

CRAIGIEBUCKLER AND SEAFIELD COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Planning Officer's Report

01 October 2024

Planning Matters

Installation of grid battery energy storage facility – not in our community council area but of interest as there was a similar proposal near Macaulay Drive.

Reference	240614/DPP
Application Validated	Mon 20 May 2024
Address	Land At Newton Of Pitfodels Aberdeen AB15 7AL
Proposal	Installation of a grid battery energy storage facility (up to 40MW), with associated development
Status	Refused 19/09/2024
Appeal Status	Unknown
Appeal Decision	Not Available
Local Review Body Status	Not Available
Local Review Body Decision	Not Available
Application Type	Detailed Planning Permission
Expected Decision Level	Not Available
Case Officer	Aoife Murphy
Community Council	Cults, Bieldside And Milltimber
Ward	Lower Deeside
District Reference	Not Available
Applicant Name	Flexion Energy UK Storage
Agent Name	Colin D Lavety
Agent Company Name	Stantec UK Ltd
Agent Address	5th Floor 9 George Square Glasgow G2 1DY
Environmental Assessment Requested	No
Application Validated Date	Mon 20 May 2024
Expiry Date	Wed 12 Jun 2024
Last Advertised In Press Date	Wed 29 May 2024
Permission Expiry Date	Not Available
Determination	Thu 19 Sep 2024

Deadline	
Local Review Body Decision Date	Not Available





Grid Battery Energy Storage Facilities, which are also referred to as Battery Energy Storage Systems (or BESS), facilitate the storage and release of energy generated from renewables, such as wind and solar farms.

Batteries of varying scale are an ideal technology to support the increasing dependency on low carbon technology in the UK's energy generation mix and facilitate the stability of the network as balancing supply and demand becomes more challenging.

National Grid highlights energy storage as a key growth area and estimates that as much as 30GW installed capacity could be required by 2050. BESS has a key part to play in ensuring homes and businesses can be powered by low carbon energy, even when the sun is not shining or the wind is not blowing. For example, the UK has the largest installed capacity of offshore wind in the world, but the value of clean energy can be increased by increasing the ability to capture this energy and purposefully deploy it, increasing production and potentially reducing costs.

On Thursday 19th September, William Sell attended a meeting of the Council's Planning Committee during and spoke on behalf of a resident of Hazlewood who objected to the proposed battery electricity storage system planned for the South side of Countesswells Road.

There were 108 objections to it. The planning officer's recommendation was to reject it. The motion to reject the planning application was carried.

A copy of the Craigiebukler & Seafeld Community Council speech to the Planning Committee is below:

Good morning, Convenor and Councillors.

In my capacity as her Community Councillor, I have been asked to represent Gillian Laing, who registered an objection to the proposed grid battery energy storage facility, which is intended to be sited in an agricultural field located on the southern side of Countesswells Road.

Ms. Laing asks you to take note of her objections which are as follows: -

The development is proposed to be located on an unspoilt rural area which is part of Aberdeen's greenbelt. The proposed site is in a field which, until recently, was under cultivation.

The formation of the access road to the proposed development cuts across a connected area of greenbelt, thus disconnecting it from an adjacent area of greenspace. This is contrary to the concept of greenbelt, which is a system of connected greenspaces intended to provide access to the countryside.

The probable negative visual effect of this industrial development would significantly and adversely impact upon the rural landscape as well as the residential dwellings that closely neighbour its site.

Its design and prominence are detrimental to the pleasant and welcoming ambience of the intended location, which features green fields and woodlands.

In woodlands to the west of the proposed site, there is a small group of dwelling houses. A short distance, west of the houses, there is a reservoir. Nearby, to the east of the site of the proposed development are the Countesswells Playing Fields.

A fire at the battery storage site is likely to put those using the playing fields at risk of harm from toxic gasses and smoke.

Further to the east of the site is the location of Airyhall Primary School. In the event of spontaneous combustion in the proposed battery energy storage system, the school could become enveloped in clouds of toxic gasses, endangering the lives of pupils and staff.

At this juncture, it is necessary to briefly explain why lithium-ion battery storage systems pose the risks of fire, toxic gasses and explosions.

According to the 'Journal of Loss Prevention in the Process Industries', volume 81, February 2023, "Under a variety of scenarios (i.e., short circuit), the stored chemical energy is converted to thermal energy. The typical consequence is cell rupture and the release of large amounts of flammable and potentially toxic gases, which can lead to fire and explosion".

In the event of the dangerous occurrence described in the above paragraph, the densely populated communities to the north of the site (the new Countesswells development, the housing estates of Hazlewood, Burnieboozle and Craigiebuckler) are at risk (depending on the wind direction) of being overwhelmed by clouds of toxic gasses.

The Aldi store, by virtue of its location, could also be filled with toxic gasses, resulting in multiple casualties.

Pollution of the area's high-water table may also be caused by chemical leakages as the batteries deteriorate towards the end of their 5-year lifespan.

Properties in Craigiebuckler, Burnieboozle, and Countesswells are prone to being flooded by groundwater during periods of sustained, heavy rainfall. In future, that floodwater could also contain toxic substances which have leaked from the battery energy storage system.

The Press reported that, less than 2 weeks ago, there was a fire in California when the San Diego lithium-ion battery energy storage system, linked to a substation, went on fire. It was a 30MW system. The proposed battery energy storage system is 40MW. Population evacuations

were the result.

In May 2024, another facility in California burned for nearly 2 weeks reigniting several times and prompting evacuation orders to be issued.

In September 2023, another battery energy storage system went on fire resulting in an evacuation order for anyone within a quarter mile of the site.

A fire at the proposed battery energy storage system could cause the evacuation of the whole of the Countesswells Area, RGC playing fields, ALDI supermarket, Airyhall primary school, the residential communities of Airyhall, Craigiebuckler and Burnieboozle - as well as the James Hutton Research Institute.

I conclude that, for the reasons detailed above, this type of development is wholly unsuitable for its proposed location.

DECISION NOTICE

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997

Detailed Planning Permission

Colin D Lavery
Stantec UK Ltd
5th Floor
9 George Square
Glasgow
G2 1DY

on behalf of **Flexion Energy UK Storage**

Aberdeen City Council in exercise of its powers under the above mentioned Act hereby **refuses planning permission** for the development specified below and shown in the plans and drawings listed.

Application Reference Number	240614/DPP
Address of Development	Land At Newton Of Pitfodels Aberdeen AB15 7AL
Description of Development	Installation of a grid battery energy storage facility (up to 40MW), with associated development
Date of Decision	19 September 2024

DETAILS OF ANY VARIATION MADE TO THE APPLICATION

None.

REASON FOR DECISION

The reasons on which the Council has based this decision are as follows –

Whilst developments such as this can be generally accepted within a green belt location, given their classification of being an essential infrastructure, thus complying with part of Policy 8 (Green Belt) and Policy 11 (Energy) of the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and Policy NE1 (Green Belt) of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2023 (ALDP), overall it is considered that this development in this location would undermine the integrity and purpose of the green belt. This is due to the development being sited within an area of rural countryside that is relatively unspoilt by development, particularly developments of this industrial nature. Whilst mitigation measures have been put forward by the applicant which would seek to lessen the visual impact, the concerns related to the siting such a facility in this location remain and it is also expected that there would be a significant negative visual impact of the landscape as well as those residential dwellings that sit in close proximity to the site. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy 8 (Green Belt), Policy 11 (Energy) and Policy 14 (Design, Quality and Place) of NPF4 and Policy NE1 (Green Belt), Policy D1 (Quality Placemaking), Policy D4 (Landscape) and Policy R7 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments) of the ALDP.



A full evaluation and account of the processing of the application is contained in the report of handling, which is available by entering the application reference number at <https://publicaccess.aberdeencity.gov.uk/>.

Planning Application Summary with Decisions September 2024

Date	Planning Application Number	Address	Description	Type	ACC Status	Decision Date	Decision
08/01/2024	240011	54 Craigiebuckler Terrace Aberdeen AB15 8SX	Erection of 1.5 storey extension to side and formation of dormer to front, and single storey rear extension	Detailed Planning Permission	Approved	22/08/2024	Approved Conditionally
19/03/2024	240341	The James Hutton Institute Countesswells Road Aberdeen AB15 8QH	Works to 3 Protected Trees; T1 & T2 (Tag 36 & 35) Beech - Fell as heavily diseased; T3 (Tag 131) Poplar - Crown lift/reduce branches or fell to reduce risk of uprooting	Works to Tree Preservation Order	Approved	15/04/2024	Approved Conditionally
27/03/2024	240335	20 Rubislaw View Aberdeen AB15 4DD	Existing of use of flat as Short Term Let accommodation (sui generis) with maximum occupancy of 4 people	Cert. of Lawfulness (Existing)	Certificate issued	24/05/2024	Certificate Issued
01/04/2024	240405	8 Pinewood Walk Aberdeen Aberdeen City AB15 8AZ	Works to 6 protected trees; T1-T6 Fagus Sylvatica - crown raise to 10m	Works to Tree Preservation Order	Approved	15/04/2024	Approved Conditionally
09/04/2024	240440	16 Seafield Road Aberdeen AB15 7YT	Works to Protected Tree: T1: Beech tree - Fell danger too close to house; T2-T3: lime tree - to be reduced by 20%	Works to Tree in Conservation Area	Approved	24/04/2024	Approved Unconditionally
30/04/2024	240536	33 Craigiebuckler Avenue Aberdeen AB15 8SE	Installation of replacement of single storey extension to rear	Detailed Planning Permission	Determined	11/06/2024	Permitted Development
14/05/2024	240568	15 Springfield Gardens Aberdeen AB15 7RX	Erection of single storey extension to side and rear	Detailed Planning Permission	Approved	25/09/2024	Approved Conditionally
15/05/2024	240595	101 Craigiebuckler Avenue Aberdeen AB15 8PB	Erection of single storey extension to rear	Detailed Planning Permission	Approved	09/07/2024	Approved Conditionally
16/05/2024	240608	21 Countesswells Avenue Aberdeen AB15 8LX	Erection of single storey side extension and replacement conservatory roof	Detailed Planning Permission	Approved	09/07/2024	Approved Conditionally
28/05/2024	240663	1 Macaulay Park Aberdeen AB15 8FR	Erection of single storey extension to rear	Detailed Planning Permission	Approved	22/07/2024	Approved Conditionally
03/06/2024	240662	4 Macaulay Drive Aberdeen AB15 8FL	Extension to existing conservatory and roof replacement to rear	Detailed Planning Permission	Approved	01/08/2024	Approved Conditionally
21/06/2024	240745	31 Rubislaw Park Crescent Aberdeen AB15 8BT	Formation of dormer to rear	Detailed Planning Permission	Determined	24/06/2024	Permitted Development
12/07/2024	240846	10 Woodburn Avenue Aberdeen AB15 8JQ	Formation of dormers to side and rear	Detailed Planning Permission	Approved	06/09/2024	Approved Conditionally
25/07/2024	240842	The James Hutton Institute Countesswells Road Aberdeen AB15 8QH	Erection of single storey link extension	Detailed Planning Permission	Approved	19/09/2024	Approved Conditionally
13/09/2024	241077	50 Burnieboozle Crescent Aberdeen AB15 8NP	Works to 3no. protected trees; T1-T2; Rowan - pruning; T3; Holly - pruning	Works to Tree Preservation Order	Pending		

Planning Applications as per weekly planning list September 2024:

Reference	241077/TPO
Application Validated	Fri 13 Sep 2024
Address	50 Burnieboozle Crescent Aberdeen AB15 8NP
Proposal	Works to 3no. protected trees; T1-T2; Rowan - pruning; T3; Holly - pruning
Status	Pending
Appeal Status	Unknown
Appeal Decision	Not Available
Local Review Body Status	Not Available
Local Review Body Decision	Not Available
Application Type	Works to Tree Preservation Order
Expected Decision Level	Not Available
Case Officer	Richard Brough
Community Council	Craigiebuckler And Seafield
Ward	Hazlehead/Queen's Cross/Countesswells
District Reference	Not Available
Applicant Name	Brenda Norrie
Agent Name	Stephen Gowans
Agent Company Name	Not Available
Agent Address	16 Stewart Drive Alford AB33 8UG
Environmental Assessment Requested	No
Application Validated Date	Fri 13 Sep 2024
Expiry Date	Not Available
Last Advertised In Press Date	Not Available
Permission Expiry Date	Not Available
Determination Deadline	Thu 07 Nov 2024
Local Review Body Decision Date	Not Available

Schedule of Proposed Works

Please list each individual tree and label them as T1, T2, T3 etc. and provide a detailed description of the works proposed and the reason for the works.

Tree No.	Tree Species	Description of tree work(s)	Reason(s) for work
T1	Rowan	Each of the trees is to be - Reduced by around 1/3 and shaped by pruning to growth points	
T2	Rowan		
T3	Holly		

