

## Appendix 2 – Summary of Applicants Supporting Information

**Planning Statement** – provides the applicant’s assessment of the proposal in the context of the provisions of the Development Plan and other material considerations. It indicates that an extensive pre-application process was undertaken as the development constitutes a Major development as defined by the Town and County Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009. Following consideration of a number of factors and the existing infrastructure within the area including the planning history associated with the solar site it was concluded that the site has very good potential for the development proposed. The statement identifies the potential benefits of the development which includes contributing to the delivery of international and national policy objectives by diversifying the energy mix and facilitating the transition to low carbon energy, whilst decreasing the dependency on fossil fuels. The proposed 39.9MW solar farm would generate approximately 45,000 megawatt hours per year (‘MWh/yr’) which would offset the annual electricity usage of approximately 12,000 homes. The proposed BESS is intended to optimise grid operational requirements, by capturing some of the electrical energy generated by the solar PV scheme, and releasing this at key times during the day. A private wire shared connection is intended to benefit both a generator and potential offtaker, as it provides the opportunity to share savings, through direct supply of electricity by sharing the same grid connection. It is considered that there are clear benefits which arise from the renewable energy credentials of the development which clearly outweigh the modest impacts. Considering all policies relevant to the development and material considerations, the statement concludes that the development is considered to be in compliance with these policies and considerations, and planning permission should therefore be granted.

**Design and Access Statement** – this document provides an assessment of the site's context and characteristics that informed the identification of design principles that led to the proposed design solution. The statement indicates that the purpose of the Development is to harness solar power to generate electricity. The statement states that the design of a solar development must also take account of potential environmental effects and that the development must therefore strike a balance between energy yield and minimising environmental effects. In relation to access, the statement identifies that construction traffic will access the solar farm site from the A90, then the C35 before taking the existing access track to the site. The only improvement required is to the bell mouth of the access track at its junction with the public road. Access within the solar farm would comprise 4m wide tracks. The solar farm and BESS development is expected to be constructed over a 6-month period. A Construction Traffic Management Plan (‘CTMP’) will be prepared with traffic management measures which will ensure efficient and safe transport of vehicles and personnel to and from site, and with minimum disruption to other road users. Following construction, once in full operation, the Development will not generate any significant traffic movements, with security and maintenance staff the only likely infrequent visitors, travelling by car or light van.

**Landscape and Visual Report** – the report presents the findings of a landscape and visual appraisal (LVA) of the development which is informed by local landscape character assessments, landscape capacity guidance and other relevant guidance. The solar farm is situated within a Broad Valley Lowland LCZ/LLCA. As such the Development is well sited within the landscape, set with a backdrop of the woodland and network of mature hedgerows, which help to ‘absorb’ the proposed solar panels into the landscape. The report identifies that within the context of the previous consented solar PV development on the site, the characteristics of the broad valley lowland, and medium scale of the receiving landscape, with a medium capacity to accommodate a solar PV development, the landscape would have the capacity to accommodate the proposed Development. In relation to visual effects views of the Development, from the surrounding areas, would predominantly be Moderate to Moderate – Major immediately post construction. However, predicted visual effects would reduce over time, as a result of the proposed mitigation tree and hedgerow planting. The LVA advises in relation to cumulative impacts that the closest existing solar energy development is located at East Arrats 2.5km to the south west. The cumulative assessment indicates that due to the topography and the tree cover within the A935 corridor, especially around the House of Dun, the inter-visibility between the proposed Development and the Land of East Arrats Mill Solar

Farm is unlikely. The Development would contribute towards cumulative landscape and visual effects; however, these would not exceed the capacity of the landscape to accommodate solar PV development within this landscape.

**Landscape and Visual Assessment of Cable Route** – this assessment presents the findings of the landscape and visual appraisal (LVA) of the cable route. It indicates that during the construction phase there would be localised direct landscape effects on the existing landscape character, and the local landscape elements, and visual receptors, along the cable route. The potential for significant temporary landscape and visual effects during the construction of the cable route are likely. During the operational phase the land will be reinstated to its previous use, and there would be no long-term significant landscape and visual effects arising from the cable route works. Any hedgerows, or tree planting, which are lost during the construction period would be mitigated with replacement planting.

**Pre-application Consultation Report** – the report describes the consultation process undertaken by the applicant prior to submitting the application. This report outlines the engagement activity that took place with potential interested parties which included advertisement of the public events in the press. The report explains that a public event was held at Hillside Village Hall on 5 November 2019 which was attended by 16 members of the public. The report states that comments made were supportive of the development proposal which would produce clean energy and a safe supply of energy. The report outlines that some concerns were raised about the landscape and visual impact of the solar farm and that some concerns were also raised about the visibility of the private wire grid connection however it has been explained that the cable will be buried along the entire route.

**Ecology Appraisal** – this document provides an assessment of the ecological features present or potentially present within the site and environs in relation to the proposed development. This comprises a Phase 1 Habitat Survey which advises that the majority of the site area is made up of cultivated arable land with the presence of improved grassland, broadleaved woodland and hedges. A protected species survey was also undertaken and did not identify the presence of bat species, otter, water vole, red squirrel or amphibian species within the site or survey area (which included appropriate species buffers), which was likely to be largely due to the lack of suitable habitat for these species. In relation to badgers, historical setts identified in 2014 were re-found however they were disused then and the on-site evidence indicates they are still disused as they are heavily overgrown with vegetation. In conclusion the results of the 2019 surveys suggest no notable changes in the habitats and protected species assemblage or distribution within the site and surrounds, therefore the assessment and conclusions of the *East Ballochry Solar Farm Ecological Appraisal (MacArthur Green, 2014)* remain valid and robust. Based on the lack of protected species evidence identified within the site, providing that general good practice mitigation measures outlined in the Ecological Appraisal are followed, no further specific mitigation or compensation measures are recommended at this stage.

**Solar Farm Habitats Regulations Appraisal** – this appraisal presents information to inform an appropriate assessment to enable the competent authority (Angus Council) to conclude whether any likely significant effects associated with the solar farm would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Montrose Basin SPA. The appraisal identifies 3 potential impacts that could have likely significant effect on the SPA – Habitat Loss and Modification; Displacement and In-combination Effects. In relation to habitat loss it is suggested that the potential goose foraging habitat which could be lost due to the Development is a very small percentage of the overall habitat potentially available to geese from the Montrose Basin SPA. The Development site contributed 0.15% of the comparable potential foraging habitat found within the study area. It is therefore concluded that there are no adverse effects on the integrity of the Montrose Basin SPA resulting from habitat loss and modification due to the Development. In relation to displacement it is suggested that that up to 0.15% of the total foraging habitat available to SPA geese may be directly lost due to the Development. It is therefore concluded that there are no adverse effects on the integrity of the Montrose Basin SPA resulting from displacement impacts associated with the Development. In relation to in-combination effects of other plans and projects it is determined that up to 1% of the total

foraging habitat in combination with other developments could be lost. Given the small percentage resulting from the analyses, such a loss is not considered to have a significant effect on the integrity of the protected interests of the Montrose Basin SPA.

**Grid Connection Habitats Regulations Appraisal** – this appraisal presents information to inform an appropriate assessment to enable the competent authority (Angus Council) to conclude whether any likely significant effects associated with the grid connection would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Montrose Basin SPA. The appraisal identifies 3 potential impacts that could have likely significant effect on the SPA – Habitat Loss and Modification; Displacement and In-combination Effects. In relation to habitat loss it is considered that habitat currently suitable for foraging geese may be temporarily lost due to the construction of the grid connection and associated infrastructure, prior to any reinstatement. Available evidence suggests that the area around the grid connection is not attractive as foraging habitat to geese species and its usage has been sporadic, if at all. Although pink-footed geese may be recorded within the same 1km grid square as the grid connection, the route is unlikely to be important for foraging geese from the Montrose Basin SPA. It is therefore concluded that there are no adverse effects on the integrity of the Montrose Basin SPA resulting from habitat loss and modification due to the grid connection. In relation to displacement during construction due to the separation distance between the SPA and the construction area which is within a built-up area Geese utilising the SPA for roosting or feeding are therefore unlikely to be disturbed due to construction activities during the construction period, based on observed disturbance distances in the scientific literature. In relation to in-combination effects with other plans and projects it is determined that in-combination effects are not considered to have a significant effect on the protected interests of the Montrose Basin SPA.

**Outline Biodiversity Management Plan** – this plan proposes habitat management measures to be implemented in the management of the solar farm. It indicates key species groups to which enhancement measures aim to benefit are birds, mammals, invertebrates and reptiles. The aims and objectives proposed also aim to maintain and enhance hedgerow habitats, introduce additional native woodland to the site and grassland meadow habitat. In order to achieve the aims and objectives it is proposed to plant around 20ha of species rich grass mix within the site and to maintain the existing grassland meadow. Plant approximately 680m of hedgerow along the southern site boundary and 1.3km of hedgerow interspersed with birch trees along the northern and western site boundaries. Hedgerows will be maintained for the operational life of the solar farm. Plant 2800sqm of native woodland within the site and maintain this over the operation life of the solar farm. Enhance reptile and invertebrate habitat by protecting this during the construction of the development. Enhance roosting opportunities for bats by installing bat boxes on suitable trees or the farm buildings at East Ballochry. A monitoring strategy will be implemented which includes pre-construction surveys for protected species, site visits by a qualified ecologist before construction is complete to ensure all measures have been implemented satisfactorily, an annual visit and then at incremental periods to ensure the measures are being successfully established and production of a site visit report for submission to Angus Council and SNH every 5 years.

**Noise Impact Assessment** – this document assesses construction noise associated with the cable route and assesses the likely noise impact from the construction phase on nearby residential properties. The noise and vibration effects have been assessed in the context of the Control of Pollution Act 1974; The Environmental Protection Act 1990 and BS 5228:2009 Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites. The assessment identifies the plant associated with the construction of the cable and identifies the distance between the nearest noise-sensitive receptor and the closest point at which each construction activity would occur. This is used to calculate worst-case noise levels using the source data and methodology described in BS 5228-1. During cable route works the worst-case noise level at properties is predicted to be 79 dB, LAeq, for street works in urban areas, and 74 dB, LAeq for 'unmade' areas. The assessment indicates that noise levels at any given dwelling will be above the BS 5228 threshold for less than 2 days at any receptor in urban areas, and less than 1 day at any receptor in 'unmade' stretches. Given that BS 5228 does

not consider impacts of less than 1 month as significant, noise levels are considered acceptable, subject to the application of best practice management / mitigation measures.

**Archaeological Desk Based Assessment** – this document seeks to establish the known or potential archaeological and cultural heritage baseline in order to assess the direct and indirect effects of the development upon heritage assets. A 2km study area was identified for the solar site with a 500m study area identified for the cable route. Within the 2km Study Area there are no known prehistoric – post medieval archaeological features. The wider area has significance prehistoric archaeological remains and as such, there is high potential for unknown prehistoric remains to exist within the Solar Study Area and potential mitigation in the form of a geophysical survey is recommended to identify potential archaeological features, followed by targeted trial trenching to determine the character and extent of potential features, if required. Where potential archaeological sites may exist, avoidance of these areas is recommended via the utilisation of concrete footings for panel strings to ensure that there is no direct effect upon subsurface archaeological remains. The Cable Study Area has a moderate archaeological potential for unknown prehistoric remains with a moderate-low potential from the medieval period onwards. Additionally, there are some areas of high archaeological potential. These include, the area surrounding Dubton, and the area along Rose Hill which has a high potential for modern remains associated with RAF Montrose airfield and the Newmanswalls medieval mansion. As such, a targeted trial trench evaluation is proposed as mitigation. The results of this trial trench evaluation will determine whether additional archaeological investigations are required, i.e. further archaeological evaluations along the entire length of the cable route, or a watching brief. It is also recommended that known archaeological features within the Cable Study Area are fenced off during construction. In conclusion, subject to the proposed mitigation the development would not have any unacceptable effects on heritage assets.