

## **EAR: Appendix 1.3**

### **Cromarty Hydrogen – Outline Restoration & Decommissioning Plan**

**Draft V01- 21-09-2023**

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#### **1. Introduction & purpose of this document**

Scottish Power Energy Retail Limited (SPERL) are submitting a planning application for the erection of a green hydrogen production and storage facility (Class 5 - General Industry), road haul tanker loading facility, underground electricity connection, import substation, improvements to existing access road, site offices, parking, gatehouse and perimeter fencing, temporary construction and laydown area, and ancillary development (hereafter the 'Proposed Development') at land to the east of the Beinn Tharsuinn Windfarm (National Grid Reference (NGR) NH 64225 81469) under Section 32 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). The application boundary is shown in Figure 1 <INSERT>.

The information accompanying the planning application comprises the following documents:

- Environmental Appraisal Report (EAR);
- Supporting Statement;
- Planning Statement;
- Pre-application Consultation (PAC) Report;
- Design and Access Statement (DAS); and
- Transport Statement.

It is anticipated that any consent granted for the Proposed Development would include a planning condition requiring that a De-commissioning and Restoration Plan for the site (referred to here as the 'plan') would be prepared and agreed with the Local Planning Authority (LPA). This is likely to include details, including a programme, for the removal of all buildings, ancillary infrastructure and the reinstatement of the development site to its original state or to a level agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

**The purpose of this document is to set out the typical contents of such a plan in order to seek comment and feedback from the LPA prior to preparation of the plan which would follow the granting of planning consent.**

## **2. Guidance**

It is anticipated that the plan would be prepared drawing upon relevant guidance which is current at the time as well as best practice and case studies from related industries, examples include:

- Decommissioning and Restoration Plans for Wind Farms – Guidance, Version 2 (SNH, 2016)
- Decommissioning of Onshore Wind Turbines - Industry Guidance Document (Wind Europe, Nov 2020)
- Wind Power and Peatland - Enhancing Unique Habitats (Scottish Renewables, undated)
- Scottish Natural Heritage Commissioned Report No. 591: Research and guidance on restoration and decommissioning of onshore wind farms (SNH, 2013)
- Nature Scot website ([NatureScot](https://www.naturescot.gov.uk)) for latest information and guidance relating to, for example, peatland restoration and constructed tracks in the Scottish Uplands

It is noted in the SNH guidance (SNH, 2016) that, given the likely intervening time between construction and any decommissioning and site restoration, the plan should include sufficient provision for flexibility to accommodate potential changes in environmental conditions, laws and techniques which may change during the lifetime of the development.

## **3. Site context**

The application site is on land located adjacent to the east of the operational Beinn Tharsuinn Wind Farm, approximately 12 km north of Alness and lies in the administrative boundary of The Highland Council. In the immediate surroundings there are steep slopes, including Cnoc Muigh-bhlàraidh to the north, valleys and numerous watercourses. The wider area comprises broad rounded hills and forestry plantation. The main site area currently comprises open moorland. A detailed description of the baseline conditions of the application site, at the time of submitting the planning application, is set out in the EAR.

## **4. Decommissioning and restoration objective**

It is the applicants intention to remove infrastructure and make good the site unless the potential environmental impacts posed by removal outweigh the benefits. In general, this would involve the following site-wide measures:

- I. Removal of hardstanding areas and restoration of the land, where this is the agreed approach with The Highland Council and other consultees
- II. Disconnecting and removing cable infrastructure
- III. Removing buildings, storage containers and above-ground infrastructure

Assessments would be conducted at time of decommissioning to determine environmental impacts associated with different approaches to decommissioning and restoration.

The developer will carry out all activities in an environmentally responsible manner and encourage the upgrade, reuse, repair and recycling of products wherever possible.

## **5. Stakeholder consultation**

It is anticipated that the preparation of the plan will include provision for consultation with principal technical stakeholders, as appropriate, including:

- The Highland Council

- NatureScot
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Scottish Water

## **6. De-commissioning & Restoration Plan – Contents & Structure**

This section sets out the anticipated contents of the plan:

- Introduction
- Aims & purpose of plan
- Proposed development
- Site and surroundings (including baseline conditions)
- Consents & licenses
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Decommissioning Activities
  - Description of proposed activities
  - Data and survey requirements
  - Engagement and communications during decommissioning
  - Health, safety and environment
- Resource & Waste Management
  - Overview & proposed approach (including WM hierarchy)
  - Materials arising
    - Concrete
    - Metals
    - Composites
    - Oils
    - Other materials
- Site Restoration
  - Restoration
  - Damage minimisation
  - Visual remediation
  - Aftercare
- Project management & implementation programme
- Plan monitoring & review

## **7. Plan preparation, review & update**

Subject to the anticipated planning condition, it is envisaged that a draft De-commissioning and Restoration Plan would be issued to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for comment. It is also anticipated that appropriate provision for reviewing and updating the plan would be made, as necessary.