

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017

Regulation 8(1) – Requests for screening opinions of the planning authority

South Lanarkshire Council – Screening Opinion

Development description: Erection of 3 No. Wind Turbines (maximum 180m to tip height)

Site location: Back Hareshaw Farm, Strathaven

Date request received: 12.11.2020

Background

Under The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017, certain development projects require the planning authority to consider whether a proposed project is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. If the planning authority considers that it will have a significant effect, then it must ensure that the applicant carries out Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that identifies, describes and assesses those effects.

Under the terms of regulation 8(1) of the above mentioned Regulations, any person who is minded to carry out development may request the relevant planning authority to adopt a screening opinion as to whether the proposed development is, or is not an EIA development.

Proposed development

A request for South Lanarkshire Council to adopt a screening opinion for the erection of 3 No. wind turbines with a maximum tip height of 180 metres.

Site description

The application site is existing farm land in a rural location to the north west of Drumclog Bridge. There are no International, national or local designations within the site. The Battle of Drumclog Battlefield is located within 1.03km of the site and it is listed on the Historic Inventory of Battlefields.

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 size, nature or location. The development falls within the description of 3. Energy Industry, as defined in column 1 of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. It specifically falls within category 3(j) 'Installations for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (wind farms) and where the development involves (i) the installation of

more than 2 turbines or (ii) the hub height of any turbine or height of any other structure exceeds 15 metres. In this instance the development is for 3 turbines each at a maximum height of 180m to tip and therefore the proposals breach both thresholds within 3(j) of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017. Development that falls within a relevant description and exceeds any specified threshold requires to be screened to see if it will be likely to have significant effects on the environment, taking account of the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the Regulations.

Screening opinion

Having regard to the characteristics of the development, its location and potential impact, and having assessed it against a screening opinion checklist, South Lanarkshire Council considers that the proposals do constitute an EIA development.

The reasons for adopting this opinion are as follows:

- 1.0 The development is of a height (180m) and number (3 turbines) that has the potential to have a significant landscape and visual impact on the local area.
- 2.0 The development is located adjacent to three wind farm developments (Calder Water, West Browncastle and Whitelee) and has the potential to have a significant cumulative visual and landscape impact upon the landscape
- 3.0 The proposal is adjacent to a Battlefield on the Inventory of Historic Battlefields (Drumclog) and due to its scale there is potential to have a significant impact upon the interpretation of this historic designation.

Conclusion

It is considered that the impact of the proposal has the potential for significant visual and landscape impact. It is in an area where there are existing wind farm developments. Therefore the potential for cumulative visual and landscape impact may also be significant. A cultural designation is in close proximity to the proposed site and the proposals may have a significant visual impact upon the characteristics of this designation's qualifying criteria. It is therefore considered that the development does constitute an EIA development.