

## **SSEN Kintore – Tealing 400kV Connection and Hurlie (Fetteresso Forest) 400kV Substation**

### **23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 - Sub-group Meeting**

(David Lawman, Brian Menzies and Caroline Duguid)

### **Proposed Public Meeting Details**

Significant plans and proposals are well underway for the development of substations and connections (transmission lines) related to wind farms in the north east. This is potentially one of the most significant development considerations for Stonehaven in recent years and it is important that the community council responds to this in a way that is representative of the broad views of the community. As such we would like to propose that a public meeting is held in early 2025 to allow people to come together and have an opportunity to discuss the plans. We would aim to invite the key organisations involved e.g. SSEN, Aberdeenshire Council and, ultimately representatives of national governments (MSPs and MPs). We would be grateful for views on this proposal.

### **Post Sub Group Meeting Feedback**

(Phil Mills-Bishop)

Yes absolutely agree that SDCC should have a Public meeting "if" when and "if" SSEN submits a valid planning application and "if" SDCC is notified as a Statutory Consultee. Currently in the SSEN Pre-Consultation the proposed route does not fall within our bailiwick i.e. area. However, as David observed because of visuality and possible disruption during the construction phase, SDCC is likely to be "notified" as a Statutory Consultee assuming it is submitted as and designated by Planning Officers as a Major Application. Developers have various tactics for their schemes to avoid being designated as a Major Development by breaking it up into various phases. House builders typically do this by phasing their schemes into 49 houses and not 50 which is one of the triggers for a Major Application another being over 20,000 sq metres. The substation/battery storage and possible underground cabling included in the SSEN application may well be below all the normal triggers if broken into a number of phases.

However, SSEN may wish, as a strategy, that their scheme be considered in total as a Major Application as it gives them various options to appeal and for the Scottish Government to "call-in" the application should it be refused at the various levels within the respective Local Authority the Planning Application/Scheme falls in. Unfortunately, Community Councils involved, despite being so called Statutory Consultees, do not have the same rights.

Anyhow if all those "ifs" and "maybes" materialise then a meeting as you suggest would be helpful as long as it is tightly controlled by David and should be perhaps incorporated into a slimmed down Agenda Meeting at the appropriate time where the focus is on the elements contained within the actual Planning Application submitted. Also while it is appropriate to invite those who live, work and have businesses in the Stonehaven Community and the planning applicant i.e. reps from SSEN themselves to give a presentation and answer questions it would not be appropriate to invite Regional, National politicians and pressure groups although I accept it would be difficult to debar them if they turned up but even so it does ensure that David has total control as Chair and that the discussion is contained with the rules of the

Community Council where the priority is given to Community Councillors and not taken over by Region/National politicians or vociferous pressure/lobby groups... if this happens a lot of "heat but little light" will be the result as I suspect the "Save our Mearns" meeting at St James' Church tomorrow will. As for Aberdeenshire Council Elected Members they are Ex-Officio Members of the Community Council and can attend as per normal and need no invite but are debarred from taking part or expressing any opinion on a live Planning Application. They may listen but I suspect that some may just leave during that part of the Agenda Meeting to ensure that they are not compromised when the application comes to them at the Kincardineshire and Mearns Area Planning Committee. Equally it would be inappropriate to invite Planning Officers to attend and in any event they would not.

Hope this helps...as you are aware my background is in planning and I have served as Planning Secretary on a number of occasions for different SDCCs over the past 10yrs.