

ANGUS COUNCIL**DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS COMMITTEE – 02 JUNE 2015****PROPOSAL OF APPLICATION NOTICE – MONTREATHMONT MOOR FOREST,
MONTREATHMONT, NEAR FORFAR****GRID REF: 358940 : 754193****REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING AND PLACE****Abstract:**

This report advises Committee that a Proposal of Application Notice (ref. 15/00440/PAN) has been submitted in respect of the formation of a ground mounted solar PV park and associated infrastructure. Committee is invited to identify issues which it would like to see addressed in the planning application.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Committee notes the key issues identified at this stage and advises of any other issues it considers should be addressed in any planning application that is subsequently submitted.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/
CORPORATE PLAN**

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Our communities are developed in a sustainable manner
- Our natural and built environment is protected and enjoyed.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 At its meeting on 19 June 2014, Council approved a guidance note on the role of Councillors in pre-application procedures in respect of national and major planning applications (Report 275/14 refers). A key element of that guidance requires officers to present a report to Committee when a Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) is submitted. Such a report will set out what are considered to be the key considerations in the determination of any subsequent planning application and allow Members opportunity to identify any additional issues that they consider should be addressed when a planning application is submitted.

3.2 A PAN (ref. 15/00440/PAN) has been received. It indicates that an application for planning permission is to be submitted for the formation of a ground mounted solar PV park and associated infrastructure on land at Montreathmont Moor Forest, Montreathmont near Forfar. The proposed development site measures around 88 ha (88000sqm) and currently consists of a cultivated forest clearing. It has been indicated that the proposed development would have a generation capacity of 42 MW. The site can be accessed via a track that leads from Montreathmont Camp which is accessed from the B9113 Forfar-Montrose Road. A plan showing the outline of the site on which the development is proposed has been submitted. No further details relating to the proposed application have been provided at this stage.

3.3 The submitted PAN sets out the proposed consultation that the applicant intends to undertake with local communities and the applicant has indicated that a copy of the PAN has been served on Aberlemno Community Council and Friockheim Community Council. A public display is to be held at Guthrie Hall between 4-8 pm on 16 June 2015.

- 3.4 The results of the community consultation will be submitted with the subsequent planning application in the form of a pre-application consultation report (PAC Report) as required in regulations.
- 3.5 Confirmation has been given that a planning application cannot be submitted prior to 03 August 2015 (the date 12 weeks from the submission of the PAN).

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The site that is subject of the PAN lies within the context of a large forest clearing that is centrally located within Montreathmont Forest. The site has been historically associated with agricultural use and wartime listening operations. The land in question is a mix of class 3.1 (prime) land capable of moderate crop production and Class 4.1 (non-prime) land capable of a narrow range of crops.
- 4.2 The site is bound on all sides by Montreathmont Forest. Notable features around the site include a wireless station to the east, Rough Moss Burn to the south, Battle Burn and Lunan Den Burn which both traverse the site in an east–west manner and an overhead power line that over sails the north west corner of the site. Local archaeological areas and surface water extents have been identified within the site.

5. DISCUSSION

- 5.1 In this case the land subject of the Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) is not allocated in the adopted Angus Local Plan Review for any specific use and is not identified for any specific use in the emerging Local Development Plan. The appropriate policy relating to the proposed renewable energy development in the Angus Local Plan Review is Policy ER34 which states:

Policy ER34 : Renewable Energy Developments

Proposals for all forms of renewable energy developments will be supported in principle and will be assessed against the following criteria:

- (a) the siting and appearance of apparatus have been chosen to minimise the impact on amenity, while respecting operational efficiency;*
- (b) there will be no unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts having regard to landscape character, setting within the immediate and wider landscape, and sensitive viewpoints;*
- (c) the development will have no unacceptable detrimental effect on any sites designated for natural heritage, scientific, historic or archaeological reasons;*
- (d) no unacceptable environmental effects of transmission lines, within and beyond the site; and*
- (e) access for construction and maintenance traffic can be achieved without compromising road safety or causing unacceptable permanent change to the environment and landscape, and*
- (f) that there will be no unacceptable impacts on the quantity or quality of groundwater or surface water resources during construction, operation and decommissioning of the energy plant.*

- 5.2 In these circumstances it is considered that the key issues in relation to the determination of a subsequent planning application are likely to be: -

- Environmental and Economic Benefits;
- Landscape Impact;
- Visual Impact;
- Impact on Residential Amenity;
- Ecology Impact;
- Glint, Glare and Aviation Impacts;
- Archaeological and Built Heritage Impacts;
- Other Development Plan Considerations (Access, Floods/Drainage, Transmission, Decommissioning, Use of Prime Agricultural Land etc.);
- Other Material Considerations (Relevant Local and National Guidance on Solar PV Development, Representations (If received).

5.3 Whilst other issues may emerge through the publicity and consultation process associated with any planning application, the above matters are considered to represent the main issues that should be considered at pre-application stage and that are likely to be determining factors for any subsequent planning application. However, Committee is invited to identify any additional matters that it would wish to see addressed.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The issues contained in this report fall within an approved category that has been confirmed as exempt from an equalities perspective.

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

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Appendix 1 : Location Plan

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