



A specialist energy consultancy

# Planning Statement

## Coylton Greener Grid Park (GGP)

Statkraft UK

15627-008-D3  
24 October 2023

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE



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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Summary

This Planning Statement has been prepared by TNEI Services Limited ‘the ‘Agent’) on behalf of Statkraft UK Limited ‘the ‘Applicant’), to accompany an application for planning permission for the construction and operation of a Greener Grid Park (‘the Proposed Development’) on land immediately east of Coylton substation, on land to the south of the A70, National Grid Reference (NGR): NS 46528 19641 (the ‘Site’). The Site lies wholly within the administrative area of East Ayrshire Council (‘EAC’). The Site location plan including red line planning application boundary is shown in Drawing reference 15267-043 and 15627-048 included within the submission documents within this application.

The full package of documents submitted in support of this application are as follows:

- Planning Statement (This report).
- Design and Access Statement.
- Pre-application Consultation Report.
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
- Drainage Strategy.
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
- Bat Activity Survey Report.
- Water Vole and Badger Survey Report.
- Archaeological Assessment.
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
- Noise Impact Assessment.
- Peat Probing Report.
- Construction Traffic Management Plan.

## 1.2 The Applicant

Statkraft is 100% owned by the Norwegian state and is Europe’s largest generator of renewable energy. In the UK Statkraft develop, own, and operate wind, solar, hydro and Greener Grid Park projects. Since 2006 Statkraft has invested over £1.4 billion in the UK’s renewable energy infrastructure and is a leading provider of Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), having facilitated over 6 GW of new-build renewable energy generation through PPAs. Statkraft is contracted to deliver grid stability services to National Grid ESO, supporting their target to deliver a zero-carbon electricity system by 2025. The first two projects at Keith in Moray and Lister Drive Liverpool are operational; and Neilston Greener Grid Park in Renfrewshire is currently under construction.

## 1.3 Planning Statement Approach

The Application for the Proposed Development is made under Section 32 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (the Planning Act 1997), as amended by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.

The purpose of this Planning Statement is to outline the Proposed Development, the framework for determination, and to provide an assessment of the Proposed Development against the context of planning policy and energy targets. Its structure is as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction;
- Section 2: Background to the Proposed Development;



- Section 3: Site Location and Description;
- Section 4: Description of the Proposed Development;
- Section 5: UK and Scotland Planning and Energy Policy;
- Section 6: Planning Appraisal; and
- Section 7: Summary and Conclusions.

## 2 Background to the Proposed Development

### 2.1 Need for the Proposed Development

Historically, the UK's electricity network has relied on large, centralised power plants. However, dated traditional power plants are diminishing, reducing their capacities, and decommissioning as they no longer meet the required environmental performance standards. Furthermore, existing nuclear power plants are reaching the end of their design lives with no new nuclear power plants currently being planned for Scotland.

There is, therefore, a requirement to deliver a greater amount of clean energy through renewable technologies. In 2019, Scottish First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, announced that the climate emergency is at the forefront of the Scottish Government Programme going forward. The Programme states, *'Scotland, like the rest of the world is facing a climate emergency and our wellbeing, and that of future generations, is at stake. As a country, we have a strong record in cutting our emissions but our response to the global climate emergency requires us to accelerate our good work and make many fundamental changes in how we travel, live, heat our homes and in what jobs we do.'*

Addressing the climate emergency is therefore a priority issue that extends beyond politics and is a social responsibility that must permeate all industry and development to meet carefully considered and ambitious targets within national and global energy and climate change initiatives.

The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 amends the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and sets a target to reduce Scotland's emissions of all greenhouse gases to net-zero by 2045. This is ambitious and is five years ahead of the UK's net-zero target for 2050. Projects, such as the Proposed Development, play a key role in decarbonising the energy sector, whilst providing environmental and economic benefits such as clean and reliable energy at low cost to consumers.

The Atkins Report – Engineering Net Zero – The Race to Net Zero 2020 dispels the myth that the UK can achieve net-zero without further concerted action in relation to how we generate and distribute electricity. This report quantifies the minimum requirement for new generation of energy to meet net-zero by 2050 at 250 GW, with the UK system needing between 15 and 30 GW of new storage, during this time.

To put this into perspective, *'the UK currently has 3.1 GW of capacity in pumped storage plus about 1 GW in batteries. We may need up to ten times this to achieve net zero.'*

Furthermore, there is a growing demand by network operators for a broad range of services such as storage and management of inertia and fault levels on the grid. The Proposed Development is designed to support multiple services to enable decarbonisation of electricity supply.

### 2.2 Grid Stability

The transmission system short circuit levels and inertia are currently falling due to the decline in transmission connected synchronous generation, as traditional coal and gas plants are phased out of the UK's energy system. Renewable generators like wind and solar connect to the grid in a different way, which does not give National Grid ESO the same stabilising properties. Therefore, a new way is needed to find new providers to help support the system. Grid scale battery storage is one way to solve this issue.

National Grid ESO has identified areas of the transmission network in Scotland where this support is required. One of these areas is around Coylton Substation where the Proposed Development would connect into.



National Grid ESO is running a competitive process for this support called the National Grid Stability Pathfinder Phase 2 (SSP2) where a variety of technologies and operators are seeking long-term commercial contracts with National Grid ESO to perform this service. The Applicant was awarded a stability contract under SPP2 in April 2022 for grid forming converter battery energy storage system (BESS) connecting to the Coylton Substation. The Proposed Development will fulfil this contract.

The proximity to the Grid Supply Point is key to providing the stability services effectively. The effectiveness of any proposed solution drops significantly with distance from the key pieces of electrical infrastructure, which is the reason for the selection of the proposed location for this project.

## 2.3 Constraint Management

Rising costs of constraint management and the need for more renewable energy in Scotland, and the rest of the UK to meet net zero targets, has led National Grid ESO to look at alternative solutions. When renewable energy generators are not needed due to lack of demand or other network issues, they often receive payments to stop generating, this is known as ‘constraining-off’ generation. Batteries can act as a cheaper buffer between generation and supply; they store the renewable energy generated to ensure that the green energy can be used at a later stage and remove cost implications for the consumer. This helps facilitate more renewable energy onto the grid and improves the energy mix being consumed, while saving consumers significant money. Without solutions such as the one proposed by the Applicant, National Grid ESO forecasts costs to consumers will rise by over £2.5bn a year during the second half of the 2020s.

## 2.4 Balancing Mechanism

National Grid ESO has a constant supply of ‘extra power’ available for use when the power required by customers is not equal to the power generated and a reserve supply. The Balancing Mechanism is used to ensure that the network is in balance and reserve power is then used when the network comes under ‘stress’.

When unforeseen demand is put on the network, such as when a large power station suddenly goes offline, then the National Grid ESO control room needs alternative sources of power. This is achieved from rapid responding facilities, such as the Proposed Development, which can absorb energy from the grid as instructed.

## 2.5 Benefits of the Proposed Development

The Proposed Development would result in an improvement to the reliability of the electrical network. In the move toward a low carbon economy, it would allow increasing levels of renewable energy generation to be more fully integrated into the electrical system.

The granting of planning permission would support the deployment of a mature technology in the UK, with the ultimate aim of making a valuable contribution to the UK’s secure, low carbon and affordable electricity system, at least cost to consumers. As such, it is only by decentralising the system through developments such as that proposed (which consequently induces a faster uptake in renewables) can Scotland and UK truly become a low cost, net-zero nation. Therefore, indirectly, one of the greatest economic benefits of this scheme is that the cumulative purpose of BESS facilities, have the potential to significantly reduce energy bills in the near future.

## 2.6 Planning History

### 2.6.1 Previous Planning Application

A planning application for a Greener Grid Park including energy management and storage on the Site was submitted to the Council in March 2022. This development included up to 20MW of BESS and two



synchronous compensators, with associated infrastructure. Planning permission 21/0748/PP was granted on 23 August 2022.

In April 2022 the Applicant was awarded a stability contract by the NGENSO for 50MW BESS. Therefore, this new application is being submitted with a redesigned development proposal with the required increase in storage capacity of BESS. The contract awarded did not include any requirement for synchronous compensators, therefore they are no longer included within the layout. This new application would supersede the existing consent.

### 2.6.2 EIA Criteria and Screening

Regulation 2 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations (2017) ('the EIA Regulations') defines EIA development as either:

- Schedule 1 Development - development of a type listed in Schedule 1 always requires EIA; or
- Schedule 2 Development - development of a type listed in Schedule 2 requires EIA if it is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size, or location.

In determining whether a particular development is of a type listed in Schedule 1 or 2, planning authorities should have regard to the ruling of the European Court, Case C-72/95 (Kraaijeveld and others), that the EIA Directive has a 'wide scope and broad purpose'. The fact that a particular type of development is not specifically identified in one of the Schedules does not necessarily mean that it falls outside the scope of the Regulations.

The purpose of the Proposed Development is to provide support to the national grid, however it will not in of itself result in any on-site generation of electricity. As a result, the Proposed Development is not considered to fall within any specific category listed within Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations and should not constitute EIA development. However, given the lack of specific guidance or policy related to battery / energy storage, it is recognised that the Council may assess the Development as falling under either Schedule 2, to Category 10 (a): "*Industrial estate development projects*", or Category 3 (a): "*Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1)*". In each case, a development area threshold exceeding 0.5 hectares is applied.

Given that the Site area exceeds this threshold, the requirement for an EIA is determined by considering the selection criteria detailed within Schedule 3 of the EIA regulations. The Selection Criteria in Schedule 3 includes an assessment of the following:

- Characteristics of the Development;
- Location of the Development; and
- Characteristics of the Potential Impact.

On 17 April 2023, a request for an EIA Screening Opinion Request was submitted to the Council (ref. 23/0008/EIASCR). A Screening Response was issued on 17 May 2023, confirming that following an assessment, the proposal is considered unlikely to result in significant environmental effects and therefore an EIA is not required for the development.

### 2.6.3 Proposal of Application Notice

A Proposal of Application Notice (PoAN) was submitted to the Council on 5 April 2022 (Planning Reference: 22/0004/PREAPP). The PoAN was prepared and submitted in accordance with the provisions of the DMP Regulations, Section 35b of the Planning Act 1997, as amended.

As the PoAN was submitted before 1 October 2022, under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 (Commencement No. 6 and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2021<sup>1</sup> as amended, it means that the old DMP regulations apply as long as an application is made prior to 31 March 2024 and as this application has been submitted in October 2022 the existing PoAN is valid.

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<sup>1</sup> The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 (Commencement No. 6 and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2021, Available at - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2021/101/contents/made> [Accessed on 21/10/2023]



## 3 Site Location and Description

### 3.1 Site Selection

In March 2022 Statkraft was awarded a Stability Pathfinder Phase 2 contract to provide frequency control services to National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO), in the form of grid forming converter BESS. This contract is for connection to the operational Coylton National Grid substation.

There are a limited number of sites which are available that can connect to the electrical grid networks. Coylton was identified by National Grid as a location that needed stability services. The existing substation is already a strong and central location on the Scottish grid, therefore, it's a preferred location for the new grid services which are required to enable integration of large amounts of renewable energy that are needed to meet Scottish and UK Government targets.

This Site was identified as being suitable given the close proximity to Coylton substation which is part of the National Grid and operated by SP Energy Networks. Projects of this nature must be sited within close proximity to the connecting substation to avoid lengthy transmission cables, with increased distance away from the connecting substation ultimately threatening the technical and financial viability of a project.

### 3.2 Site Location and Physical Context

The Site is located on land to the south of the A70, adjacent to Coylton substation, Colyton, Ayrshire, KA18 2RN. The approximate site centre grid reference is Northing: 619612 and Easting: 246495. **Drawing 15627-047** submitted with this application shows the location of the Site with its boundary edged in red.

The location of battery storage infrastructure is driven by constraints and pressures that apply to the grid network in certain areas, increasingly as a result of the development of renewable energy generation. They are most effective when located adjacent to large substations.

The Site covers 13.1 ha of primarily agriculturally improved grassland, and lies approximately 1.8 km northeast of Drongan, 3.5 km west of Ochiltree and 4.8 km east of Coylton. The area immediately surrounding the Site is predominantly rural in nature except for Coylton substation within the western area of the Site. The Killoch Depot is also located approximately 800 m northeast of the Site.

Vehicular access to the Site would be obtained via a new access point from the A70, directly to the north of the site.

The topography of the Site is generally flat with a slight gradient decline from the north to the south of the Site, meaning the proposed placement of infrastructure is at a lower elevation than the site entrance.

A watercourse runs through the Site itself with several overhead electricity lines also running through the Site and within the surrounding area, leading from Coylton substation.

There are no identified statutory landscape or ecological designations within 1 km of the Site. The Site lies within Landscape Character Type (LCT) 66 – Agricultural Lowlands as defined within NatureScot's National Landscape Character Assessment (2019). The Landscape is also described as LCT-7c East Ayrshire Lowlands in the East Ayrshire Landscape Wind Capacity Study by Carol Anderson Landscape Associates.

## 4 Description of the Proposed Development

### 4.1 Overview

The Proposed Development relates to the construction and operation of a Greener Grid Park (GGP), with a capacity of up to 50 MW. The Proposed Development would consist of multiple containerised lithium-ion (Li-ion) battery storage units, along with associated equipment, including power converters, transformers, air conditioning (HVAC) units, and spares stores. This equipment would be sited on a levelled and stoned platform, with appropriate surface water drainage, with the compound enclosed by suitable security fencing. Individual components would likely require concrete plinth type foundations.

The Proposed Development may be constructed in two distinct phases (Phases 1 and 2), as shown on **Drawing 15627-032**.

The Proposed Development site allows space for the installation of more BESS units than are necessary to provide the 50 MW capacity sought by the planning application. Permission to utilise the remaining potential capacity of the site, would be subject to a future Section 36 application to Scottish Ministers should the Applicant choose to develop the site further.

### 4.2 Development Infrastructure

The Proposed Development would comprise the following key components:

- 24 Blocks of Battery storage containers, each measuring a maximum of 4 m (H) x 28 m (L) x 15 m (W).
- AUX Transformers, each 2.5 m (H) x 2.6 m (L) x 1.6 m (W).
- Storage containers, each 2.6 m (H) x 6.1 m (L) x 2.4 m (W).
- Office cabins, each 3.60 m (H) x 9.80 m (L) x 3.1 m (W).
- An underground grid connection cable of approximately 0.3km in length.
- Comms houses, each 5.63 m (H) x 18.8 m (L) x 14.2 m (W).
- 4.5 m (H) Noise attenuation / security perimeter fencing.
- 4.5 m (H) high Perimeter Gate (Close Boarded)
- 3.4 m (H) Internal security fencing for HV Yard.
- 3.4 m (H) Palisade Gate for HV Yard.
- CCTV / Lighting Poles (6m High).
- Porous Crushed Aggregate Hard Surfacing.
- HV Equipment at 8 m (H) x 28.1 m (L) x 14.4 m (W).
- HV Yard at 40.42 m (L) x 20.78 m (W).
- Landscape and biodiversity enhancements to include native tree, native mix-species hedgerows, and wildflower meadows.

### 4.3 Grid Connection

An underground cable would connect the Proposed Development to Coylton substation to the west.

#### 4.4 Access

The Site is located approximately 1.8km to the northeast of the settlement of Drongan, immediately to the east of Coylton Substation and vehicular access to the Site will be provide via the construction of a new site entrance connecting to the A70 which is located immediately to the north of the Site.

The onsite access track will be gated to prevent unauthorised access and will be suitably designed to allow delivery of the electrical infrastructure to Site. The access track will cross an existing drainage ditch and an existing Scottish Water foul water drainage pipe. The design of these crossings will be confirmed at detailed design following site investigations.

#### 4.5 Construction Period

The construction period of the Proposed Development is anticipated to last for approximately 12-18 months. Please see the Design and Access Statement (ref. 15627-009) for detailed programme of construction activities with timescales and total vehicle movements.

## 5 UK and Scotland Planning and Energy Policy

### 5.1 UK and National Energy Policy

#### 5.1.1 Climate Change Plan: The Third Report on Proposals and Policies 2018-2032

Published in February 2018 by the Scottish Government, the Climate Change Plan (CCP) generally sets out the requirement for an emissions reduction plan that maximises opportunities for Scotland whilst protecting the domestic economy. It sets out a new transport emissions reduction target of 37% to be achieved by 2032, whilst also outlining further emissions reduction targets with Scotland's approach to the Paris Agreement.

An update to this policy was published in March 2021, which sets out the Scottish Government's pathway to our new and ambitious targets set by the Climate Change Act 2019. It is considered a key strategic document on Scotland green recovery from COVID-19.

The Proposed Development would enable the promotion of the domestic economy's attributes to achieve the decarbonisation of the electricity supply, further maximising opportunities with the diversification of the energy network. The knock-on effects of schemes such the Proposed Development will balance the grids network supply, whilst providing economic benefits such as clean and reliable energy at low cost to consumers. Which in turn allow for further 'green' energy development and in the likelihood of achieving the ambitious targets set.

#### 5.1.2 Scottish Energy Strategy: The Future of Energy in Scotland

The Scottish Energy Strategy (SES): the Future of Energy in Scotland, first published in December 2017, sets out the Scottish Government vision for the future energy system in Scotland for the period through to 2050. The SES identifies that Scotland's long-term climate change targets will require the near complete decarbonisation of our energy system by 2045 with renewable energy meeting a significant share of our needs.

Energy storage plays an influential role within this Strategy, with Section 3 of the SES including storage as a priority and action which should be addressed:

*'Scotland needs a balanced and secure electricity supply. That means a system and a range of technologies which provide sufficient generation and interconnection to meet demand. It means an electricity network which is resilient and sufficiently secure against any fluctuations or interruptions to supply.'*

More specifically, the Strategy targets the importance of battery storage as a technology;

*'The Scottish Government agrees that storage is a strategically important issue, with real potential benefits for Scotland. We will continue to support innovation and deployment in this area, and to work with energy sector and academic stakeholders on steps designed to accelerate its penetration and value across Scotland.'*

Further guidance for the development of security and resilience within the electricity transmission infrastructure in Scotland is provided in 'A Visions for Scotland's Electricity and Gas Networks 2019-2030'. Based on the SES, the Networks Vision looks at ways in which electricity and gas network infrastructure will continue to support the energy transition. Critically important is for opportunities to accelerate progress to decarbonise the energy network;

*'We must work to ensure that our networks continue to support a resilient energy system, throughout and beyond the low carbon transition. There needs to be a greater strategic focus on regional security of supply which considers not only the networks themselves but also the location and characteristics of the resources connected to them.'*



The strategy sets out the requirement to meet demand within this quest for reliance within the energy network;

*'The ability to operate the electricity system as a whole is becoming more challenging. The closures of large, thermal power stations across Britain, including those in Scotland, means that while discussions about infrastructure often focus on the capacity of networks to move power, a stable electricity system needs other services such as the ability to support voltage, detect faults, and remain resilient to unexpected events.'*

In the context of the above Strategy, the Proposed Development makes a significant contribution in maintaining a resilient energy network which would be supported by the SES. The Proposed Development seeks to directly address the requirement to maintain adequate supply in meeting demand where generation and transmission are unable to do so. Balancing both peaks and troughs associated with electricity supply to keep the electricity system stable, the Proposed Development will support Scotland's Network Vision whilst aiding the decarbonisation of the electricity supply network.

### 5.1.3 Declaration of a Climate Emergency and Achieving Net Zero

The Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon declared a "Climate Emergency" in her speech to the SNP Conference in April 2019, stating:

*"As First Minister of Scotland, I am declaring that there is a climate emergency. And Scotland will live up to our responsibility to tackle it".*

In May 2019, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) published 'Net Zero – UK's Contribution to Stopping Global Warming'. This report states that, *'Net Zero is a more fundamental aim than previous targets. By reducing emissions produced in the UK to zero, we also end our contribution to rising global temperatures'*. It goes on to state that, *'we must not increase our ambition to tackle climate change. The science demands it; the evidence is before you; we must start at once; there is no time to lose'*.

The report made the following recommendations for the UK economy:

- UK overall: a new tougher emissions target of Net Zero GHG by 2050, ending the UK's contribution to global warming within 30 years. This would replace the previous target of an 80% reduction by 2050 from a 1990 baseline;
- Scotland: a target of net-zero GHG economy by 2045, reflecting Scotland's greater relative capacity to remove emissions than the UK as a whole;
- A Net Zero GHG target for 2050 would deliver on the commitment that the UK made by signing the Paris Agreement.

With regards to the UK and Scottish targets, the report clearly states, *'this is only possible if clear, stable, and well-designed policies to reduce emissions further are introduced across the economy without delay. Current policy is insufficient for even the existing targets'*. The report also states;

*'Scotland has proportionally greater potential for emissions removal than the UK overall and can credibly adopt a more ambitious target. It should aim for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. Interim targets should be set for Scottish emissions reductions (relatively to 1990) of 70% by 2030 and 90% by 2040'*.

The Proposed Development acknowledges the 'Climate Emergency' and is designed to support multiple services to enable decarbonisation of electricity supply by providing a 'greener' energy solution to help maintain adequate supply where generation levels are low. In doing so the Proposed Development helps to achieve the Net Zero emissions targets.



#### 5.1.4 National Audit Office – Achieving Net Zero

Published on 2 December 2020, the National Audit Office report<sup>2</sup> to the UK Government examines the main risks to achieving net zero effectively and efficiently. The report is forthright that most of the UK reductions in emissions has come about from the switch away from coal in electricity generation. Whilst reducing emissions further will require wider changes to the UK economy, further investment in renewable electricity generation will be required.

BEIS (The Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy) projects that the UK will not meet its targets for emissions reduction unless action is taken to reduce the shortfall in achieving the targets set in the fourth and fifth carbon budgets. At paragraph 6 of the summary the report states that:

*‘Achieving net zero is a colossal challenge and significantly more challenging than the Government’s previous target to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050.’*

At paragraph 13 of the Summary, the Achieving Net Zero report confirms that BEIS will launch a net zero strategy prior to COP26 in November 2021. In October 2021 Net Zero Strategy: Build back Greener<sup>3</sup> was adopted with the government’s vision for transitioning to a net zero economy by 2050, encompassing all sectors that need to decarbonise, and closing the gap that currently exists in meeting the targets in the fourth and fifth carbon budgets. This strategy sets the level for the sixth carbon budget, review the cost of net zero and how it should be paid for and establishing meeting net zero as part of the wider economic response to Covid-19.

#### 5.1.5 The Sixth Carbon Budget: The UK’s path to Net Zero

On 9 December 2020, the CCC released The Sixth Carbon Budget which updates intermediary targets for the UK’s progress to net zero.

*‘Our recommended pathway requires a 78% reduction in UK territorial emissions between 1990 and 2035. In effect, it brings forward the UK’s previous 80% target by nearly 15 years. There is no clearer indication of the increased ambition implied by the Net Zero target than this.’*

In establishing intermediary targets towards net zero, the context exists for Local Authorities to recognise the action that must be taken sooner rather than later. As concluded in the Sixth Carbon Budget:

*‘The implication of this path is clear: the utmost focus is required from government over the next ten years. If policy is not scaled up across every sector; if business is not encouraged to invest; if the people of the UK are not engaged in this challenge – the UK will not deliver Net Zero by 2050.’*

The Proposed Development acknowledges the ‘Net Zero Targets’ and is designed to support multiple services to enable decarbonisation of electricity supply by providing a ‘greener’ energy solution to help maintain adequate supply where generation levels are low. In doing so, the Proposed Development will support Net Zero by decarbonisation of the electricity supply network.

#### 5.1.6 Energy White Paper: Powering Our Net-Zero Future

The Energy White Paper sets out how the UK will clean up its energy system and reach net zero emissions by 2050. The following points are relevant to the Proposed Development:

- Page 43: *‘A low-cost consistent system is likely to be comprised predominantly of wind and solar. But ensuring the system is also reliable, means intermittent renewables need to be*

<sup>2</sup> National Audit Office ‘Achieving Net Zero’ Available at - <https://www.nao.org.uk/reports/achieving-net-zero/#downloads> [Accessed on 20/10/2023]

<sup>3</sup> Net Zero Strategy: Build back Greener, Available at - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy> [Accessed on 20/10/2023]

*complemented by technologies which provide power, or reduce demand, when the wind is not blowing, or the sun does not shine. Today this includes nuclear, gas with carbon capture and storage and flexibility provided by batteries, demand side response interconnectors (see 'Energy system' chapter) and short-term dispatchable generation providing peaking capacity, which can be flexed as required'.*

- Page 44: *'By 2050, we expect low-carbon options, such as clean hydrogen and long-duration storage to satisfy the need for peaking capacity and ensure security of supply at low cost, likely eliminating the reliance on generation from unabated gas'.*
- Page 72: emphasises the fact that energy storage in batteries will provide *'...the flexibility needed to match supply to demand at peak hours, or when renewables output is low'*, such flexibility will lower future costs for consumers and can be deployed quickly to meet spikes in demand. Page 72 also states *'Increasingly, flexibility will come from new, cleaner sources, such as energy storage in batteries, increased interconnected capacity from neighbouring electricity markets, or from consumer using smart technologies to reduce how much energy they use or shift when they use the energy to different times in the day'.*

The Proposed Development will provide a reliable low-carbon storage solution (of up to 50 MW), which can respond to the flexible requirements for short-term dispatchable energy demands during times of peaking capacity or when renewables output is low.

### 5.1.7 UK Government Energy Security Strategy

The UK Government released its Energy Security Strategy in April 2022, of which intends to guide planning policy to accelerate the transition away from hydrocarbons within the energy sectors and roll out new renewables. Building on the government's 'Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution', together with the 'Net Zero Strategy' and this Energy Strategy, the UK government is driving an unprecedented private sector investment into clean energy jobs by the end of the decade. Ambitious targets are being set to ensure the rapid decarbonisation of the electricity sector within the UK, with a potential 95% of British electricity potentially being low carbon by 2030.

Networks, storage, and flexibility features is a primary area of focus within the Energy Strategy, accelerating the domestic supply of clean electricity and facilitating the network infrastructure to support its increased generation. In this area, of which the Proposed Development sits in, the strategy aims to prioritise;

*'anticipating need because planning ahead minimises cost and public disruption; and hyper-flexibility in matching supply and demand so that minimal energy is wasted. This more efficient, locally responsive system could bring down costs by up to £10 billion a year by 2050.'*

A flexible and efficient system of electricity transmission and distribution requires increased deployment of BESS and additional electrical infrastructure. As such the strategy aims to ensure;

*'encouraging all forms of flexibility with sufficient large-scale, long-duration electricity storage to balance the overall system by developing appropriate policy to enable investment.'*

The Proposed Development intends to contribute to the objectives set out in the strategy above. The components included within the Proposed Development allows for greater flexibility and stability of electricity demand in tandem with the growth of renewable energy generation within the electrical infrastructure.

### 5.1.8 A Vision for Scotland's Electricity and Gas Networks 2019-2030

Further guidance for the development of security and resilience within the electricity transmission infrastructure in Scotland is provided in this document. Based on the SES, the Networks Vision looks at ways in which electricity and gas network infrastructure will continue to support the energy transition. Critically important is for opportunities to accelerate progress to decarbonise the energy network;

*"We must work to ensure that our networks continue to support a resilient energy system, throughout and beyond the low carbon transition. There needs to be a greater strategic focus on regional security of supply which considers not only the networks themselves but also the location and characteristics of the resources connected to them."*

The strategy sets out the requirement to meet demand within this quest for reliance within the energy network;

*"The ability to operate the electricity system as a whole is becoming more challenging. The closures of large, thermal power stations across Britain, including those in Scotland, means that while discussions about infrastructure often focus on the capacity of networks to move power, a stable electricity system needs other services such as the ability to support voltage, detect faults, and remain resilient to unexpected events."*

The Proposed Development seeks to directly address the requirement to maintain adequate supply in meeting demand where generation and transmission are unable to do so. Balancing both peaks and troughs associated with electricity supply to keep the electricity system stable, the Proposed Development will support Scotland's Network Vision whilst aiding the decarbonisation of the electricity supply network.

## 5.2 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) is the primary material consideration for all planning decisions, including the determination of planning applications, in Scotland. It is a long-term spatial plan for Scotland which sets out where development and infrastructure is needed and provides land use policy for development and investment in Scotland to assist in achieving Net Zero, sustainable development by 2045.

Following draft versions of NPF4 being published in 2021 and 2022, the Scottish Parliament voted to approve the revised NPF4 in whole in January 2023 and in February 2023 NPF4 was formally adopted. NPF4 now forms part of the statutory Development Plan and replaces National Planning Framework 3 ('NPF3') and Scottish Planning Policy ('SPP'). As a result, NPF4 exerts a profound influence on all planning matters within Scotland and would require significant consideration when preparing the planning arguments for the Proposed Development.

### 5.2.1 Applying/Using NPF4

In the ministerial foreword NPF4, Tom Arthur MSP states, inter alia, that *"putting the twin global climate and nature crises at the heart of our vision for a future Scotland will ensure the decisions we make today will be in the long-term interest of our country"*. Furthermore, when explaining how the plan is to be used, it is stated in Annex A of NPF4 that *"we must embrace and deliver radical change so we can tackle and adapt to climate change, restore biodiversity loss, ..."*.

Centralised development management policies are introduced in NPF4 which are to be applied Scotland wide and NPF4 is also required by law to contribute to six outcomes (Annex A of NPF4) linked to, amongst other things, *"meeting any targets relating to the reduction of emissions of greenhouses gases"*.

Part 1 of NPF4 outlines the National Spatial Strategy for Scotland 2045 (NSS) which has been developed to support the planning and delivery of ‘Sustainable Places’, ‘Liveable Places’ and ‘Productive Places’. The NSS recognises the urgency of addressing climate change, particularly when stating that *“the world is facing unprecedented challenges. The global climate emergency means that we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the future impacts of climate change”* (emphasis added). When discussing the NSS regarding delivering ‘Sustainable Places’, the Scottish Government highlight how, by 2030 we must have made significant progress towards reaching Net Zero emissions by 2045.

In response to the positioning of the twin crises front and centre of NPF4, the NSS and how planning is expected to operate, the application for the Proposed Development would need emphasise the necessity for the decision-makers to afford significant weight to its contribution to national and global energy targets.

### 5.2.2 The National Spatial Strategy for Scotland 2045

The National Spatial Strategy for Scotland 2045 had been developed to support the planning and delivery of:

- ‘Sustainable Places’: *“where we reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity”*;
- ‘Liveable Places’: *“where we can all live better, healthier lives”*; and
- ‘Productive places’: *“where we have a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy”*.

The Second Part of NPF4 uses these three themes (sustainable, liveable, and productive places) to address national planning policy. Under sustainable places, the third National Development identified is named *“Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure”*.

This third National Development is described as follows:

*“This national development supports renewable electricity generation, repowering, and expansion of the electricity grid.*

*A large and rapid increase in electricity generation from renewable sources will be essential for Scotland to meet its net zero emissions targets. Certain types of renewable electricity generation will also be required, which will include energy storage technology and capacity, to provide the vital services, including flexible response, that a zero-carbon network will require. Generation is for domestic consumption as well as for export to the UK and beyond, with new capacity helping to decarbonise heat, transport, and industrial energy demand. This has the potential to support jobs and business investment, with wider economic benefits.*

*The electricity transmission grid will need substantial reinforcement including the addition of new infrastructure to connect and transmit the output from new on and offshore capacity to consumers in Scotland, the rest of the UK and beyond. Delivery of this national development will be informed by market, policy and regulatory developments and decisions”.*

All forms of electricity generation exceeding 50 MW capacity are defined as national development, in locations across all of Scotland. In terms of the need for such development the NPF4 states:

*“Additional electricity generation from renewables and electricity transmission capacity of scale is fundamental to achieving a net zero economy and supports improved network resilience in rural and island areas”.*

#### 5.2.2.1 National Planning Policy

Part 2 of NPF4 uses the three identified delivery themes (sustainable, liveable, and productive places) to group the national planning policies. With regard to the application of the national levels policies, NPF4 states:

*"The policy sections are for use in the determination of planning applications. The policies should be read as a whole. Planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is for the decision maker to determine what weight to attach to policies on a case-by-case basis. Where a policy states that development will be supported, it is in principle, and it is for the decision maker to take into account all other relevant policies".*

In terms of 'sustainable places' relevant policies include the following:

- Policy 1: Tackling the Climate and Nature Crisis;
- Policy 3: Biodiversity;
- Policy 4: Natural Places;
- Policy 5: Soils;
- Policy 6: Forestry, Woodland, and Trees;
- Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places; and
- Policy 11: Energy.

A summary of the relevant provisions of the above policies is detailed below.

### **Policy 1: Tackling the Climate and Nature Crisis**

A significant shift in the policy context under which national planning policy has been prepared is exemplified through Policy 1 in NPF4.

Policy 1 directs that that "*significant weight*" should be given to the matters of the climate change emergency and nature crisis when considering "*all development proposals*" (emphasis added) and the policy intent is "*to encourage, promote and facilitate development that addresses the global climate emergency and nature crisis*".

By making this the first policy in NPF4, its Policy Intent (above) and Policy Outcome of "*Zero carbon, nature positive places*" are re-positioned as a priority of the document, and for all plans and planning decisions.

The Climate and Nature Crises ('the twin Crises') have undoubtedly been placed front and centre of NPF4 and of how planning is expected to operate, which has never before been the case in national planning policy. Planning policy no longer leaves the judgement of how much weight should be afforded to the climate emergence solely to the decision maker, thus, the Proposed Development should be given significant weight in response to its contribution to meeting energy targets and reaching Net Zero.

### **Policy 11: Energy**

The Policy Intent for Policy 11 – the principal policy for the Proposed Development – is to "*encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development*" including "*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)*". The Policy Outcomes consist of the "*expansion of renewable, low carbon and zero emission technologies*".

Policy 11 states how "*proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies will be supported*" (emphasis added) with the only exception to this being wind farms development in National Parks and National Scenic Areas.

Policy 11 also affirms that "*significant weight will be placed on the contribution of the proposal to renewable energy generation targets and on greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets*" (emphasis added). This illustrates a further departure from SPP in that decision makers are now specifically instructed to attribute significant weight to generation and emission targets moving forward. Substantial policy support has been introduced for larger scale renewable energy developments as NPF4 explicitly recognises the importance of hitting national targets to combat climate change.



An emphasis is placed on economic benefits of energy proposals in Policy 11 c) as it is illustrated that proposals will not be supported unless they “*maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities*”.

Policy 11 also states the following:

*“e) In addition, project design and mitigation will demonstrate how the following impacts are addressed:*

- i. impacts on communities and individual dwellings, including, residential amenity, visual impact, noise, and shadow flicker;*
- ii. significant landscape and visual impacts, recognising that such impacts are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy. Where impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable;*
- iii. public access, including impact on long distance walking and cycling routes and scenic routes;*
- iv. impacts on aviation and defence interests including seismological recording;*
- v. impacts on telecommunications and broadcasting installations, particularly ensuring that transmission links are not compromised;*
- vi. impacts on road traffic and on adjacent trunk roads, including during construction;*
- vii. impacts on historic environment;*
- viii. effects on hydrology, the water environment and flood risk;*
- ix. biodiversity including impacts on birds;*
- x. impacts on trees, woods, and forests;*
- xi. proposals for the decommissioning of developments, including ancillary infrastructure, and site restoration;*
- xii. the quality of site restoration plans including the measures in place to safeguard or guarantee availability of finances to effectively implement those plans; and*
- xiii. cumulative impacts.*

...

*Grid capacity should not constrain renewable energy development. It is for developers to agree connections to the grid with the relevant network operator. In the case of proposals for grid infrastructure, consideration should be given to underground connections where possible.*

*f) Consents for development proposals may be time-limited. Areas identified for wind farms are, however, expected to be suitable for use in perpetuity”.*

The objective of Policy 11 is obvious in that it is clearly advocating for significant expansion in renewable energy across Scotland, which the Proposed Development would contribute to. Policy 11 provides a response to Policy 1 in that it offers renewable energy as a big part in the Scottish Government’s expected solution for tackling the Climate Emergency.

Also notable is that paragraph e) point ii recognises that significant landscape and visual impacts are “*to be expected*” for some types of renewable energy development and that these will generally be considered as acceptable so long as “*impacts are localised and/or design mitigation has been applied*”.

Policy 11 is therefore significantly different from the previously adopted SPP as it removes a lot of the policy hurdles and obstacles which have encumbered renewable energy development in the past.

Ultimately, Policy 11 (in combination with Policy 1) is advocating that, so long as the site-specific environmental impacts of a project are within acceptable limits, all renewable energy projects should be consented.

### **Policy 3: Biodiversity**

The Policy Intent for Policy 3 is *“to protect biodiversity, reverse biodiversity loss, deliver positive effects from development and strengthen nature networks”*.

Policy 3 requires proposals to contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity through development and to also, where possible, integrate nature-based solutions. For proposals of national or major scale, or for development which requires an EIA, support will only be granted where it is demonstrated that *“the proposal will conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, including nature networks so they are in a demonstrably better state than without intervention”* (emphasis added).

The policy sets out the following criteria which development proposals of national or major scale, or which require EIA, are required to illustrate:

- i. *“the proposal is based on an understanding of the existing characteristics of the site and its local, regional, and national ecological context prior to development, including the presence of any irreplaceable habitats;*
- ii. *wherever feasible, nature-based solutions have been integrated and made best use of;*
- iii. *an assessment of potential negative effects which should be fully mitigated in line with the mitigation hierarchy prior to identifying enhancements;*
- iv. *significant biodiversity enhancements are provided, in addition to any proposed mitigation. This should include nature networks, linking to and strengthening habitat connectivity within and beyond the development, secured within a reasonable timescale and with reasonable certainty. Management arrangements for their long-term retention and monitoring should be included, wherever appropriate; and*
- v. *local community benefits of the biodiversity and/or nature networks have been considered”*.

Policy 3 does not however set any specific targets or offer advice on what constitutes as acceptable biodiversity gain or *“significant enhancements”*, instead it is stated that *“best practice assessment methods should be used”*. Guidance is undoubtedly required on this matter and is expected from the Scottish Government in Autumn 2023. However, until that point where a methodology is proposed/accepted there is likely to be uncertainty around how biodiversity gain is approached, and the assessment of the matter will be one left down to the judgement of the decision maker.

### **Policy 4: Natural Places**

The Policy Intent for Policy 4 is *“to protect, restore and enhance natural assets making best use of nature-based solutions”* and the Policy Outcomes are that natural places are *“protected and restored”* and natural assets are *“managed in a sustainable way that maintains and grows their essential benefits and services”*.

Policy 4a) underlines how development proposals which will unacceptably impact the natural environment will not be supported.

With regards to nationally important designations, development proposals should not compromise the overall integrity or objectives of said areas or any significant adverse effects must be clearly outweighed by social, environmental, or economic benefits of national importance (policy 4c). With regards to significant adverse effects on local designations, development proposals should not compromise the integrity of said area or the qualities for which it has been identified. If they do, for local designations, the social, environmental, or economic benefits of the proposal must be of *“at least local importance”* (Policy 4d).

Policy 4 states that *“the precautionary principle will be applied in accordance with relevant legislation and Scottish Government guidance”* and explains how if adverse effects on species protected by legislation occur, proposals will not be supported unless they meet the relevant statutory tests.

#### **Policy 5: Soils**

The Policy Intent of Policy 5 is *“to protect carbon-rich soils, restore peatlands and minimise disturbance to soils from development”*.

Policy 5 states that for development proposed on peatland, carbon-rich soils or priority peatland habitat, a detailed site-specific assessment is required to identify the baseline (including depth, habitat condition, quality, and stability of carbon rich soils), likely effects (including on soil disturbance) and net effects (on climate emissions and loss of carbon).

Policy 5c) defines renewable energy proposals as one of the few types of development which will be supported, in principle, on peatland, carbon-rich soils and priority peatland habitat.

#### **Policy 6: Forestry, Woodland, and Trees**

The Policy Intent of Policy 6 is *“to protect and expand forests, woodland and trees”*.

Policy 6 states that development proposals will not be supported where there will be:

- i. *“Any loss of ancient woodlands, ancient and veteran trees, or adverse impact on their ecological condition;*
- ii. *Adverse impacts on native woodlands, hedgerows, and individual trees of high biodiversity value, or identified for protection in the Forestry and Woodland Strategy;*
- iii. *Fragmenting or severing woodland habitats, unless appropriate mitigation measures are identified and implemented in line with the mitigation hierarchy;*
- iv. *Conflict with Restocking Direction, Remedial Notice or Registered Notice to Comply issued by Scottish Forestry.”*

The policy demonstrates how proposals which include woodland removal will not be supported unless they *“will achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits in accordance with relevant Scottish Government policy on woodland removal”* and, furthermore, highlights the likelihood of compensatory planting to be required for proposals where woodland is removed.

#### **Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places**

The Policy Intent of Policy 7 is *“to protect and enhance historic environment assets and places, and to enable positive change as a catalyst for the regeneration of places”* and the first of the three Policy Outcomes is 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”*.

Part a) of Policy 7 is as follows:

*“Development proposals with a potentially significant impact on historic assets or places will be accompanied by an assessment which is based on an understanding of the cultural significance of the historic asset and/or place. The assessment should identify the likely visual or physical impact of any proposals for change, including cumulative effects and provide a sound basis for managing the impacts of change”*.

With regards to proposals which affect conservation areas, development will only be supported where the character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting is preserved or enhanced.





Development proposals affecting scheduled monuments will only be supported where direct impacts and significant adverse impacts on the integrity of its setting are avoided, or, where exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated and effects are minimised.

Policy 7 requires, where feasible, for non-designated historic environment assets and their settings to be protected and preserved in situ.

Developers must provide an evaluation of any potential non-designated buried archaeological early on in proposal, and where impacts cannot be avoided, they should be minimised.

## 5.3 Local Planning Policy

### 5.3.1 Adopted Local Development Plan ('LDP')

As stated within Section 37(2) of the Planning Act 1997, the Development Plan is the primary consideration when determining planning applications and forms the basis for the assessment of the Development in this Statement. The Site falls under the administrative boundary of East Ayrshire Council ('EAC') as the Local Planning Authority. The development planning document pertinent to the Site are:

- East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2017 ('EALDP') adopted February 2017.
  - EALDP Volume 1: Strategy and Policy.
  - EALDP Volume 2: Settlement maps.
- Supplementary Planning Guidance documents
  - Design Guidance for Masterplanning (2018).
  - Developer Contribution (2017).
  - Financial Guarantees (2017).

#### 5.3.1.1 EALDP Volume 1: Strategy and Policy

The policies assessed within this section reflect those that are considered relevant to the Proposed Development. It is considered that the most significant policies within the EALDP for the determination of the Development, are Policy IND 3: Business and Industrial Development in the Rural Area and Policy RE1: Renewable Energy Developments.

An assessment of the Development's compliance with this Policy is of significant importance when determining this Application. To determine the Proposed Development's compliance with Overarching Policy OP1, there are certain criteria that are more relevant than others. The following are also considered to be more relevant to the Proposed Development:

#### **Overarching Policy OP 1:**

This policy states that all development proposals will require to meet the following criteria, most relevant criteria for the Proposed development are:

- *"Comply with the provisions and principles of the EALDP vision and spatial strategy, all relevant LDP policies and associated supplementary guidance and non-statutory guidance;*
- *Be fully compatible with surrounding established uses and have no unacceptable impacts on the environmental quality of the area;*
- *Ensure that the size, scale, layout, and design enhances the character and amenity of the area and creates a clear sense of place;*

- *Be of the highest quality design by meeting with the provisions of SPP, the Scottish Government’s policy statement Designing Streets, the Council’s Design Guidance and any master plan/design brief prepared for the site;*
- *Prepare Master Plans/Design Statements in line with Planning Advice Notes 83 and 68 respectively where requested by the Council and/or where this is set out as a requirement in Volume 2 of the EALDP;*
- *Be compatible with, and where possible implement, projects shown on the EALDP placemaking maps;*
- *Ensure that there is no unacceptable loss of safeguarded areas of open space/green infrastructure and prime quality agricultural land;*
- *Protect and enhance natural and built heritage designations and link to and integrate with green infrastructure where possible;*
- *Ensure that there are no unacceptable impacts on the landscape character or tourism offer of the area.”*

**Policy IND 3: Business and Industrial Development in the Rural Area**

This policy lists the type of developments which the council encourages and supports. The Proposed Development falls within *“Renewable energy developments within the Rural Area that have been subject to detailed consideration against identified policy criteria”*. As defined throughout this report, the Proposed Development on this Site would help to balance the supply and demand of the energy grid and stabilise the fluctuating nature of energy generation from renewable sources. Therefore, Policy IND 3 supports developments of this nature, subject to detailed consideration against other EALDP policies.

**Policy RE1: Renewable Energy Developments**

This policy supports renewable energy developments whether they are new developments to be built or are integral parts of new or existing developments where it can be demonstrated that there are no acceptable adverse impacts, as listed in Schedule 1 of the EALDP.

**Policy RE 11: Residential Amenity**

This policy seeks to protect, preserve, and enhance the residential character and amenity of existing residential areas. An assessment of potential impact on residential amenity, in line with the industry standard RVAA Guidance is contained within Landscape and Visual Appraisal.

**Policy ENV1: Listed Buildings**

Listed buildings play an important role in defining and enhancing the quality of East Ayrshire’s environment and contribute to the character of local communities. This policy states that, *“the Council will support:*

- *The retention and preservation of all listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas.*
- *The adaption and re-use of listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas to meet modern requirements, where this can be achieved in a manner sensitive to the character of the building.”*

**Policy ENV2: Scheduled Monuments and Archaeological Resources**

This policy states that, any development that would have an adverse effect on Scheduled Monuments or on their settings shall not be supported unless there are exceptional overriding circumstances. This policy also states that, *“other archaeological resources should be preserved in situ wherever possible.*



*The developer may be required to supply an archaeological evaluation report prior to the determination of a planning application. Where the case for preservation does not prevail, the developer shall be required to make appropriate and satisfactory provision for archaeological excavation, recording, analysis, and publication in advance of development”.*

#### **Policy ENV 6: Nature Conservation**

This policy recognises the importance of the natural environment and biodiversity; hence it seeks to minimise adverse impacts from the development. Development proposals are required to submit assessments to recognise the impacts and include mitigation measures. All development proposal needs to follow the criteria listed in this policy to help EAC maintain and enhance the natural environment.

#### **Policy ENV 8: Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape**

This policy states that proposals for development within rural areas would be assessed on appropriateness where due consideration is given on protection and enhancement of East Ayrshire’s landscape character areas as identified in the Ayrshire Landscape Character Assessment. This policy also lists the requirements new development proposals need to meet:

- *“Development proposals are sited and designed to respect the nature and landscape character of the area and to minimise visual impact. Particular attention will be paid to size, scale, layout, materials, design, finish, and colour.*
- *Where visual impacts are unavoidable, development proposals should include adequate mitigation measures to minimise such impacts on the landscape.*
- *Particular features that contribute to the value, quality, and character of the landscape are conserved and enhanced. Development that would result in the loss of valuable landscape features, to such an extent that the character and value of the landscape, are unacceptably diminished, will not be supported. Such landscape features are:*
  - *Settings of settlements and buildings within the landscape;*
  - *Skylines, distinctive landform features, landmark hills, and prominent views;*
  - *Woodlands, hedgerows, and trees;*
  - *Field patterns and means of enclosure, including dry stone dykes; and*
  - *Rights of way and footpaths.”*

#### **Policy ENV 9: Trees, Woodland, and Forestry**

This policy states that the Council will support the retention of individual trees, hedgerows and woodlands within both settlements and rural areas, where such trees contribute to the amenity, nature conservation and landscape value of the area.

#### **Policy ENV 10: Carbon Rich Soils**

This policy states that EAC will seek to minimise adverse impacts on carbon rich soil from the development however, development proposals may be permitted for renewable energy generating developments where they successfully demonstrate advantage in terms of Climate Change.

#### **Policy ENV 11: Flood Prevention**

This policy states that EAC will take a precautionary approach to flood risk from all sources and will promote flood avoidance in the first instance. The policy also states that, *“The Flood Risk Framework contained in SPP, summarised in table 7 below and outlined fully in Schedule 7, will be used in the*



*assessment of development proposals. This sets out the type of development that will be appropriate in each category of flood risk and indicates where Flood Risk Assessments are likely to be required”.*

**Policy ENV 12: Water, Air and Light and Noise pollution**

This policy does not support developments which will, or which have the potential to, cause significant adverse impacts on water bodies, air quality or cause light or noise pollution.

**Policy T1: Transport Requirements for new development**

This policy states that, *“where considered appropriate, developers will be requested to enter into Section 75 Obligations with the Council with regard to making financial contributions towards the provision of transportation infrastructure improvements and/or public transport services which may be required as a result of their development”.*

### 5.3.2 Emerging Local Development Plan

On 5 December 2022, EAC submitted LDP 2 to the Scottish Ministers for Examination. The Plan and all necessary paperwork were submitted to the Scottish Government’s Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (‘DPEA’) on 24 February 2023. The Scottish Minister’s Examination of LDP 2 commenced on 11 May 2023. LDP 2 is a plan for EAC from 2023 to 2028 comprising of following documents:

- Volume 1: Vision, aims, spatial strategy and policies.
- Volume 2: Settlement maps (Site allocations).
- Rural area map.

Several policies appear to be similar between the LDP1 and LDP2. Where policies effectively duplicate those from LDP1 they are not repeated here. This section therefore considers other policies of relevance from LDP2.

**Policy SS1: Climate Change**

By the nature of renewable energy developments, the Proposed Development supports the mitigation of the causes and effects of climate change and the significant weight afforded to the Global Climate Emergency is anticipated to be applied positively in the planning balance.

**Policy DES1: Development Design**

This policy conveys that EAC will always seek to achieve excellence in design outcomes. Development proposals should demonstrate the Six Qualities of Successful Places as defined in Scottish Planning Policy, by meeting the following principles where relevant to the proposal:

- Distinctive.
- Safe and pleasant.
- Easy to move around and beyond.
- Welcoming.
- Adaptable.
- Resource efficient.

**Policy NE1: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape and features**

According to LDP 2 Settlement Maps – Rural map, the Site is not located within any protected Area for landscape or its features.

**Policy NE3: Local Landscape Area**

According to LDP 2 Settlement Maps – Rural map, the Site is not located within Local Landscape Areas of Policy NE1 (Protecting and Enhancing Landscape and features), Policy HE 4 (Heritage Gardens &



Designed Landscapes Inventory) or Policy HE4 (Heritage Gardens & Designed Landscapes non-Inventory).

**Policy NE4: Nature Crisis**

This policy ensures biodiversity enhancement, nature recovery and nature restoration across East Ayrshire. This policy states that development proposals that contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity, including the restoration of degraded habitats, build and strengthening nature networks and improve the connections between these networks and minimise adverse impacts through careful planning and design will be supported. **Policy NE10: Protection of Prime-Quality Agricultural Land**

This policy ensures that there is no unacceptable and irreversible loss of prime quality agricultural land. Any development proposal that would result in the loss of prime quality agricultural land (Classes 2 and 3.1) will not be permitted unless small-scale in nature and directly related to agricultural. *“All development proposals within areas of prime-quality agricultural land and good quality locally important land must:*

- *Be necessary in order to meet an established need; or*
- *Be small-scale in nature and directly related to a rural and/or agricultural business”.*

**Policy INF1: Infrastructure First**

This policy supports and encourages infrastructure first approach to planning which involves early engagement and collaboration with the stakeholders to better inform land use and investment decisions. This approach is encouraged to achieve clarity over infrastructure requirements and their planned delivery to meet the needs of communities.

**Policy INF4: Developer Contributions**

This policy requires that where a development will place additional demands on infrastructure, facilities and amenities, the developer would be required to meet or contribute to the cost of providing or improving the infrastructure, facilities, or services. EAC states that decisions will be taken based on the adopted LDP, the proposed development, Local Place Plans (as and when these are produced), Community Action Plans, development frameworks and strategies, the impact on existing infrastructure and facilities, and the tests set out in Circular 3/2012.

**Policy CR3: Carbon Sequestration**

This policy states that, *“planning applications for carbon sequestration and negative emissions technologies shall be assessed against the following criteria:*

- *the contribution a proposal makes towards maintaining a diverse energy mix and improving energy security;*
- *impacts on local communities and other sensitive receptors;*
- *impacts upon any natural or built heritage features;*
- *impacts in terms of noise, dust, vibration, odour, air quality and water quality;*
- *impacts upon landscape;*
- *impacts upon transport;*
- *the suitability of the restoration and aftercare proposals for the site; and*
- *the benefits accruing from the proposal including any restoration or abandoned/derelict minerals sites and local employment opportunities.”*

## 6 Planning Appraisal

### 6.1 Introduction

As set out above in Section 5, planning applications are required to be determined against the policies of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise as stated in Section 25 and 37(2) of the Planning Act 1997, as amended. The requirement to have regard to “*any other material considerations*” is in effect a statutory requirement to ensure that all other relevant matters have been considered. With the adoption of NPF4, this now takes precedence as the primary policy document against which to assess the Proposed Development, followed by the Development Plan and material considerations.

Section 25 and 37(2) of the Planning Act 1997, as amended require applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Planning Act 1997 does not provide a definition of what constitutes a ‘material consideration’ in so far as is relevant to planning applications. However, it is generally accepted in case law that any consideration which relates to the use and development of land should be capable of being a material consideration. The weight to be attached to any material consideration in reaching a decision is a matter of judgement for the decision-taker. However, the decision-taker is required to demonstrate that in reaching that decision they have considered all the relevant matters. It should however be noted that there is no Strategic Development Plan in relation to the Site and therefore the Development Plan in this instance only refers to the LDP.

This section addresses those planning matters raised by the Proposed Development against the planning policy context outlined in Section 5 above. Compliance with NPF4 is considered first and then against the Council’s Climate Change policies (EALDP Policy RE1: Renewable Energy Developments, and LDP 2 Policy SS1: Climate Change and Policy RE1: Renewable Energy), which are considered to be an appropriate structure against which to analyse compliance with the Local Development Plan in the absence of a specific policy under which electrical grid infrastructure can be considered.

### 6.2 Principle of the Proposed Development

#### 6.2.1 Suitability of the Proposed Location

An overview of the Proposed Development was provided in Section 2.2; further detail is provided below with descriptions of various environmental considerations related to the Proposed Development. A review of the EALDP and resources made available by SEPA, NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland (‘HES’) have been undertaken in order to inform the Application. The Proposed Development is not within any of the following statutory designations: Special Areas of Conservation (‘SAC’); Special Protection Areas (SPAs); Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); Ramsar Sites; Garden and Designed Landscapes (GDL); or Conservation Areas. There are also no Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments within the Site boundary.

A key principle for the location of the Proposed Development is that it is required to be located in close proximity to an existing substation in order to operate most efficiently. Furthermore, the Applicant was awarded a stability contract under SPP2 in April 2022 for grid forming converter battery energy storage system (BESS) connecting to the Coylton Substation. The Proposed Development will fulfil this contract. Notwithstanding this a number of technical assessments have been prepared to ensure that the site is suitable to accommodate the Proposed Development with respect to its environmental impacts.



### 6.2.2 Contribution to Renewable Energy Targets

By improving the availability of renewable generation to the National Grid network, the Proposed Development will provide the grid network with increased flexibility and stability. This provides more opportunities for renewable energy generation developments to connect onto the National Grid and to provide stable availability of electricity transmission to all within the surrounding area. The Proposed Development is therefore in accordance with EALDP, specifically, Policy RE1 of which provides the criteria in which renewable development should adhere to.

The Proposed Development will contribute significantly to the renewable energy directive (2009/28/EC) as it will provide the grid network with stability throughout varying changes in electricity demand. This will enable the National Grid Network the flexibility with increasing sources of renewable energy being introduced to the grid in an effort to tackle climate change, as the growing demand for such services can be provided by the Proposed Development. As further demand for electricity transmission is growing, the Proposed Development provides further certainty and support to this increased renewable electricity generation.

The Proposed Development will act as a balancing service and will therefore contribute to the Scottish Government's NSS in NPF4; particularly in the planning and delivery of 'Sustainable Places': *"where we reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity"*. As previously mentioned, (section 5.2), of the 18 National Developments (NDs) identified within NPF4 (which are *"significant developments of national importance"*), the Proposed Development will constitute as ND 3 - Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure. In the statement of need for ND 3, it is emphasised how *"certain types of renewable electricity generation will also be required, which will include energy storage technology and capacity, to provide the vital services, including flexible response, that a zero-carbon network will require"* (emphasis added). The Proposed Development will therefore undoubtedly help towards achieving the Scottish Government's NSS and related renewable energy targets.

Additionally, Policy 11: Energy of NPF4 set outs intentions to support low-carbon and net zero energy technologies throughout the transition to a net-zero Scotland by 2045, with its Policy Intent being to: *"Encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development"* including *"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)"* (emphasis added).

The Proposed Development is a facility designed to provide much needed flexibility and support to the grid during periods of high electricity demand and high generation from renewable sources. The Proposed Development provides National Grid with the flexibility to adjust to varying demands rapidly and is beneficial in ensuring that grid frequency is maintained.

Given the above context, it is considered that the Proposed Development is therefore of national strategic importance and should be afforded significant material weight. It is also supported by Scottish Government as it is an improved, more responsive mechanism to support the grid network and facilitate greater flexibility and stability within the national grid. As such, the Proposed Development will contribute to the low carbon energy effort by being able to provide a balance to renewable energy generation.

### 6.3 Compliance with National Planning Framework 4

As noted above, the Second Part of NPF4 uses three themes (sustainable, liveable, and productive places) to address national planning policy. Under sustainable places, the third National Development identified is named *"Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure"*.

The Proposed Development supports the substantial reinforcement of the electricity transmission grid as it provides infrastructure forming part of a BESS development will be able to store and transmit energy from renewable developments and therefore contributes to the development of sustainable places.

In terms of 'sustainable places' relevant NPF4 policies include the following:

- Policy 1: Tackling the Climate and Nature Crisis;
- Policy 3: Biodiversity;
- Policy 4: Natural Places;
- Policy 5: Soils;
- Policy 6: Forestry, Woodland, and Trees;
- Policy 7: Historic Assets and Places; and
- Policy 11: Energy.

The Proposed Development's purpose is to provide storage, flexibility, and stabilisation services to the electricity grid, further enabling a decrease reliance on the use of fossil fuels to manage periods of peak energy demand within the grid. These services provide both direct and indirect effects to help tackle climate change and nature crisis, ensuring the Proposed Development maintains compliance with this Policy 1 contained within NPF4.

### 6.3.1 Biodiversity and Landscaping

The overall aim of Policies 3,4 and 6 of NPF4 is to maintain the quality of the natural and biodiversity. The Proposed Development ensures Biodiversity within and surrounding the Site can be protected and enhanced. In support of this planning application, appropriate ecological surveys such as badger and water vole surveys have also been undertaken within the local area in order to ensure no adverse impacts of the development occur on the local species and habitats within the Site boundary and in close proximity of the Site.

The Proposed Development would cause minimal impacts on the ecological and landscaping value of the Site. The Proposed Development would result in the removal of a small number of trees. However, improvement and enhancement of the perimeter trees, hedgerows and vegetation is proposed as part of this Application.

The Proposed Development has adopted a more nature focused design measures to determine the final Site Layout included within the submission documents for this application (Drawing ref. 15627-023 and 15627-032). Therefore, the Proposed Development is considered to be in compliance with Policies 3, 4 and 6 of NPF4.

### 6.3.2 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

The Archaeological Assessment accompanying this application, has concluded that no heritage assets will be adversely impacted as a result of the Proposed Development. Any potential for buried archaeology was considered in the assessment however, if any buried archaeological remains are present, they would be removed during construction. On this basis, no further consideration is required of any on-site archaeology potential. The Applicant is happy to accept an appropriately worded planning condition requiring consideration of any onsite archaeology potential prior to construction start. For these reasons, it is considered that the Proposed Development is compliant with Policy 7 of NPF4.

### 6.3.3 Environmental Impacts

Policy 11 provides support for all forms of renewable energy, including for battery storage and that such projects need to demonstrate that project design and mitigation has addressed environmental impacts. Environmental impacts of relevance to the Proposed Development are:





- Impacts on communities and individual dwellings, including, residential amenity, visual impact, noise.
- Impacts on road traffic and on adjacent trunk roads, including during construction.
- Impacts on historic environment.
- Impacts on landscape.
- Impacts on hydrology, the water environment and flood risk.
- Impacts on biodiversity including on birds.
- Impacts on trees, woods, and forests.

The various technical assessments prepared in support of the Proposed Development demonstrate that there would be no adverse environmental impacts from the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in compliance with the relevant sustainable places policies of NPF4 and in particular Policy 11. Great weight should be afforded to the Proposed Development’s compliance with NPF4 given it is the key policy document against which new development proposals are assessed.

## 6.4 Compliance with the Local Development Plan

The Proposed Development has been assessed against the following policies throughout this Application.

Adopted LDP policies	Emerging LDP 2 policies
OP1: Overarching Policy	SS1: Climate Change
IND 3: Business and Industrial Development in the Rural Area	SS2: Overarching Policy
RE1: Renewable Energy Developments	DES1: Development Design
RE 11: Residential Amenity	NE1: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape and features
ENV1: Listed Buildings	NE3: Local Landscape Area
ENV2: Scheduled Monuments and Archaeological Resources	NE4: Nature Crisis
ENV 6: Nature Conservation	NE10: Protection of Prime-Quality Agricultural Land
ENV 8: Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape	HE1: Listed Buildings
ENV 9: Trees, Woodland, and Forestry	HE3: Scheduled Monuments, Historic Battlefields, and other Archaeological and Historic Environment assets
ENV 10: Carbon Rich Soils	INF1: Infrastructure First
ENV 11: Flood Prevention	INF4: Developer Contributions
ENV 12: Water, Air and Light and Noise Pollution	CR1: Flood Risk Management
T1: Transport requirements in new development	CR3: Carbon Sequestration

The Proposed Development is considered to be compliant with the policies of EALDP and LDP2. Technical assessments prepared in support of the Proposed Development and the recommended mitigation measures proposed within these, have been adopted through the design process of the Proposed Development. Further assessment against relevant EALDP policies is set out in the paragraphs below.

### 6.4.1 Arboriculture

No trees will need to be removed for the construction of the Proposed Development. The underground cable route passes through a natural gap in the hedge to connect the Proposed Development to Coylton substation. A small section of hedge at either side may need to be removed to facilitate installation of the underground cable. This will be offset by the landscape planting proposed as part of the Proposed Development. No adverse arboricultural impacts are predicted and therefore the Proposed Development is considered to be in accordance with EALDP ENV9.

### 6.4.2 Biodiversity and Ecology

The area within the Site boundary apart from area within Coylton substation is being used as an agricultural field and currently has low ecological value. Furthermore, the closest ecological designation of national or international significance to the Site is 'Barlosh Moss' SSSI, located approximately 1.8km to the southeast of the Site.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal ('PEA') was prepared by Tetra Tech in October 2023 and is submitted in support of the planning application. This PEA concluded that the Proposed Development is considered to have negligible impact on any statutory designation due to the distance and qualifying features but provided that reasonable mitigation measures are implemented. However, the Site has potential to support a number of protected and notable species including nesting birds, badgers, reptiles, hedgehogs, and brown hares due to which the PEA report recommends:

- Potential impacts to habitats, designated sites, and protected species should be considered as part of a Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- Best practice working methods should be followed to prevent harm or disturbance to any protected species or other animal that may use the site.
- Any tree felling or vegetation clearance should take place outside the bird nesting season (March-August inclusive) and a bat survey is recommended prior to any tree removal for any trees which have the potential to have bat roost features.

Additionally, a Badger and Water Vole Survey Report<sup>4</sup> ('BWVS Report'), also undertaken by Tetra Tech in October 2023, concludes that a badger sett was identified within the redline boundary (shown in Figure 2 of the BWVS Report). The report states that a 30m buffer must be maintained between the identified sett and proposed works. Additionally, no evidence of Water Vole was identified during the survey.

It is therefore concluded that the Proposed Development is in compliance with EALDP Policies ENV6 and ENV9 and LDP 2 policies NE1 and NE4 in respect to no significant adverse impacts would be generated due to the Proposed Development on the ecological value of the Site.

### 6.4.3 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

Impacts on the historic environment have been assessed within the Archaeological Assessment undertaken by RPS to support this Application.

There are no known heritage assets within the Site. The desk-based study shows that the Historic Environmental Records ('HER') holds no entries relating to evidence of activity earlier than the Medieval period in the study area and evidence of pre-Medieval activity in this part of East Ayrshire is relatively sparse. Furthermore, the ground within the Site boundary and surrounding the Site is poorly draining and hence unattractive for settlement. It is considered therefore that there is low potential for hitherto unrecorded archaeology to be present in the Site.

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<sup>4</sup> Badger and Water Vole Survey Report is a confidential report.



The Archaeological Assessment concluded that if any archaeological remains are present within the Site boundary, they would be removed during the construction phase. The likelihood of this occurring is considered low given the archaeological potential. Therefore, the Proposed Development would not cause any adverse impacts on the setting of the any historic asset, and, in turn, their historic significance, appreciation and understanding would not be negatively impacted. It is therefore concluded that the Proposed Development is in compliance with EALDP policies ENV1 and ENV2 and LDP2 policies HE1 and HE3.

#### 6.4.4 Flood Risk

According to Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), the Site is not located in an area at risk of river or surface water flooding. The nearest river water flooding risk area is approximately 540m to the south of the Site associated with Taiglium Burn. Some area located approximately 10m to the southeast of the Site has been identified to have medium to high likelihood of surface water flooding.

The accompanying Surface Water Drainage Strategy, prepared by Kaya, demonstrates that the proposed surface water drainage strategy will provide a sustainable surface water management scheme and ensure no increase in downstream flood risk by managing discharges from the Site to the local water environment in a controlled manner. It is therefore concluded that the Proposed Development is in compliance with EALDP policies ENV11 and LDP2 policies CR1.

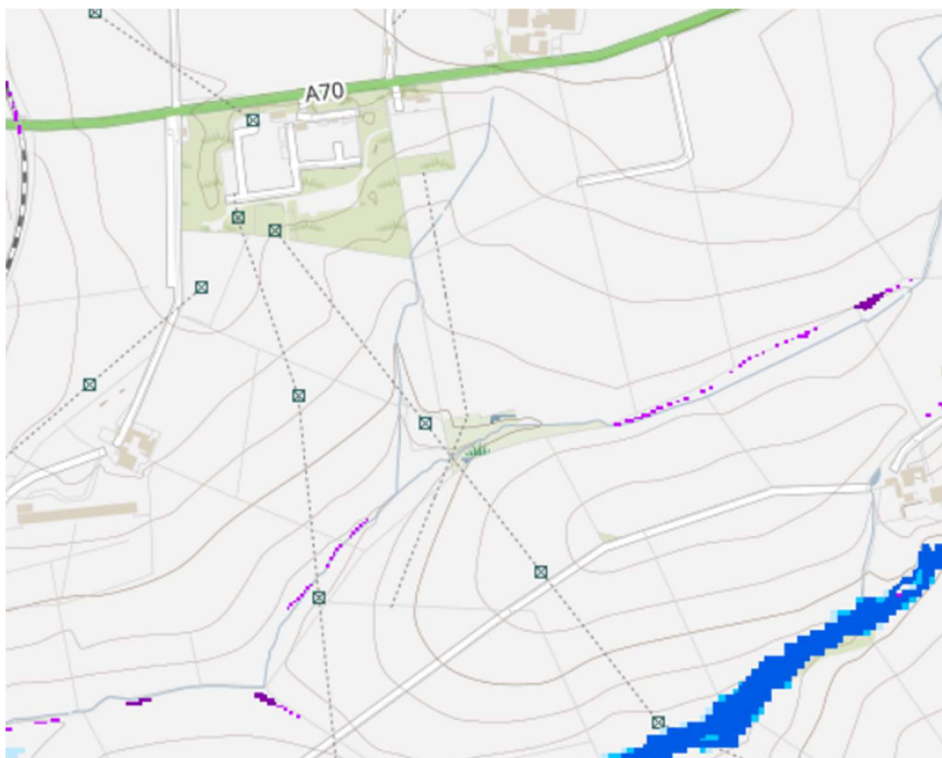


Image 1: SEPA Flood Risk Map

#### 6.4.5 Landscape and Visual Impacts

A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) is accompanying this application, which was undertaken by TGP as part of this Application and concludes that the Proposed Development would not affect any landscape designations. The Proposed Development would however result into a permanent loss of a small portion of pastoral farmland on which the Site is located. The current land pastoral land use and minimal loss of trees or hedges would limit effects on the landscape fabric giving rise to a Moderate/Minor effect.

The Proposed Development lies within Agricultural Lowland Landscape Character Type 66 ('LCT 66'), where the Site's immediate landscape comprises of electrical infrastructure including the high voltage overhead power lines, which coalesce at the Coylton Substation within the western part of the Site itself. The Proposed Development includes new tree and hedgerow planting which would strengthen and enhance the pattern and quality of the landscape. Over time the perimeter planting would largely screen the BESS and associated elements from other parts of LCT 66.

The LVIA report finally concludes that the Proposed Development could be accommodated at the Site with limited and relatively localised effects on the local landscape character and visual amenity. It is concluded that the Proposed Development aims to conserve the biodiversity value of land by retaining trees and hedgerows where possible, to minimise the fragmentation of habitats. Enhancement measures have been proposed to improve the overall biodiversity of the site and is therefore in compliance with EALDP Policies OP1, ENV6 and ENV8 and LDP 2 Policies SS2, RE11, NE1 and NE3.

#### 6.4.6 Noise

A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) has been undertaken as part of this planning application. In order to predict the noise emission levels of the Proposed Development, a noise propagation model has been prepared in accordance with ISO 9613 based on candidate plant typical for this type of development and on the assumption that noise control measures will be incorporated into the design, including acoustic enclosures fitted to the inverter/transformer units and the installation of a series of barriers.

The nearest identified Noise Sensitive Receptors (NSRs), which have a high level of sensitivity, are existing residential properties located at varying distances in all directions from the site. The curtilage of the closest residential receptors is approximately 340 m to the southwest of the nearest noise emitting plant. Noise emission levels have been calculated at seven Noise Assessment Locations (NALs), which have been selected to represent the closest NSRs to the Proposed Development site.

The NIA concludes that the Proposed Development will not have an adverse noise impact on the local area. Therefore, the Proposed Development is in accordance with Policy ENV12 (Water, air and light and noise pollution) of the EALDP.

#### 6.4.7 Renewable Energy and Sustainable Development

As detailed within Section 2 of the report, the Proposed Development provides a variety of grid stabilisation and flexibility services that ensures the considerable contributions to the promotion of the Scottish Government's targets in relation to Climate Change and Green House Gas emissions. With the Proposed Development's ability to promote further storage of renewable energy within the National Grid, as well as its avoidance of any significant adverse environmental impacts. The Applicant has also secured a stability contract under SPP2 in April 2022 for grid forming converter battery energy storage system (BESS) connecting to the Coylton Substation. The Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in compliance with both EALDP Policy RE1 and LDP 2 Policy SS1 accounting for the Council's approach to consider such proposals on a case-by-case basis.

#### 6.4.8 Soil and Peat

Majority of the Site has Grade 4.1 Quality Agricultural land, however there is Grade 3.2 Quality land towards the south of the Site (Please see the figures below, blue refers to Grade 4.1 and amber refers to Grade 3.2 quality soil). Therefore, the Site does not constitute Prime agricultural land which is Grade 1 to Grade 3.1 quality land.



Image 2: Scotland's Soil - Agricultural Land Classification Map

A Peat Probe Survey was conducted on Site in January 2022 and the surveyors did not find any evidence of peat on Site. Therefore, no peat or peaty soils will be affected by the development. It is therefore concluded that the Proposed Development is in compliance with EALDP policies ENV10 and LDP 2 Policy NE10.

#### 6.4.9 Traffic and Transport

A Transport Statement and Construction Traffic Management Plan ('TS & CTMP') has been prepared by Pell Frischmann in support of the Proposed Development. Traffic management procedures have been proposed within the TS & CTMP which would ensure the safe operation of the approach route to the site during construction. The TS & CTMP demonstrate that the impact on the wider road network from the Proposed Development would be negligible. It is particularly given that there is a well-established access route to the site that has been used for the construction of the development platform and partly for the GSP. It is therefore concluded that the Proposed Development is in compliance with EALDP Policies T1, RE11 and IND 3 and LDP 2 Policies INF4 and T1.

#### 6.4.10 Conclusions on Compliance with Local Planning Policy

Consideration of all environmental impacts from the Proposed Development through the technical assessments and design measures detailed within the Design and Access Statement contained within this application pack, has demonstrated that there would be no unacceptable adverse environmental effects from the Proposed Development. Therefore, the Proposed Development is considered to be in compliance with the local planning policies and guidance set out above. The principle of the Proposed Development as a form of infrastructure to reinforce stability and flexibility within the



national grid, further provides justification of the Proposed Development as sustainable development as it will help to ensure the continuing utilisation of renewable forms of energy generation in both a local and national context.

## 7 Summary and Conclusions

It is evident from reviewing current national renewable energy policy that the Scottish Government is committed to tackling climate change, moving towards a zero-waste Scotland, and increasing the use of renewable energy. Furthermore, the Scottish Government has declared a Climate Emergency in response to clear and irrefutable evidence that the world must act now to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. Scotland must transition from a reliance on fossil fuels to utilising renewable energy sources in order to act on climate change. As such, there is an increasing pressure upon communities to shift to sustainable, low-carbon sources of energy.

The Proposed Development assists the UK to meet national and international targets for the reduction of emissions including greenhouse gases. The Proposed Development will also contribute to the provision of long-term sustainable and competitive energy supplies, assisting the UK renewables industry to become competitive in home and export markets and, in doing so, provide employment opportunities. The Applicant was awarded a stability contract under SPP2 in April 2022 for grid forming converter battery energy storage system (BESS) connecting to the Coylton Substation. The Proposed Development will fulfil this contract.

The key features in support of the Proposed Development are summarised below:

- It complies with NPF4 and the relevant Development Plan and can draw support from a number of material considerations;
- It is designed to support the flexible operation of the grid network and will provide a significant contribution to a variety of important services to National Grid;
- It enables the decarbonisation of electricity supply in support of EU targets and national planning policy;
- It is located in close proximity to the existing Coylton substation;
- The Site is not sensitive in regard to environmental considerations such as; landscape, cultural heritage, noise, air, hydrology, flood risk and ecology;
- It is located in a rural location, away from any sensitive receptors; and
- Construction, operation/maintenance of the Proposed Development would create employment opportunities for the locals and also potentially support small local businesses.

A planning application for a Greener Grid Park including energy management and storage on the Site was submitted to the Council in March 2022 and was granted permission in August 2022. Therefore, the principle of a battery storage development on the Proposed Site has already been granted permission by EAC.

This Planning Statement sets out an appraisal of material planning considerations, which includes the policies contained within LDP1, emerging LDP2 and NPF4 along with a range of other documents which are considered material to the determination of the Proposed Development. It is considered that the Proposed Development complies with all the relevant policies of the statutory Development Plan and offers significant benefits which have been listed throughout this Statement. On this basis the Proposed Development is commended to East Ayrshire Council for approval.