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**THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CIRCULAR 1/2017**

**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 ON LAND ADJACENT TO AUCHENCROSH CONVERTOR STATION, BALLANTRAE, SOUTH
AYRSHIRE**

The proposal is for the installation of a synchronous condenser and ancillary infrastructure on land adjacent to Auchencrosh Converter Station, near Ballantrae, South Ayrshire, KA26 0NY. The proposed development site extends to 1.5 hectares. The proposal is Schedule 2 development under the terms of the above Regulations and must therefore 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:-

- Characteristics of the development
- Location of the development
- 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 meets the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 – Schedule 3 selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development.

	Yes/No	Briefly describe	Is effect likely to be significant? Significance should be considered in terms of the extent, transboundary nature, magnitude and complexity, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of any impact(s).
1. Characteristics of the Development			
(a) Scale of the development			
Will the development be out of scale with the existing environment?	N	The site lies adjacent to an existing convertor station and several large pylons are in the vicinity of the site.	It is not considered that solely on the basis of the scale of the proposed development that the effects would be significant within the context of EIA regulations. Any adverse landscape and visual impact effects can be adequately assessed through supporting information and are unlikely to be of a magnitude that merits assessment through EIA.
Will it lead to further consequential development or works (e.g. new roads, extraction of aggregate, generation or transmission of power)?	N	All components of the development are contained within the Screening Opinion request.	
(b) Cumulation with other development			
Are there potential cumulative impacts with other existing development or for proposed development in the planning system?	Y	The site is adjacent to an existing convertor station.	No. The scale of the proposal will not result in any significant increase in the environmental impact of the area.
Should the application for this 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?	N		No.
(c) Use of natural resources			
Will construction or operation of the development use natural resources i.e. land (especially undeveloped or agricultural land)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water or fisheries? • minerals or aggregates? • agriculture, forests and timber? • energy including electricity and fuels? • any other resources? 	Y	The proposed development would be sited within an agricultural field.	No. The scale of development is not considered to be significant in terms of EIA.
(d) Production of waste			
Will the development produce wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Y	In common with all construction projects, minor quantities of general waste will be produced.	No. The potential quantities of waste are not significant in EIA terms.
(e) Pollution and nuisances			

	Yes/No	Briefly describe	Is effect likely to be significant? Significance should be considered in terms of the extent, transboundary nature, magnitude and complexity, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of any impact(s).
Will the development cause noise and vibration or release of leachates, light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation during construction, operation or decommissioning?	Y	There is potential for noise and vibration during the construction period.	No. There are no sensitive noise receptors in very close proximity to the development. However, a Noise Report will be submitted in support of the application.
(f) Risk of accidents, having regard in particular to substances technologies used			
Will there be a risk of accidents during construction or operation of the development which could have effects on people or the environment?	Y	There is potential for release of sediment to the water environment and emissions to air from construction vehicles.	No. The scale of the development is not considered to be significant in terms of EIA.
(g) Other characteristics: potential physical changes (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies etc) from construction, operation or decommissioning of the development			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> permanent or temporary change in land use, landcover or topography including increases in intensity of land use? 	Y	The proposed development would alter the land use. Buildings and hardstanding proposed.	No. the scale of the development and change in land use is not considered to be significant in terms of EIA.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> peat land disturbance and/ or degradation leading to: carbon release, damage to habitats, affecting land stability or hydrology? 	Y	The site has potential for peat and carbon rich soil.	No. The area of land affected by construction of the proposed development is not significant in EIA terms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pre-construction investigations e.g. boreholes, soil testing? 	N		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> construction, demolition, reclamation or excavation works? 	Y	The development will require construction of a building.	The area of land involved and potential environmental effects are not considered to be significant in terms of EIA.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> underground works ? 	Y	A cable will be laid underground to connect the development to the existing convertor station.	The area of land involved and potential environmental effects are not considered to be significant in terms of EIA.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> facilities for storage of goods or materials? 	N		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new road, rail, air or sea traffic or infrastructure during construction or operation or decommissioning? 	N		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new or diverted transmission lines or pipelines? 	Y	An underground cable is required to connect the synchronous condenser to the convertor station.	The area of land involved and potential environmental effects are not considered to be significant in terms of EIA.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any works requiring an authorisation under the Water Environment (Controlled Activities)(Scotland) Regulations 2005 	N		

	Yes/No	Briefly describe	Is effect likely to be significant? Significance should be considered in terms of the extent, transboundary nature, magnitude and complexity, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of any impact(s).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> long-term/ongoing activity during restoration or decommissioning which could have an impact on the environment? 	N		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> influx of people to an area either temporarily or permanently? 	N		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any other changes? 	N		
2. Location of the Development			
(a) Existing land use			
Are there existing land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the development, e.g. undeveloped land, greenfield land, homes, other private property, industry, commerce, tourism and recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, water catchments, functional floodplains, mining or quarrying?	Y	Residential properties are located within the vicinity of the proposed development. Core Path in situ.	No. A Noise Report will be submitted in support of the planning application. The impact on the core path should be considered within the application.
(b) Relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area			
Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the development?	N		
(c) Absorption capacity of the natural environment			
Are there any areas on or around the location which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape and visual, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the development? Particular attention should be paid to wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, nature reserves and parks.	Y	The site is located within the South Ayrshire Local Scenic Area and the development is potentially visible from the A77 public road (woodland felled) and from the surrounding landscape. Given the appearance and scale of the development there is potential for adverse landscape and visual impact. The site is in very close proximity to Glen App and Galloway Moors SSSI and is located within the Glen App Wildlife Site.	No. The scale of the development and therefore the magnitude of LVIA are not considered to be significant in EIA terms. The impact of the development can be assessed through the normal planning application process).
Are there any groundwater source protection zones or areas that contribute to the recharge of groundwater resources?	N		

	Yes/No	Briefly describe	Is effect likely to be significant? Significance should be considered in terms of the extent, transboundary nature, magnitude and complexity, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of any impact(s).
Are there protected species in or around the location, for example European Protected Species, which could be affected?	N		
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?	Y	Core Path.	No. Access to this path would still be maintained and this would be looked at within the planning application.
Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected?	N		
Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected?	N		
Is the development in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Y/N	The felling of woodland means that the site could possibly be viewed from the A77.	No. This would be a fleeting glimpse if in a vehicle.
Is the location of the development susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions which could cause the development to present environmental problems?	N		

Conclusions

From the assessment undertaken in accordance with the Regulations and taking into account the submitted screening report, the Council concludes that the proposed development on land adjacent to Auchencrosh Converter Station, Ballantrae, South Ayrshire, as shown on the map attached to this document, is unlikely to result in effects on the environment which are sufficiently significant to require the submission of an environmental statement.

