

**THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CIRCULAR 01/2017**

**RESPONSE OF SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL TO A REQUEST FOR A SCREENING OPINION SUBMITTED UNDER
THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017
THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE IS LOCATED AT LAND TO THE EAST OF THE A77, HOLMSTON FARM, AYR**

The proposal concerns the development of an energy storage facility, comprised of battery storage enclosures, associated power conversion units and transformers, substations, hardstanding area, telecommunications equipment, fencing, vehicular access, grid connection and ancillary works.

The proposal is Schedule 2 development under the terms of the above Regulations as it falls within the auspices of Energy Industry. Therefore, it needs to be screened in order to determine whether the proposal constitutes 'EIA development'.

This determination is referred to as a '**screening opinion**'. In each case, the basic question to be asked is: 'would this particular development be likely to have significant effects on the environment?'

For many types of development, perhaps the majority, it will be necessary to consider the characteristics of the development in combination with its proposed location in order to identify the potential for interactions between a development and its environment and therefore determine whether there are likely to be significant environmental effects. In determining whether a particular development is likely to have such effects, the Council 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.

Consideration of the third of these categories is designed to help in determining whether any interactions between the first two categories (i.e. between a development and its environment) are likely to be significant.

The content of this checklist is derived from the requirements of The Town and Country Planning Environmental Impact Assessment (Scotland) Regulations 2017 Schedule 3 selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 developments.

Schedule 3 Selection Criteria	Yes/No	Briefly describe potential impact	Is effect likely to result in a significant effect? Please explain.
1. Characteristics of the Development			
(a) Size and design of the development			
Will the proposed development be out of scale with the existing environment?	No	Although the proposed development would be sited within the greenbelt, it would be adjacent to the existing Ayr Substation. A large retail store is also located to the south of the site.	No, it could be absorbed within the existing landscape setting considering the wider context and existing adjacent developments
(b) Cumulation with other existing and/or approved development			
Will the proposed development lead to further consequential development or works?	No	Other than the proposed development, the proposal will not result in further consequential development.	No, this application is not expected to lead to further associated development
Are there potential cumulative impacts with other existing development, approved developments or developments the subject of valid applications?	No	There are no approved planning proposals in the immediate vicinity proposed under the LDP that would result in significant cumulative impacts.	No significant cumulative effect when considered against the existing site and surrounding context
Should the application for the proposed development be regarded as an integral part of a more substantial project? If so, can related developments which are subject to separate applications proceed independently?	No	The proposal is self-contained although it is understood that it would link into the National Grid.	No, project can proceed independently in terms of physical development.
(c) Use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water, and biodiversity			
Will the proposed development use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or are in short supply?	Yes	The proposed development will utilise land which is currently greenbelt and used for a Fir Plantation.	Proposals to develop on land which is currently undeveloped is not considered sufficient for the purposes of giving rise to 'significant' effects under the terms of the EIA Regulations.

(d) Production of waste			
Will the construction, operation or decommissioning of the proposed development produce wastes?	Yes	As with most construction processes, the production of waste is inevitable.	No significant effects in this regard.
(e) Pollution and nuisances			
Will the construction, operation or decommissioning phases of the proposed development release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to the air?	No		
Will the construction, operation or decommissioning of the proposed development lead to risk of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants?	No		
Will the construction, operation or decommissioning phases of the proposed development cause noise, vibration or the release of light?	Yes	There will be noise and vibration as a result of construction works while noise associated with the proposed development is likely to be acceptable residential noise levels, although a Noise Impact Assessment would require to be undertaken to confirm this.	It is not considered that the noise and vibrations associated with the site would be significant within the context of surrounding area, although as stated, a Noise Impact Assessment would be required to confirm this.
(f) Risk of major accidents and/or disasters which are relevant to the development concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge			
Will there be any risk of accidents during construction, operation or decommissioning of the proposed development which could affect the environment or human health?	Yes	The site would be developed and as such risk of accidents would exist. It is noted that High-Pressure Gas Pipelines run through the site.	Safety within the site during construction and operation should be managed by contractors/operators in accordance with industry guidelines with regards the development itself and working in areas in and around high pressure gas pipelines.
(g) Risk to human health			

Will the construction, operation or decommissioning phases of the proposed development involve the use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health?	No		
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Schedule 3 Selection Criteria	Yes/No	Briefly describe potential impact	Is effect likely to result in a significant effect? Please explain
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2. Location of the Development			
(a) Existing and approved land use			
Are there existing and/ or approved land uses in the locality of the proposed development site which could be affected by the proposed development?	Yes	The site is located within the Greenbelt and residential properties are located approximately 200m to the north-east and 210m to the west. It is noted that High-Pressure Gas Pipelines run through the site.	It is considered that the effects of the proposed development on the Greenbelt and neighbouring uses could be assessed within the planning application process and designed to ensure effects are not significant. These require to be considered within the design and application process and through consultation with relevant bodies. It is likely that any impact can be avoided.
(b) Relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground			
Are there any areas on or around the location of the proposed development and its underground, which contain important, high quality or scarce resources, which could be affected by the proposed development?	No		
(c) Absorption capacity of the natural environment			
Are there any areas on or around the application site that are protected under international or national legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural heritage or other value which could be affected by the	No		

construction, operation or decommissioning of the proposed development?			
Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology which could be affected by the proposed development? Particular attention should be paid to the following areas: (i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths; (ii) coastal zones and the marine environment; (iii) mountain and forest areas; (iv) nature reserves and parks.	No		
Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora which could be affected by the proposed development?	Unknown	The proposed development site could potentially provide a suitable habitat to protected species; however, this is unknown at present.	For the purposes of this assessment, it is considered that the planning application process provides sufficient scope for the consideration of any required survey work and the input of consultation authorities.
Are there any groundwater source protection zones or areas that contribute to the recharge of groundwater resources which could be affected by the proposed development?	No		
Are there any areas on or around the location of the proposed development where environmental quality standards are already exceeded which could be affected by the proposed development?	No		
Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated which could be affected by the proposed development?	Yes	Residential properties are located approximately 200m to the north-east and 210m to the west.	It is considered that the effects of the proposed development on neighbouring uses could be assessed within the planning application process and designed to ensure effects are not significant.

Is the proposed development in a location where it is likely to be visible to many people?	Yes	The site is largely screened from the A77 by a treebelt; however, it could potentially be viewable to road users. Also, potential to be viewable by walkers using the nearby core path.	It is considered that the visibility of the proposed development on the site in question should be considered within the application submission, with potential for additional screening as required.
Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the proposed development?	Yes	A core path exists to the north and east of the application site.	It is considered that any development could accommodate and protect the core path thus ensuring any effects are not significant.
Are there any areas of local landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the proposed development?	No		
Are there any areas of features of historic, cultural or archaeological value on or around the location which could be affected by the proposed development?	No		
Is the proposed development location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions?	No		

3. Characteristics of the Potential Impact

(a) Magnitude and special extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)

Will the effect extend over a large geographical area, affecting many people and resulting in social changes, e.g. in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment? No

(b) Nature of impact

Is the development located within or close to any other areas which are protected under international, EU, or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which would be significantly affected by the development? No

(c) Transboundary nature of the impact
Will there be any potential for transboundary impact? No
(d) Intensity and complexity of the impact
Is there a risk that environmental standards will be breached? No
(e) Probability of the impact
Is there a high or low probability of a potentially highly significant effect? Low probability.
(f) Expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact
Will the effect be permanent, continuous or irreversible? The energy storage facility is to be constructed of containers, so any effect is reversible.
(g) Culmination of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development
Will the Project have cumulative effects, due to its proximity to other existing or planned Projects with similar effects? No.
(h) Possibility of effectively reducing the impact
Will there be any significant adverse effects on any aspect of the environment during the construction and operational phases of the development, has the developer included mitigation measures to avoid, prevent, repair or reduce the potential impact?

The developer has proposed additional screening in the form of grassed soil bunds, infilling of hedgerows and new native woodland planting which could mitigate any potential impacts. The effects of the proposed development are not considered to be sufficiently significant to require an EIA Report.

Conclusions

The checklist above (which forms part of the Council's EIA Screening Opinion assessment) is a useful tool for the purposes of identifying the wide range of environmental receptors which could be affected by proposed development. The main issues which have emerged from the checklist are:

- Impact on the Greenbelt designation requires to be considered within any planning application submission.
- Impact on the high-pressure gas pipelines requires to be considered.
- The potential impact of the visibility of the proposed development should be considered within the planning submission.

From the assessment undertaken in accordance with the Regulations and associated Circular, and taking into account the submitted screening report, the Council concludes that the proposed development at Holmston Farm, Ayr (as shown on the map forming part of the screening request and attached below), is unlikely to result in effects on the environment which are sufficiently significant to require the submission of an environmental assessment, in so far as this assessment relates to those elements of the proposed development that are within South Ayrshire Council area or that impact on South Ayrshire Council area.



