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Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2008

Proposal for a site to be included in the Main Issues Report

Please use this form to provide details of the site that you would wish to have included in the Main Issues Report for consideration as a proposal for the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

One of the purposes of this form is to inform a public debate on the merits of the different sites being proposed. All information submitted will therefore be made available to the public to promote a transparent and open process.

Please feel free to provide any further information you feel appropriate to support your submission. Please ensure your proposal is with us by 6 November 2008.

N1

Name of proposer: RES UK & Ireland Ltd
Date:06/10/08

Postal Address:
7000 Academy Park,
Gower Street,
Glasgow G51 1PR

N2

Name of landowner (if known) :
[REDACTED]

Postal address of landowner :
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

To comply with the data protection Act1998 this information will not be made public

The site and your proposals

S1

Under what name would you like the site to be identified? Meikle Carewe Proposed Wind Farm

Have you any information on the internet which promotes your aspirations for the site? If so please provide the URL :<http://www.meikle-carewe.co.uk/>

The site name could be descriptive ("Site north of") or an address (Site at Westburn Road , Aberdeen)

S2 Have you provided a map showing the exact boundaries of the site you would like considered?

S3 Yes No

Please provide the National Grid reference of the site

384000 792000

S4 What is the current use of the site? Sheep grazing

Has the land been built upon before (Brownfield Land)? Yes No

Is there any suspicion that the land is contaminated? Yes No

If yes Please provide a statement of the nature and extent of the contamination suspected
Statement attached

S5 What use(s) do you propose for your site? Wind Farm

If you are proposing a mix of uses on your site please ensure that the area of each is noted on the site plan

S6 Are you proposing to phase your development? Yes No

If you are proposing phasing your development please provide additional details of what is anticipated to be built, and when.

S7 If you are proposing housing on the site please provide us with details of what you think would be appropriate, both in terms of the number of dwellings, and their form (Flats, detached houses etc).

If you have a design statement or other details about what you would like to see on the site, please include it.

S8

If you are proposing business land please provide us with details of what you would market the land for?

- Businesses and offices (Use class 4)
- General industrial land (Use Class 5)
- Storage and distribution (Use Class 6)

Do you have a specific occupier in mind for the site? Yes No

Please make sure the area of land proposed for business use shown on the site plan.

S9

If you are proposing uses other than housing or business please provide us with as much detail as possible on what you propose.

In November 2006 RES applied to Aberdeenshire Council for detailed planning permission to construct a small-medium scale wind farm comprising 12 medium size wind turbines on land at Meikle Carewe Hill, 6.5 km north west of Stonehaven (centred on grid ref: E384000 N792000) as shown on Figure 1.1 (attached). An associated Environmental Statemnt was then submitted in June 2007. The wind farm proposal has an approximate development area of 2 km2.

Each three-bladed turbine would have a tapered tubular tower with an overall height to blade tip not exceeding 70m. The wind farm would produce sufficient electrical energy to meet the average requirements of over 5200 homes, which would satisfy the annual needs of 82% of the households in Stonehaven and Portlethen combined (approximately 6% of the households in Aberdeenshire).

The development would have associated electricity transformers, access tracks and site entrance, a control building and substation compound and a permanent free-standing wind monitoring mast. During construction and commissioning there would be a number of temporary works including a road stone borrowpit and a construction compound.

Rather than simply reinstating the borrowpit by contouring and reseeding for example, it is planned to make a feature of the borrowpit that could provide ecological and public benefit.

Figure 14.2 (attached) shows the design focus on regeneration of the borrowpit into a natural habitat incorporating features to encourage public access. Figure 14.3 (attached) shows the selected design materials and palettes that are in keeping with the existing habitat that was used in the developing the conceptual design. Key features of the conceptual proposal shown in Figure 14.4 are the exposed south and east facing rock faces and the seasonal wetland area which could include a wooden board walk. Native plant species would be used to break up the various elements of the area. The picnic area within the sheltered rock faces would afford views to the existing Allochie Lochan and over the new wetland area. A path would wind through the habitats and lead up to the wind farm viewing area above the rock face. This would be where the first information board would be located. A car park based on the existing hardstanding area used during construction is also included with an overspill car park proposed adjacent to this. An artists impression from standing within the recreation area is given in Figure 14.5.

It is recognised that there is a developing national and local backdrop to access and recreational promotion within the area and RES will amend its plans appropriately should evolving conditions require it.

The wind farm is expected to connect directly into the existing local 33kV distribution network, 1.5km to the north east of the development site via an underground cable. Details of the route are contained within this ES for information only as the grid connection will be managed by the local distribution network operator, Scottish Hydro-Electric Power Distribution Limited (SHEPD).

A previous application for a 14 turbine wind farm at Meikle Carewe was lodged by RES with Aberdeenshire Council in March 2000. In 2001 the application was amended to 10 turbines and resubmitted. The reduction in the number of machines created a layout with increased separation distances from nearby houses. Although the application received a positive recommendation from the planning department, it failed to gain consent in December 2002 due to concerns raised on aviation safety, TV interference issues and visual amenity. These issues have now all been addressed with an amended layout consisting of 12 smaller turbines which also retains the reduced footprint of the 10 turbine scheme.

Please continue on additional sheets as required.

The wider area

A1

Please provide a statement on the siting and design of your proposal (how will the development fit in with the wider landscape, or complement the urban design of the area?)

The site has a number of largely immovable constraints in terms of the microwave links, electricity pylon lines, gas pipe lines, archaeology and ecology that are best and most readily protected by avoidance of certain areas. See the combined constraints map, Figure 4.3 at the end of this section (attached). There are just over 100 residences within 2.5km of the wind farm, surrounding three sides of the wind farm site. The initial design strategy was to maintain a large separation from these residences (over 10 times the turbine tip height) and to also ensure this large separation from the settlement of Netherley. A consideration of how the layout could reflect or otherwise be compatible with the underlying topography was also important

The site land form consists of three gently rolling hills lying at an elevation of roughly 100m above the surround farmland but with no particular ridgelines. Within the context of the constraints mentioned below, the turbine layout was developed primarily to deliver a pleasing visual composition. This was achieved by ensuring a relatively even turbine spacing within the three hills the turbines are located on

A balanced view was ensured from static viewpoints .i.e viewpoints not on roads, no outlying turbines, no clustering in most important viewpoints.

Separations from local residences was maximised.

Overview of Constraints Relevant to Design

This section gives a brief overview of the factors that have been taken into account in the design of the proposed wind farm.

Technical Constraints

Turbine Spacing

From a wind farm efficiency and wind turbine aerodynamic loading perspective, care must be taken in positioning turbines relative to one another. The optimum spacing is a complex function involving the average wind speed and flow turbulence of the site and to a stronger degree the nature of the wind directionality: for a site where the wind has a strong dominant direction, the turbines can be as close as two diameters apart, but rows need to be at perhaps seven rotor diameters spacing; at sites with more variation in wind direction, such as Meikle Carewe, spacing prevents turbines being closer than 4 to 4.5 diameters 'cross-wind' and 4.5 to 5.5 diameters 'down-wind'. Failure to adhere to such spacing can invalidate the turbine manufacturer's warranty and therefore the technical requirements cannot be violated in developing a design.

Microwave Links

There are five fixed microwave links that cross the site at Meikle Carewe following three key corridors (refer to Figure 4.3 attached).

The turbines were located to ensure that the blades would not disrupt the links.

Overhead Power Lines

Overhead Power Lines cross the site to both the west and east of the development. In wind farm design, a standard separation of 1.5 times the tip height is generally used to ensure adequate separation of the turbines from these lines. In the case of Meikle Carewe the spacing is much greater than this.

Gas Pipelines

Transco operate two gas pipelines that cross the site. RES worked closely with TRANSCO in 2004 to enable TRANSCO to install a reinforced slab across the pipeline at the proposed crossing point of the wind farm access track. This will ensure the pipeline is not at risk particularly during the construction of the wind farm.

Environmental Constraints

Archaeological Constraints

There are a few remains of cultural heritage significance within the site boundary, primarily associated with prehistoric settlement and later post-medieval settlement although Roman activity near the site has also been demonstrated. The turbine locations and infrastructure have been designed to have little or no direct impact on these features.

Ecological Constraints

Sensitive habitats have been identified and avoided.

Ornithological Constraints

The proposed wind farm has been designed to avoid any features of particular ornithological importance, and as a result populations within its potential impact zone were low.

Hydrological Constraints

There are two elements to protection of hydrology, one relating to the positioning of the development and the other to it's detailed construction. The initial approach to protecting hydrological interests at Meikle Carewe has involved identifying all water courses and affording them a 20 metre buffer to decrease any risk of soil erosion, accidental spillages or concrete pollution entering the water environment. In actuality, the separation is actually much greater than this as the wind farm infrastructure is located on the upper slopes away from the water courses.

In addition to defining the location of flowing water courses, areas of wetter ground that were identified were also mapped as constraints.

If you have a landscape statement, a design statement or other details about what you would like to see on the site, please include it. *Statement attached*

If you have prepared any frameworks or masterplans showing a possible layout for the site, please include it with this form. *Framework attached*

Have you applied principles of sustainable siting and design to your site? Yes
No

If you have undertaken a site assessment please provide details

Statement attached

The Code for Sustainable homes or WWW.index21.org.uk provides guidance on this issue

Effect on the community

Has there been any opportunity for local people to influence what you propose through local engagement? Yes
No
Not Yet

K97

If you have undertaken any community consultation please provide details of the ways in which engagement was conducted, its effectiveness and the way in which it has influenced your proposals. Please provide details of any engagement you may propose to undertake.

C2 At least 25% of all housing is likely to be required to be affordable. If applicable, are you considering providing more or less than this? More
25% or Less

C3 What community benefits arise from your proposals? What would the nature of these be, and how would they be delivered?
 A recreation area or community has been proposed as described in S9 above.

Community benefits may be material, such as community facilities, or intangible, such as affordable housing or the ability to live locally. Include elements which you anticipate may be required as developer contributions from the development (although specifics will have to be negotiated with the Council on the basis of the development proposed)

C4 How easy is it for people using or living in the development you propose to access services? Are the following facilities within:

	400m	400m-1k	>1km
	Please tick appropriate box		
Local Shops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community facilities (eg Hall)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports facilities (eg playing fields)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Residential areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Transport networks	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>

If you propose to provide any of these as a component of the development itself then please answer "yes". NA=Not Applicable

Servicing the site

C5 Have you undertaken any of the following studies to determine whether your site is capable of being developed, or what might be required by you to make it developable?

Flood Risk Assessment	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
Traffic Impact Assessment	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
Drainage Impact Assessment	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
Habitat / biodiversity Assessment	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>
Other as applicable (eg noise, dust, smell Retail impact etc)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	NA <input type="checkbox"/>

Rather than full studies it may be appropriate to undertake initial assessments to identify the scale of any works that might be required, as this will impact on the deliverability of the proposal. This assessment may be no more than an exchange of letters with appropriate agencies. Information on water and sewage capacity is available online at :
http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/portal/page/portal/SWE_PGP_CONNECTIONS/SWE_CORP_CONNECTIONS/ASSET_CAPACITY_SEARCH

- C6 What are the access arrangements you propose for the site. Does your site plan clearly show where you propose to access the road network? Yes No

Other information

- O1 What other information would you like to be considered in support of your proposal? In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 please do not include any personal information

A full ES was submitted to Aberdeenshire Council in 2007.

Please return the completed form to the Policy Planning Team, Planning Policy and Environment Service , Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB or e-mail to ldp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

Fair Processing Notice

- The Data Controller for this information is Aberdeenshire Council.
- The data will be used for the following purposes:
 - 1) to inform a public debate on the merits of the different sites being proposed,
 - 2) to evaluate submitted bids
- This data will potentially be disclosed worldwide (via publication on Internet)

By completing and submitting this form, you are consenting to the above processing.

C. 1. Meikle Carewe Proposed Wind Farm Community Consultation

In launching the plans publicly leading up to the revised planning application resubmission a number of press releases were made in the local press from late August 2006 through to November 2006.

RES has distributed a project newsletter to circa 1,200 residential and business addresses that exist within 7km of the turbines and to the west of the A90. To ensure the residents of Stonehaven and Newtonhill were notified of the project a full page article based on the newsletter content was printed in the *Mearns Leader* newspaper. To ensure the nearest residents were fully informed of the revised proposals, the newsletter was delivered by hand to these properties over three days in September 2006. Over 70 properties were visited with just over half of the occupiers present when visited. Figure 5.1 (attached) shows the region visited.

As well as enabling RES to answer specific questions the local residents had, the house visits also allowed RES to undertake a 'straw-poll' of those nearest to the wind farm to ascertain the general feeling about a wind farm at Meikle Carewe. Although not the most scientific of surveys it was encouraging to RES to find that more than half of those spoken to were in support of the wind farm, a fifth were against and the remaining respondents were neither for nor against the wind farm.

A full day public exhibition of the plans was held at the end of September 2006 in Stonehaven, the main county town of Kincardine and Mearns and was extensively advertised in the local press and in the project newsletter. The exhibition was attended by over 100 people. Questionnaires were available at the exhibition and although there were people who didn't support the wind farm, the majority of those who completed a questionnaire were in favour. 62% of respondents agreed that the site was a good location for a wind farm and 67% thought that it had been well designed.