for its biodiversity, species, habitat, or geodiversity.
- 5.5.6 ALDP Policy E1.6 requires that all development must seek to avoid any unacceptable detrimental impact on protected species. A protected species survey to inform the assessment of impacts will be required where there is reason to believe protected species may exist on or adjacent to the site. Development affecting any protected species will only be permitted when it can be justified in accordance with the relevant protected species.

Assessment

- 5.5.7 The ecological assessment has concluded that Glensaugh Farm and surrounding buildings are of no ecological importance as habitats.
- 5.5.8 The ground mounted solar panels would be installed within an area of modified grassland which has low ecological value. The roof mounted solar panels are to be sited on modern agricultural barns that have no ecological value for roosting bats.
- 5.5.9 The Proposed Development would involve dismantling the current modern agricultural building and the erection of a building to house the hydrogen facility. A protected species survey was undertaken, the results of the survey identified evidence of a bat roost with a single bat observed roosting within the building.
- 5.5.10 Further surveys concluded that the roost features within the building are of a limited size and therefore likely to only offer limited potential for a single or small number of bats. No other confirmed or potential roost features were identified that would be impacted by the Proposed Development.
- 5.5.11 However, additional survey work and mitigation measures in relation to protected species would be required as part of the licencing requirements that fall under separate legislation.
- 5.5.12 Overall, it is concluded that Proposed Development would be acceptable satisfying the requirements of the NPF4 Policies 1 and 3 and ALDP Policy E1.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.5.13 NPF4 outlines the duty of planning authorities to further the conservation of biodiversity as defined in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. It places climate and nature at the forefront of the planning system and includes a cross-cutting outcome to improve biodiversity.
- 5.5.14 As set out in the concurrent planning statement for the wind turbine, an overarching outline biodiversity enhancement plan has been developed. A more detailed assessment setting out specific measures would be produced in conjunction with Aberdeenshire Council once planning permission has been granted. Specific biodiversity enhancement measures proposed within the farm complex would include the addition of bird and bat boxes. The production of a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP) could be a condition of any approval for the Proposed Development.

5.6 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Assets

Introduction

- 5.6.1 This section of the report assesses the impact of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage. An Environmental Appraisal that specifically focused on assessing the impact of development concerning the historical environment has been undertaken by CFA Archaeology. The purpose of this assessment was to identify archaeological features within the vicinity of the Proposed Development, assess the wider site in terms of its archaeological and historic environment potential, make an assessment on the potential of the archaeological remains in relation to the Proposed Development, against the context of the relevant legislation and planning policy guidelines.
- 5.6.2 The report of the assessment has been divided into two sections. The inner study area which identifies any heritage assets, both those previously recorded on the historic environment record and on other designations lists, and those identified through the desk-based assessment, that could be directly impacted by the Proposed Development. The outer study area, encompassing a wider study area, extending to 5 km from the proposed turbine location. The wider study area was used to identify both statutory and non-statutory heritage designations that could have their settings affected by the development proposed.

Policy Context

- 5.6.3 NPF4 Policy 7 requires that the historic environment is valued, protected, and enhanced, supporting the transition to net zero and ensuring assets are resilient to current and future impacts of climate change.

- 5.6.4 The NPF4 7(h) states that:

‘Development proposals affecting scheduled monuments will only be supported where:

- i. direct impacts on the scheduled monument are avoided;*
- ii. significant adverse impacts on the integrity of the setting of a scheduled monument are avoided; or*
- iii. exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to justify the impact on a scheduled monument and its setting and impacts on the monument or its setting have been minimised.’*

- 5.6.5 This is further supported by ALDP Policy HE1. The policy states:

“We will resist development that would have an adverse impact on the character, integrity or setting of listed buildings, or scheduled monuments, or other archaeological sites. If adverse impact is unavoidable, it should be minimised and justified”.

Development on nationally or locally important monuments or archaeological sites or having an adverse impact on the integrity of their setting, will only be allowed if there are exceptional circumstances, including those of a social or economic nature, and there is no alternative site”.

Assessment

Assessment of heritage assets

- 5.6.6 The application site is located within confines of the agricultural research centre at Glensaugh Farm. The land surrounding the farm comprises an area of improved pasture and arable farmland. Glensaugh Farmstead is depicted on the first Edition Ordnance Survey and is identified as a non-designated heritage asset in the local Historic Environment Record.
- 5.6.7 The solar and hydrogen development would be sited within the modern area of the farm. The roof-mounted solar photovoltaic modules arrays would be attached to two existing modern farm buildings to the south-east and south of the farm. The ground-mounted solar photovoltaic array would be installed to the south-east of the farm buildings, in a field which adjoins the site.
- 5.6.8 The report concludes that the potential for archaeological remains to be present within the farm complex are very limited, given the nature of the site, which includes modern agricultural buildings and concrete hardstanding as such any construction impact on historic features within the modern farm complex would be negligible.

Impact on the setting of heritage assets

- 5.6.9 A tabulated assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development in relation to the setting designated heritage assets has been provided in desk-based assessment. This assessment has undertaken an analysis of the ZTV (Zone of Theoretical Visibility) showing the extent of visibility of the development in relation to the setting of the designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- 5.6.10 The potential for the solar panels and the hydrogen facility to affect the setting of heritage assets in the surrounding area has been assessed. In this case given the nature of the Proposed Development, the low-lying nature of these elements, the immediate surroundings being a modern working farm and the distance of the development in relation to designated heritage assets it has been concluded that the Proposed Development would not impact on the setting of heritage assets.

Summary

- 5.6.11 In relation to Proposed Development considering the current land-use and the evidence for occupation and settlement it is assessed that there is limited potential for previously undiscovered archaeological remains to be present within the application site. Additionally, it has been concluded that the Proposed Development would not impact on the setting of the designated heritage assets in the local area. The development is therefore considered compliant with NPF4 Policy 7 and ALDP Policy HE1.

5.7 Transport and Access

Introduction

- 5.7.1 This section provides details on the Proposed Development in relation to construction and operational traffic and evaluates the impact of the Proposed Development on the local road network and outlines suggested measures to be implemented at the site. A combined Transport Statement and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) has been prepared by Pell Frischmann.

Policy Context

- 5.7.2 NPF4 Policy 11 states that development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies will be supported where project design and mitigation will demonstrate how the impacts on road traffic and on adjacent trunk roads, including during construction will be addressed.
- 5.7.3 Policy C2 (Renewable Energy) of the ALDP notes that: *Assessment of the acceptability of such developments will take account of any effects ...on road traffic.*

Assessment

- 5.7.4 The solar PVs and the hydrogen processing plant would be located at the existing Glensagh Farm and would be accessed from the unclassified road, Glensagh, via the existing farm access junction.
- 5.7.5 The existing farm access would be used during the construction and operational phase to access the solar PV and hydrogen processing plant elements of the Proposed Development. The report concludes that the Proposed Development would lead to a temporary increase in traffic volumes during the construction phase, while the increase in traffic volumes during the operation phase is considered negligible and is not considered to be outwith normal traffic flows. It is, therefore, concluded that there are no transport related matters which would preclude the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.

Summary

- 5.7.6 The Transport Statement submitted as part of the application concludes the Proposed Development would have a negligible impact on the local road network and the existing strategic road network has sufficient capacity. In summary it is considered that there are no anticipated impacts on the traffic flows on the road. The development is, therefore, considered to be acceptable in relation to ALDP Policy C2 and NPF4 Policy 11 and NPF4 Policy 22.

5.8 Flood Risk and Drainage

Introduction

- 5.8.1 This section assesses potential flood risk of the Proposed Development in accordance with best practice and in accordance with guidance presented within NPF4. A Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment (FRDA) has been prepared by Pell Frischmann.

Policy Context

- 5.8.2 NPF4 Policy 22 seeks to ensure that future flood risk is not exacerbated by development. It provides direction on the type of developments that may be supported in area at flood risk, providing certain criteria are met by the applicant.
- 5.8.3 This is further supported by ALDP Policy C4 that requires Flood Risk Assessments should be undertaken in accordance with SEPA Technical Flood Risk Guidance.

Assessment

- 5.8.4 The report has concluded that given the location of the site in Flood Risk Zone 1, it can be reasonably concluded that the Proposed Development would not cause or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and therefore the Proposed Development is acceptable in relation to flood risk.
- 5.8.5 Additionally, energy generation and storage uses such as the one proposed are considered to comprise 'essential infrastructure' in accordance with SEPA's Land Use Vulnerability Classification. Essential infrastructure is generally permitted within most flood risk categories.

Summary

In summary the Proposed Development would not cause or increase the risk of flooding at the site or elsewhere as such the Proposed Development is acceptable in relation to flood risk and satisfies NPF4 Policy 22 and Policy C4 of the ALDP.

5.9 Glint and Glare

Introduction

- 5.9.1 This section summarises the reasons why a glint and glare assessment has not been produced.

Policy Context

- 5.9.2 ALDP Policy C2.5 states that Aberdeenshire Council will approve applications for solar panel arrays greater than 4kW, providing amongst other things that consideration has been given to concerns related to glint and glare.
- 5.9.3 Pre-application requirements requested that the application for solar panels should:

"Demonstrate the impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties through the submission of a glint and glare assessment to demonstrate compliance with Policy P1 of ALDP (2023) and Policy 14 of NPF4".

Assessment

- 5.9.4 In this case the glass used in solar PV panels is specifically designed to absorb as much sunlight as possible, consequently the panels have a lower level of reflectivity (potential for glare) than many other man-made and natural features such as conventional windows, polytunnels, glasshouses, water and snow.
- 5.9.5 The site lies within the base of a valley, with two observation points (OP) within a 1km radius of the site. Given the position of the observation points behind densely wooded areas and the undulating nature of landscape it has been concluded that glint and glare is highly unlikely to be impact on any of these receptors.
- 5.9.6 In terms of roads, the only roads within 1km of the site are the Old Military Road and the B974. It has been concluded that road users will experience minimal impacts due to the existing vegetation, comprising hedgerows and treelines, and the undulating landscape that leads to the site.

5.9.7 There are no airfields or airports in close proximity to the site, with the nearest commercial airport being Aberdeen, located 40km to the northeast, and Deeside Gliding Club situated 27km to the northwest. RAF Lossiemouth, the closest airbase to the Proposed Development, is approximately 100km to the north of the site. Given the considerable distance from airfields and airports, no anticipated impacts on air-based receptors are foreseen from the Proposed Development.

Summary

5.9.8 In summary, considering the modest number of solar PV panels, their distance from air-based receptors, and the presence of existing vegetation and the nature of the undulating landscape the Proposed Development would not impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties nor the limited roads in the vicinity. Therefore, it is concluded that development would be in accordance with NPF4 policies 11 and 14 and ALDP policies C2.5. and P1.

5.10 Noise

Introduction

5.10.1 A Noise Impact Assessment has been carried out by ITP Energised. The assessment has assessed the baseline noise environment by survey, predicted operational noise levels from the Proposed Development and evaluated the predicted levels in accordance with the relevant guidance.

Policy Context

5.10.2 NPF4 Policy 11(e) advised that project design and mitigation will demonstrate how impact on communities and individuals in terms of noise will be assessed, including the impacts on individual dwellings, including, noise.

Assessment

5.10.3 In this case the closest noise sensitive receptors (NSR) that have the potential to be affected by the proposed plant comprise the on-site staff accommodation for The James Hutton Institute.

5.10.4 The results of the survey concluded that the Proposed Development has been evaluated as having a low impact in terms of noise both during the daytime and night-time periods, and as such no specific mitigation is necessary.

5.10.5 As a result of this, the Proposed Development would not adversely impact on the amenity of neighbours in respect of noise impacts.

Summary

5.10.6 No effects on amenity of dwellinghouses from noise has been identified. The Proposed Development is therefore found to be acceptable in relation to ALDP Policy C2 and NPF4 Policy 11.

6 THE PLANNING BALANCE

6.1.1 The table below provides a summary of the assessment of the Proposed Development against the relevant policies of NPF4 and ALDP.

Table 6.1 Summary of Compliance with Policy

Policy topic and reference number	Is the development in compliance with the policy?
NPF4 Policy 1	Yes. The Proposed Development is a renewable energy scheme and would be contributing towards climate change targets and providing biodiversity enhancements which would help to respond to the nature crisis. It is therefore considered the Proposed Development is in accordance with Policy 1.
NPF4 Policy 2	Yes. The Proposed Development would facilitate development that minimises emissions and adapts to the current and future impacts of climate change. It is therefore considered the Proposed Development is in accordance with Policy 2.
NPF4 Policy 4	Yes. The Proposed Development would not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment. Specific measures to improve biodiversity at Glensaugh Farm are proposed. It is therefore considered the Proposed Development is in accordance with Policy 4.
NPF4 Policy 7	Yes. The Proposed Development would not have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment. The Ecological Impact Assessment provided has identified that Natural Environment specific measures to improve biodiversity at Glensaugh Farm are proposed. It is therefore considered the Proposed Development is in accordance with Policy 4.
NPF4 Policy 9	Yes. Justification has been provided that the buildings no longer remain in use.
NPF4 Policy 11	<p>Yes. Development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies will be supported providing project design and mitigation measures are provided. In this case the assessments have concluded there would be no impact on individual dwellings, including, residential amenity, visual impact and noise.</p> <p>In this case the assessment has concluded that there would be no impact on individual dwellings, including, residential amenity, visual impact, noise and glint and glare given position of the Proposed Development which would be located within the farm complex.</p> <p>In terms of noise, the results of the survey concluded that the Proposed Development has been evaluated as having a low impact in terms of noise both during the daytime and night-time periods, and as such no specific mitigation is therefore necessary.</p>

	<p>The LVA assessment has concluded given the nature of the development within the farm complex. No significant landscape and visual impacts would occur as result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development is in accordance with NPF4 Policy 11.</p>
NPF4 Policy 22	<p>Yes. The Flood Risk Assessment has concluded given the location of the site in Flood Risk Zone 1, it can be reasonably concluded that the Proposed Development would not cause or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and therefore the Proposed Development is acceptable in relation to flood risk. It is therefore considered the Proposed Development is in accordance with NPF4 Policy 22.</p>
NPF4 Policy 23	<p>Yes. The Proposed Development has been found to be acceptable in relation to noise. No significant adverse effects on the amenity of dwellinghouses from noise has been identified.</p>
NPF4 Policy 29	<p>Yes. The principle of the Proposed Development in a rural area is acceptable and in compliance with Policy 29.</p>
ALDP Policy C2	<p>Yes. The Proposed Development has been appropriately sited.</p> <p>The policy recognises that the principle of renewable energy development proposals is supported provided that a thorough evaluation of their impact on other relevant planning considerations has been assessed. These are discussed in their specific policy sections set out below.</p> <p>Specifically, part C2.5 of the policy requires a cumulative impact of the Proposed Development with other arrays, including siting and design, to be assessed and an account has been taken of glint and glare issues.</p> <p>In summary, considering the modest number of solar PV panels, their distance from air-based receptors, and the presence of existing vegetation and the nature of the undulating landscape the Proposed Development would not impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties nor the limited roads in the vicinity.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is therefore considered to be acceptable in relation to Policy C2.</p>
ALDP Policy C4	<p>Yes. Given the location of the Proposed Development in Flood Risk Zone 1, it can be reasonably concluded that the Proposed Development would not cause or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and therefore the Proposed Development is acceptable in relation to flood risk. It is therefore considered that the development complies with Policy C4.</p>
ALDP Policy P1	<p>Yes. The Proposed Development is functional in its design and appearance. Its size has been driven by the energy demand of the farm and its location and distance from residential properties and ecological considerations.</p> <p>An outline Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (OBEP) has been prepared that sets out measures to enhance biodiversity at Glensaugh Farm. It is therefore considered the Proposed Development is in accordance with Policy 1.</p>

ALDP Policy R2	Yes. The policy requirements state that development in the countryside will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances where it can satisfy certain criteria. In this case the development meets the exceptional circumstances and is in accordance with Policy R2.
ALDP Policy RD1	Yes. The Proposed Development has the necessary infrastructure to support it. It is therefore considered the Proposed Development is in accordance with Policy RD1.
ALDP Policy E1	Yes. The ecological impact assessments have identified the Proposed Development would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on nature conservation site designated for their biodiversity, species, habitat, or geodiversity. It is therefore considered the Proposed Development is in accordance with Policy E1.
ALDP POLICY E2	Yes. The LVA assessment has concluded that Proposed Development would not cause an unacceptable effect on key characteristics, natural landscape elements, features or the composition or quality of the landscape character. It is therefore considered the Proposed Development is in accordance with Policy E2.
ALDP POLICY HE1	Yes. The assessment has concluded the potential for previously undiscovered archaeological remains to be present within the application site is limited. Additionally, it has been concluded that the Proposed Development would not impact on the setting of the designated heritage assets in the local area. The development is therefore considered compliant with ALDP Policy HE1.

6.1.2 The table above illustrates that the Proposed Development accords with the policies of the Development Plan.

6.1.3 There is also wider support for this type of development as set out in national policy. NPF4 sets out in its introduction that ‘Scotland’s future places will be Net Zero.’ Policy 1 gives significant weight to the global climate emergency to ensure that it is recognised as a priority in all plans and decisions.

6.1.4 In terms of material considerations there are numerous documents as set out in Section 4.3 of this Planning Statement that support renewable energy schemes to meet Scotland’s climate change targets and greenhouse gas emissions which would support permission being granted. There are no other material considerations that would warrant a decision other than one made in accordance with the Development Plan.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1.1 The application which is the subject of this statement seeks planning permission for a hydrogen production facility and associated ground and/or roof mounted solar arrays. The Proposed Development is part of a wider proposed renewable energy development at the applicants Glensaugh Farm sited near Laurencekirk, Aberdeenshire. The application has been subject to pre-application discussions with Aberdeenshire Council who are supportive of the Proposed Development subject to receipt of a detailed scheme and assessments of the effects of the Proposed Development. These have been provided as part of the planning application.

7.1.2 The planning application is accompanied by a number of reports on substantive matters. The findings of these assessments have been used in applying to the Proposed Development the tests of relevant planning policies. It has been concluded that the Proposed Development is in accordance with Aberdeenshire Local Plan and NPF 4. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission is granted for this Proposed Development without delay.

Appendix 1 - HYDROGLEN DEMOLITION PHOTOS

Sheep Sheds



Both buildings are showing signs of dilapidation on the exterior.



The two buildings are conjoined by a lean-to (see above) which has been out of use for many years. The bags contain waste wool which is awaiting disposal.

Sheep Shed 1



Sheep Shed 1 is empty apart from the temporary storage of recycled materials.

Sheep Shed 2





Sheep Shed 2 is now only used for shearing, with this operation planned to be moved to another building. The slatted floor is nail sick (see above) and not considered worth repairing. No sheep have been housed there since 2018.

Camelid House



This building was converted for the housing of camelids in the early 1990s. The access doors are too small and the roof material is rotten (see above). This is the least useful building within the Glensaugh steading.



The sloping channelled floor makes the building unsuitable for most agricultural purposes beyond temporary storage. The animal pens (see above) have no use in a modern farming enterprise.