SSE THERMAL GENERATION (SCOTLAND) LIMITED
PETERHEAD LOW CARBON POWER STATION PROJECT

Updated Planning Statement (May 2025)

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PETERHEAD LOW CARBON POWER STATION PROJECT

Updated Planning Statement

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GLOSSARY

Abbreviation	Description
1989 Act	The Electricity Act 1989
1990 Regulations	The Electricity (Applications for Consent) Regulations 1990
AGI	Above Ground Installation
ALARP	As low as is reasonably practicable
Applicant	SSE Thermal Generation (Scotland) Limited
BAT	Best Available Techniques
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
CCGT	Combined Cycle Gas Turbine
CCP	Carbon Capture Plant
CCR	Carbon Capture Readiness
CCS	Carbon Capture Storge
CCUS	Carbon Capture Usage and Storage
CHP	Combined Heat and Power
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
Climate Change Act	The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009
CNP	Critical National Priority infrastructure
CO_2	Carbon Dioxide
COMAH	Control of Major Accident Hazards
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
CWTP	Construction Worker Travel Plan
DESNZ	Department of Energy Security and Net Zero
DPA	Dispatchable Power Agreement
ECU	Energy Consents Unit
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment

EIA Regulations	The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017
EPC	Engineering, Procurement and Construction
EWP	Energy White Paper
FEED	Front-End Engineering Design
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GW	Gigawatts
ha	Hectares
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
HRSG	Heat Recovery Steam Generator
HSC	Hazardous Substance Consent
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
ICCI	In-Combination Climate Change Impact
km	Kilometres
LDP	Local Development Plan
LPAs	Local Planning Authorities
m	Metres
MA&D	Major Accidents and Disasters
MW	Megawatts
NCNS Basin	Northern and Central North Sea Basin
NPF3	National Planning Framework 3
NPF4	National Planning Framework 4
NPS	National Policy Statement
NSR	Noise Sensitive Receptor
PLDP	Proposed Local Development Plan
PRoW	Public rights of way
PRS	Pressure Reduction Station
SDP	Strategic Development Plan

SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Area
SGA	Strategic Growth Area
SGAs	Strategic Growth Areas
Site	The Proposed Development Site
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPP	Scottish Planning Policy
TCP(S)A 1997	The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

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1. Summary

1.1.1. This Updated Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of SSE Thermal Generation (Scotland) Limited (the 'Applicant'). It forms part of the application (the 'Application') that was submitted to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) in March 2022 seeking consent for the Peterhead Low Carbon Power Station Project from the Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 (the '1989 Act') and a direction deeming planning permission to be granted under Section 57(2) of The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (the 'TCP(S)A 1997'). The Application reference number is ECU00003433.

1.1.2. The Planning Statement has been updated to take account of changes to energy and planning policy that have taken place since the Application was submitted and also 'additional information' that the Applicant submitted to the Scottish Ministers in February 2023, August 2023 and most recently May 2025. The additional information has been notified to consultees and publicised in accordance with Regulation 20 of 'The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017' (the 'EIA Regulations'). It is considered the Planning Statement demonstrates that the Peterhead Low Carbon Power Station Project complies with relevant energy and planning policy and should be consented in view of its very substantial benefits.

1.1.3. The Applicant is part of the FTSE-listed SSE plc, one of the UK's largest and broadest-based energy companies, and the UK's leading generator of renewable energy. Over the last 20 years, the SSE Group has invested over £20 billion to deliver industry-leading offshore wind, onshore wind, CCGT, energy from-waste, biomass, energy networks, gas storage projects, and develop carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects. The Applicant owns and operates the existing Peterhead Power Station and controls the majority of the land to which the Application relates.

1.1.4. The Applicant is seeking consent for the construction and operation of a low carbon combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) generating station with a capacity of up to 910 megawatts (MW) gross electrical capacity, including post-combustion carbon capture plant and works to the existing cooling water, natural gas and electrical grid connections (the 'Proposed Development') on land at and in the vicinity of the existing Peterhead Power Station Site near Boddam in Aberdeenshire (the 'Site'). The Application seeks consent for the construction and operation of the generating station and deemed planning permission for both the development of the generating station and all other elements of the Proposed Development, including the development ancillary to the construction and operation of the generating station.

1.1.5. The Site lies entirely within the administrative area of Aberdeenshire Council and extends to approximately 89 hectares (ha). It is located just to the north-west of the village of Boddam (30 m) and south of the town of Peterhead (1.5 km). It is accessed from the A90 from Gatehouse Road. The A90 runs from Aberdeen in the south along the coast to Fraserburgh in the north.

1.1.6. The bulk of the Site is situated to the east of the A90 and lies within the boundary – and to the north west – of the existing Peterhead Power Station site, although part of it extends west across the A90 and encompasses the nearby SSEN Peterhead electricity substation.

1.1.7. The existing Peterhead Power Station occupies the central and eastern part of the Site. Sandford Lodge and walled garden, a Category B listed building is located in the northern part of the Site. To the east the Site adjoins the coast and Sandford Bay and includes the existing cooling water intake and outfall. The northern, southern and western parts of the Site mainly comprise grassland with areas of scattered trees and some small blocks of woodland. Peterhead electricity substation occupies the part of the Site situated to the west of the A90.

1.1.8. The low carbon CCGT generating station's carbon capture plant (CCP) will capture the CO_2 emissions generated through the combustion of natural gas in the CCGT, which will then be compressed and transported by a pipeline operated (and consented under a separate application) by the Acorn Project, a CO_2 transportation and storage system, for permanent geological storage under the North Sea.

1.1.9. The Acorn Project ('Acorn') is being led by Storegga Limited with their partners Shell UK, Harbour Energy and North Sea Midstream Partners. Acorn is a CO_2 transportation and storage system that will reuse legacy oil and gas infrastructure to transport captured CO_2 emissions from industry and power generation for permanent storage 2.5 km under the North Sea. It is proposed that CO_2 will be transported from a number of major emitters within Scotland to the St. Fergus Gas Terminal via the SCO_2T Connect Project (this project involves National Gas Transmission repurposing an existing onshore natural gas pipeline for CO_2 transport) from where it will be transported offshore using existing offshore pipelines (the Miller and Goldeneye pipelines) for storage within the Acorn storage sites. Acorn and the SCO_2T Connect Project do not form part of the Application and will be the subject of separate consenting applications.

1.1.10. The Proposed Development, along with Acorn, SCO_2T Connect and a variety of industrial, power, hydrogen, bioenergy and waste-to-energy businesses, forms part of the 'Scottish Cluster', one of a number of CCS clusters that has the potential to deliver the UK Government's ambition to have four CCS/CCUS clusters capable of capturing and storing a combined total of 20 to 30 million tonnes of CO_2 per year by 2030. In July 2023, the UK Government announced that the Scottish Cluster would move forward to the next stage of deployment as a 'Track 2 cluster' as part of the Government's CCUS cluster sequencing programme. The new UK Labour Government's recently published 'Clean Power 2030 Action Plan' (December 2024) recognises the important role of CCUS and notes that there are CCUS clusters at a mature stage of development, including the Scottish Cluster, which contain power CCUS projects – such as the Proposed Development – at the heart of their plans.

1.1.11. The Applicant continues to engage with the UK Government and other key stakeholders on the importance of the Scottish Cluster and the need for all clusters across the UK to be decarbonised in order to achieve net zero in terms of GHG emissions.

1.1.12. The UK Government has set a clear target to deliver a clean power system by 2030 (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), Clean Power 2030 Action Plan, December 2024). This will predominantly be delivered by continued growth in renewables, including offshore and onshore wind, solar and batteries, as well as new low carbon flexible power sources using technologies like carbon capture and hydrogen. At the same time, the UK Government recognise that up to 35 gigawatts (GW) of traditional gas-fired power stations will still be required on the system into the 2030s – similar to the amount on the system today – providing no more than 5% of Great Britain's generation in a typical weather year.

1.1.13. In line with recent case law and evolving policy and guidance, notably the Supreme Court decision in the R (Finch) – v – Surrey County Council case, and an update in the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) GHG Assessment guidance with regard to considering 'upstream' greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the Applicant has updated the EIA Report submitted as part of the Application to consider the cumulative impact of both the Proposed Development and the existing Power Station running concurrently for a period, in addition to taking upstream emissions into account. The updates to the EIA Report, including a revised version of Chapter 18 'Climate Change and Sustainability', have been provided as part of the additional information (Additional Information 3) submitted to the Scottish Ministers in May 2025.

1.1.14. For the purposes of the Application, revised EIA Chapter 18 includes a 'worst case scenario' of the existing Peterhead Power Station remaining operational until 2040, which is the year the Applicant

has committed to achieve net zero Scope 1 GHG emissions by. However, given the assumed deployment of new low carbon sources of flexible power, the Applicant expects to see reduced running of the existing Power Station over this period.

1.1.15. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (amended by The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019) sets a legally binding target for Scotland of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. This is a more ambitious target that the one set by the UK Government (net zero by 2050). The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2024 amends the Climate Change Act to replace the existing system of annual and interim emissions reduction targets with a system of 5-yearly carbon budgets to 2045, although at the time of updating this Planning Statement these budgets are still to be set, and the previous annual targets remain in force.

1.1.16. It is evident from a review of Scottish energy and climate change policy and also UK Government energy and climate change policy (which can be relevant to decisions made by the Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the 1989 Act), that there is an important role for modern, flexible gas-fired generation fitted with post-combustion CCP – forming part of a CCS/CCUS cluster – in terms of supporting the transition to net zero GHG emissions over the coming years while ensuring the security of electricity supplies in Scotland.

1.1.17. New gas-fired generation with CCP will be required to provide back-up to renewable generation to ensure the reliability and security of electricity supplies and that the electricity grid system can meet fluctuations in demand. This is vital given Scotland's heavy and increasing reliance on renewable generation, notably wind, which is intermittent in nature. Furthermore, the UK Government has committed to provide significant investment to facilitate the deployment of four CCS/CCUS clusters by 2030. The Proposed Development forms part of the Scottish Cluster, from which captured CO_2 will be transported offshore from the St. Fergus Gas Terminal for secure storage in depleted oil and gas fields within the North Sea as part of Acorn.

1.1.18. The 'need' for new gas-fired generating capacity in the UK is confirmed by the UK Government's National Policy Statements (NPSs) for energy, notably the Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1). These NPSs are relevant to decisions in Scotland. EN-1 goes onto confirm that such infrastructure is 'Critical National Priority' (CNP) infrastructure for the UK and that the urgent need for such infrastructure will in general outweigh any other residual impacts not capable of being addressed by application of the mitigation hierarchy in all but the most exceptional cases.

1.1.19. Further to the above, by underpinning the development of the Scottish Cluster, the Proposed Development will also support the UK Government's North Sea Transition Deal (March 2021), which seeks to transform the oil and gas sector through the development of CCS/CCUS, with these technologies drawing upon the capabilities and skills within the sector and its existing infrastructure, thereby helping to support its supply chain and skilled workforce in the future.

1.1.20. National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) identifies Peterhead under National Development 15 as part of the Scottish Cluster, which is an 'Industrial Green Transition Zone' aimed at supporting the generation of significant economic opportunities for low carbon industry as well as minimising carbon emissions at scale, and will play a vital part in maintaining the security and operability of Scotland's electricity supply and network. Part 3 of NPF4 confirms that the designation of a National Development means that the principle of the development does not need to be agreed as part of the consenting process. NPF4 also identifies designations and classes of development that are appropriate to Industrial Green Transition Zones. These include thermal power generation capacity with CCS technology. The Proposed Development and its location is therefore in accordance with NPF4.

1.1.21. The Site lies within the administrative area of Aberdeenshire Council. The local development plan for the area is the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP confirms that the Site lies within the 'Aberdeen to Peterhead Strategic Growth Area', which is to be the main focus for development in the area up to 2040 and also the 'Energetica Corridor', the latter being a development initiative along the coastal zone between Aberdeen and Peterhead to create *"…a world-class business and residential location within a high-quality environmental setting".* In addition, the Site lies within the Peterhead (Boddam) Regeneration Priority Area. The LDP also identifies the Site for thermal power generation and CCS.

1.1.22. This Planning Statement has assessed the Proposed Development taking account of energy and climate change legislation and policy, planning policy and the EIA that has been undertaken, including updates and additional information. The following conclusions can be drawn from this assessment:

- While Scottish energy and climate change legislation and policy forms the primary basis for decisions by the Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the 1989 Act, UK Government energy and climate change policy can also be relevant to decisions by the Scottish Ministers on energy infrastructure projects.
- The need for the Proposed Development is confirmed by Scottish energy and climate change legislation and policy, relevant UK Government energy and climate change policy and national planning policy in the form of NPF4, with NPF4 identifying the Proposed Development as part of a National Development (the Scottish Cluster), the need for which is confirmed. The Proposed Development will help underpin the development of the Scottish Cluster and also contribute toward ensuring the reliability and security of electricity supplies in Scotland by providing flexible back-up generation that will add resilience to the system given the increasing reliance on intermittent renewable technologies. Furthermore, the UK Government's NPSs for energy infrastructure, notably EN-1, confirms the need for new CCGT generating stations with CCS/CCUS and states that such infrastructure is CNP infrastructure for the UK and that the urgent need for such infrastructure will in general outweigh any other residual impacts in all but the most exceptional cases.
- The Applicant has taken a proportionate approach to the consideration of alternatives reflecting the fact that the Site forms part of an existing power station site and is within a location that is identified in NPF4 as part of National Development 15 (the Scottish Cluster Industrial Green Transition Zone) where thermal power generation capacity with CCS/CCUS technology is considered to be appropriate development.
- The Proposed Development is also appropriate in land use planning terms, being located within an existing operational power site that is in a location identified at national (NPF4) and local level (Aberdeenshire LDP) for thermal power generation and CCS/CCUS, while it primarily involves the use of previously developed land.
- The approach that has been taken by the Applicant to the design of the Proposed Development is considered to be both proportionate and appropriate given the context within which it will sit. It represents good design and incorporates appropriate landscape and biodiversity enhancements.
- The Proposed Development will be CHP Ready and also satisfies the requirements of the CCR Regulations and relevant guidance which apply across the UK.
- The Proposed Development will have significant benefits for the local and regional economy and help underpin the development of the Scottish Cluster. The EIA undertaken identifies major beneficial effects for socio-economics, tourism and recreation (mainly through the provision of a significant number of direct and indirect construction jobs and the creation of supply chain opportunities) as well as sustainability.

- The EIA for the Proposed Development has identified a limited number of significant adverse residual effects. These are Moderate Adverse effects relating to landscape and visual amenity (primarily views from residential properties), cultural heritage (setting impacts to Sandford Lodge and in relation to the low potential for removal of previously unrecorded archaeological remains) and GHG emissions (the operational GHG Assessment being based on a 'worst case' scenario of the Proposed Development operating in combination with the existing Power Station).
- No conflict has been identified between the Proposed Development and national or local planning policy. Aberdeenshire Council submitted its consultation response on the Application to the ECU on 30 June 2023 confirming that planning officers had reported the Application to the Council's Infrastructure Services Committee on 15 June 2023 with a recommendation of 'No Objection' to the Application subject to the appended Schedule of Conditions, removal of the holding objection from SEPA (SEPA withdrew its objection on 19 September 2023) and a statement (by the Council) in respect of duties it's under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The Infrastructure Services Committee agreed the planning officer recommendation of 'No Objection'. The planning officer's report did not identify any conflict between the Proposed Development and relevant policies of NPF4 or the Aberdeenshire LDP.

1.1.23. In determining the Application, Scottish Ministers must take account of relevant policy and weigh any adverse residual effects of the Proposed Development against its benefits – the 'Planning Balance'. Those benefits are substantial and include the Proposed Development's contribution toward important energy and climate change objectives and targets, the security and reliability of electricity supplies in Scotland and the local and regional economy. Furthermore, Aberdeenshire Council's own assessment of the Application is that there is no conflict between the Proposed Development and relevant policies of NPF4 or its own LDP. With regard to the weighing of benefits against adverse effects, it is important to note that NPS EN-1, which is relevant to decisions in Scotland under Section 36 of the 1989 Act, confirms that the urgent need for CNP infrastructure, such as the Proposed Development, will in general outweigh any residual impacts in all but the most exceptional cases. CNP policy (paragraph 4.2.15 of NPS EN-1) in effect therefore creates a presumption in favour of consent. The exception to that presumption in favour of consent is where infrastructure will present an unacceptable risk to, or unacceptable interference with, human health and public safety, defence, irreplaceable habitats or an unacceptable risk to the achievement of net zero, flood risk, coastal erosion or navigation. The Proposed Development will not result in any such unacceptable risks or interferences. Its substantial benefits clearly outweigh its limited adverse residual effects, and it should therefore be approved in line with the CNP infrastructure approach.

1.1.24. In summary, it is considered this Planning Statement demonstrates, taking account of the additional information submitted to the Scottish Ministers, that the original conclusions of the March 2022 application submission remain valid, and that the Proposed Development complies with relevant energy and planning policy and that in view of its very substantial benefits Section 36 consent and deemed planning permission should be granted.

2. Introduction

2.1. OVERVIEW

2.1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of SSE Thermal Generation (Scotland) Limited (the 'Applicant'). It forms part of the application (the 'Application') that was submitted to the Scottish Ministers on 1 March 2022 seeking consent for the Peterhead Low Carbon Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Project under Section 36 of 'The Electricity Act 1989' (the '1989 Act') and a direction deeming planning permission to be granted under Section 57(2) of 'The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997' (the 'TCP(S)A 1997'). The Application reference number is ECU00003433.

2.1.2. The Applicant is seeking consent for the construction and operation of a low carbon combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) generating station with a capacity of up to 910 megawatts (MW) gross electrical capacity, including post-combustion carbon capture plant and works to the existing cooling water, natural gas and electrical grid connections (the 'Proposed Development') on land at and in the vicinity of the existing Peterhead Power Station Site near Boddam in Aberdeenshire (the 'Site').

2.1.3. The carbon capture plant (CCP) will capture the CO_2 emissions generated through the combustion of natural gas in the CCGT, which will then be compressed and transported by a pipeline operated (and consented under a separate application) by the Acorn Project, a CO_2 transportation and storage system, for permanent geological storage under the North Sea.

2.1.4. The majority of the land to which the Application relates is within the control of the Applicant. This is with the exception of some of the land occupied by the existing cooling water infrastructure and also highway land where some works are proposed.

2.1.5. The Planning Statement has been updated to take account of changes to energy and planning policy that have taken place since the Application was submitted and also the 'additional information' that the Applicant submitted to the Scottish Ministers in February 2023, August 2023 and most recently May 2025. The additional information has been notified to consultees and publicised in accordance with Regulation 20 of 'The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017' (the 'EIA Regulations').

2.1.6. The UK Government has set a clear target to deliver a clean power system by 2030 (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), Clean Power 2030 Action Plan, December 2024). This will predominantly be delivered by continued growth in renewables, including offshore and onshore wind, solar and batteries, as well as new low carbon flexible power sources using technologies like carbon capture and hydrogen. At the same time, the UK Government recognise that up to 35 gigawatts (GW) of traditional gas-fired power stations will still be required on the system into the 2030s – similar to the amount on the system today – providing no more than 5% of Great Britain's generation in a typical weather year.

2.1.7. In line with recent case law and evolving policy and guidance, notably the Supreme Court decision in the R (Finch) – v – Surrey County Council case, and an update in the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) GHG Assessment guidance with regard to considering 'upstream' greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the Applicant has updated the EIA Report submitted as part of the Application to consider the cumulative impact of both the Proposed Development and the existing Power Station running concurrently for a short period, in addition to taking upstream emissions into account. The updates to the EIA Report, including a revised version of Chapter 18 'Climate Change and Sustainability', have been provided as part of the additional information (Additional Information 3) submitted to the Scottish Ministers in May 2025.

2.1.8. For the purposes of the Application, revised EIA Chapter 18 includes a 'worst case scenario' of the existing Peterhead Power Station remaining operational until 2040, which is the year the Applicant has committed to achieve net zero Scope 1 GHG emissions by. However, given the assumed deployment of new low carbon sources of flexible power, the Applicant expects to see reduced running of the existing Power Station over this period. As such, the Applicant's current expectation is that the existing Power Station will, depending on market conditions, reach the end of its economic and design life in the 2030s, while helping to protect security of supply in the near term.

2.2. THE APPLICANT

2.2.1. The Applicant is part of the FTSE-listed SSE plc, one of the UK's largest and broadest-based energy companies, and the UK's leading generator of renewable energy. Over the last 20 years, the SSE Group has invested over £20 billion to deliver industry-leading offshore wind, onshore wind, CCGT, energy from-waste, biomass, energy networks, gas storage projects, and develop carbon capture & storage (CCS) projects. The Applicant owns and operates the existing Peterhead Power Station.

2.2.2. The Applicant is jointly developing the Peterhead Low Carbon Power Station Project with Equinor UK Ltd. Equinor has been operating in the UK for over 35 years and is one of the country's leading energy providers, supplying natural gas, oil and electricity. Headquartered in Norway, the company aims to reach net zero emissions globally by 2050. In the UK, Equinor operates one offshore oil field and three offshore wind farms including Hywind Scotland, the world's first floating wind farm whose operations and maintenance base is located in Peterhead. Equinor is also a leader in CCS and hydrogen, developing the H2H Saltend hydrogen production plant at the heart of the Zero Carbon Humber alliance, and partnering in the Net Zero Teesside Project and the Northern Endurance Partnership.

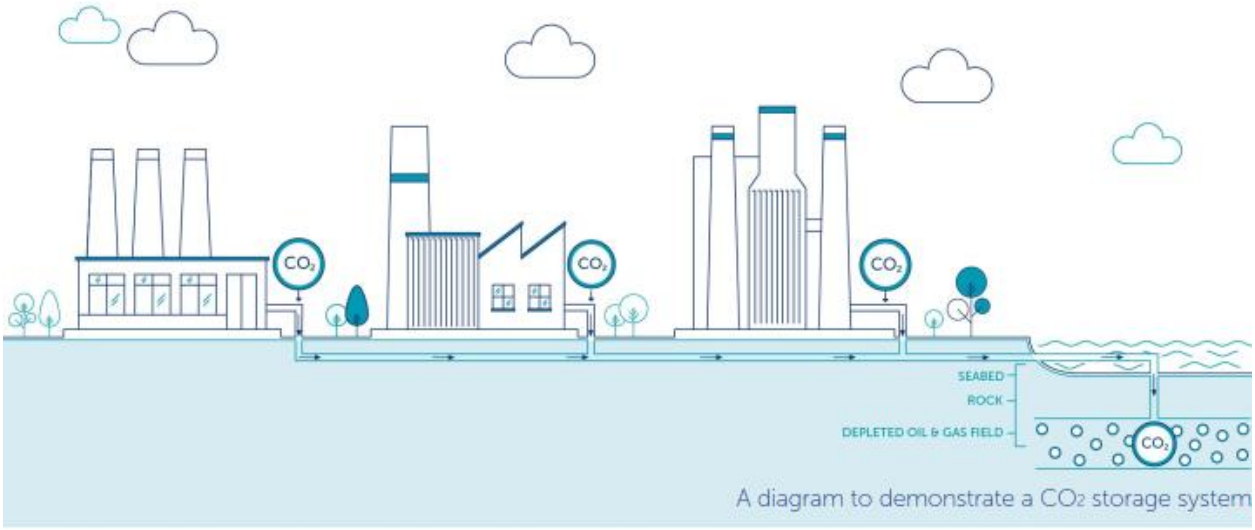
2.2.3. SSE produced a 'Greenprint' document (SSE, 2020) that sets out a clear commitment to investment in low carbon power infrastructure, working with the UK Government and other stakeholders to create a net zero power system by 2040. This includes investment in flexible sources of electricity generation and storage for times of low renewable output which will complement other renewable generating sources, either using low-carbon fuels and/ or capturing and storing carbon emissions.

2.2.4. The design of the Proposed Development demonstrates this commitment. The Proposed Development will be built with a clear route to decarbonisation, being equipped with post-combustion carbon capture technology. This is consistent with SSE's commitment to reduce the carbon intensity of the electricity it generates by 60% by 2030, compared to 2018 levels.

2.3. WHAT IS CARBON CAPTURE, USAGE AND STORAGE?

2.3.1. Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage (CCUS) is a process that removes carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions at source, for example emissions from a power station or industrial installation, and then compresses the CO_2 so that it can be safely transported to secure underground geological storage sites. It is then injected into layers of solid rock filled with interconnected pores where the CO_2 becomes trapped and locked in place, preventing it from being released into the atmosphere. There is also the potential for some of the captured CO_2 to be used in certain industrial and manufacturing processes. **Figure 2.1** below shows what is involved in the process.

Figure 2.1 – Diagram of the Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage Process



2.3.2. The technologies used in CCUS are proven and have been used safely across the World for many years. Storage sites are located several kilometres underground and are subject to stringent tests to ensure that they are geologically suitable. In the UK, it is expected that the storage sites will be located offshore, in areas such as the North Sea.

2.3.3. CCUS is one of a number of technologies that are crucial to reducing CO_2 emissions and combatting global warming. The Scottish Government has committed to achieving net zero in terms of greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, with the UK Government having committed to achieve this by 2050. These are legally binding targets.

2.4. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE

2.4.1. The Proposed Development Site (the 'Site') lies entirely within the administrative area of Aberdeenshire Council and extends to approximately 89 hectares (ha). It is located just to the north-west of the village of Boddam (30 m) and south of the town of Peterhead (1.5 km). It is accessed from the A90 from Gatehouse Road. The A90 runs from Aberdeen in the south along the coast to Fraserburgh in the north.

2.4.2. The bulk of the Site is situated to the east of the A90 and lies within the boundary – and to the north west – of the existing Peterhead Power Station site, although part of it extends west across the A90.

2.4.3. The existing Peterhead Power Station occupies the central and eastern part of the Site. Sandford Lodge and walled garden, a Category B listed building is located in the northern part of the Site. To the east the Site adjoins the coast and Sandford Bay and includes the existing cooling water intake and outfall. The northern, southern and western parts of the Site mainly comprise grassland with areas of scattered trees and some small blocks of woodland. Peterhead electricity substation occupies the part of the Site situated to the west of the A90.

2.4.4. The topography of the Site is uneven, varying from 9 m to 45 m AOD, with the landform generally sloping downward from west to east toward the coast.

2.4.5. The surrounding area is predominantly rural in character, comprising pasture and arable land with some areas of woodland.

2.4.6. The nearest residential area is Boddam to the south. This is approximately 800m from the proposed location of the CCGT generating station and its CCP.

2.4.7. Chapter 3 'Site and Surrounding Area' of the EIA Report provides a more detailed description of the Site and the receptors within the surrounding area.

2.5. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.5.1. The Proposed Development comprises the construction and operation of a low carbon CCGT generating station with a capacity of up to 910 MW electrical output and ancillary development.

2.5.2. The low carbon CCGT generating station will be fuelled by natural gas and include a post-combustion CCP and works to the existing cooling water, natural gas and electrical grid connections at the existing Power Station site. The CCP will capture and compress the CO_2 emissions from the generating station. As mentioned above, it is proposed that the generating station will connect into the Acorn Project for the transportation and permanent storage of the captured CO_2.

2.5.3. The Acorn Project ('Acorn') is being led by Storegga Limited with their partners Shell UK, Harbour Energy and North Sea Midstream Partners. Acorn is a CO_2 transportation and storage system that will reuse legacy oil and gas infrastructure to transport captured CO_2 emissions from industry and power generation for permanent storage 2.5 km under the North Sea. It is proposed that CO_2 will be transported from a number of major emitters within Scotland to the St. Fergus Gas Terminal via the SCO_2T Connect Project (this project involves National Gas Transmission repurposing an existing onshore natural gas pipeline for CO_2 transport) from where it will be transported offshore using existing offshore pipelines (the Miller and Goldeneye pipelines) for storage within the Acorn storage sites. Acorn and the SCO_2T Connect Project do not form part the Application and will be the subject to separate consenting applications.

2.5.4. The Proposed Development, along with Acorn, SCO_2T Connect and a variety of industrial, power, hydrogen, bioenergy and waste-to-energy businesses, forms part of the 'Scottish Cluster', one of a number of CCS clusters that has the potential to deliver the UK Government's ambition to have four CCS clusters capable of capturing and storing a combined total of 20 to 30 million tonnes of CO_2 per year by 2030. In July 2023, the UK Government announced that the Scottish Cluster would move forward to the next stage of deployment as a 'Track 2 cluster' as part of the Government's CCUS cluster sequencing programme. The new UK Labour Government's recently published 'Clean Power 2030 Action Plan' (December 2024) recognises the important role of CCUS and notes that there are CCUS clusters at a mature stage of development, including the Scottish Cluster, which contain power CCUS projects – such as the Proposed Development – at the heart of their plans (page 113).

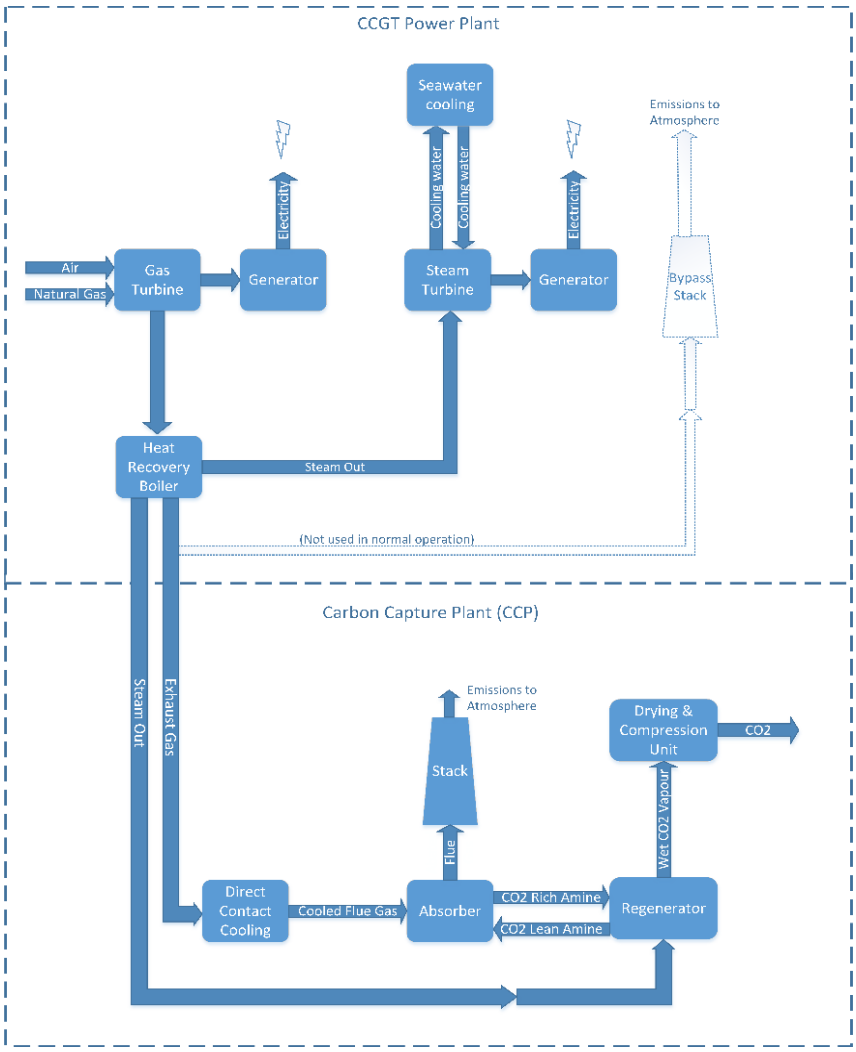
2.5.5. The Applicant continues to engage with the UK Government and other key stakeholders on the importance of the Scottish Cluster and the need for all clusters across the UK to be decarbonised in order to achieve net zero in terms of GHG emissions.

2.5.6. The existing Power Station will not need to be decommissioned or demolished to allow the Proposed Development to be constructed and operated, although some ancillary structures, which are no longer required, will need to be removed to provide the necessary space for development.

2.5.7. While the existing Power Station is only expected to operate if grid demand cannot be fulfilled by the new generating station, as confirmed above, for the purposes of the Application, revised EIA Chapter 18 includes a 'worst case scenario' of the existing Power Station remaining operational until 2040 and the revised chapter considers the cumulative impact of both power stations running concurrently for a short period, in addition to taking upstream emissions into account.

2.5.8. **Figure 2.2** below shows how the low carbon CCGT generating station will operate with its CCP.

Figure 2.2 – Combined Cycle Gas Turbine & Carbon Capture Plant Operation



2.5.9. The Proposed Development includes the low carbon CCGT generating station and also ancillary development that is required for its construction and operation. The elements of the Proposed Development are set out below:

- A new carbon capture enabled electricity generating station fuelled by natural gas and with a gross electricity output of up to 910 MW comprising:
  - a single CCGT unit;
  - a single CCP;
  - tie-ins to water, gas and electricity connections and CO_2 compression and export infrastructure; and
  - supporting facilities, including administration and control buildings, workshops, stores, water storage tanks and permanent laydown areas for operation and maintenance activities.

- Connection to the existing seawater cooling system including of a new section of cooling water pipework to the CCGT and connection to the existing pumphouse, which abstracts water from Boddam Harbour.
- Use of the existing outfall and associated pipework for the discharge of returned cooling water and treated wastewater to Sandford Bay.
- New gas pipework and connections to convey natural gas to the CCGT from the existing gas pressure reduction station (PRS) located within the Site.
- Electricity transmission infrastructure, including new cable routing to connect the CCGT to the existing Peterhead electrical substation located across the A90 on the western boundary of the Site.
- An additional new electrical substation that may be required at the Site to interface between the CCGT and electrical transmission infrastructure.
- Above ground CO_2 compression and export infrastructure comprising an Above Ground Installation (AGI) including gas purification and drying and staged compression facilities, together with outlet metering.
- Public water connection pipeline from the existing water supply to the existing Power Station to provide potable water.
- New permanent accesses to the Site, including:
  - upgrade works, including widening, to the existing Sandford Lodge access track and its junction with the A90 to allow access for construction traffic;
  - temporary diversion of Footpath ECPP-202-03 to allow for the upgrade works to and the use of the Sandford Lodge access track during construction; ;
  - upgrade works, including a dedicated right hand turn lane on the A90 northbound, to the junction of the A90 with Gatehouse Road to allow access for construction traffic;
  - construction of a new gatehouse on the upgraded Sandford Lodge access track and relocation of the existing gatehouse from Gatehouse Road to serve the Site (both off the A90); and
  - construction of a temporary gatehouse on Gatehouse Road (off the A90) to the existing Power Station to be used during the construction phase of the Proposed Development.
- Diversion of the culverted Den of Boddam Burn.
- Temporary localised diversion of the Aberdeenshire Coastal Path (ECPP-7LD-01-24) at the existing Power Station cooling water outfall.
- Temporary construction and laydown areas and contractor facilities, including materials and plant storage and laydown areas; generators; concrete batching facilities; vehicle and cycle parking facilities; pedestrian and cycle routes and facilities; offices and staff welfare facilities; security fencing and gates; external lighting; roadways and haul routes (including the maintenance and improvement of existing haul route between construction laydown areas; wheel wash facilities; and signage.
- Landscaping, planting and biodiversity enhancement measures and security fencing and boundary treatment.

2.5.10. The following further ancillary development is also required for the Proposed Development:

- Surface water drainage systems, including works to existing drainage systems.
- Electrical, gas, potable water supply, foul water drainage and telecommunications infrastructure connections, and works to alter the position of such services and utilities connections.
- Hard standings and hard landscaping.

- Soft landscaping, including bunds and embankments.
- External lighting, including lighting columns.
- Closed circuit television cameras and columns and other security measures.
- Site establishment and preparation works, including site clearance, earthworks and excavations; construction access; alteration of services and utilities; and works for the protection of buildings and land.
- Vehicle parking and cycle storage facilities.
- Accesses, roads and pedestrian routes.
- Temporary works associated with the maintenance of the authorised development.

2.5.11. A detailed description of the Proposed Development is set out at Chapter 4 'The Proposed Development' of the EIA Report.

2.5.12. Section 4.3.17 of Chapter 4 of the EIA Report explains the degree of flexibility that has been retained within the design of the Proposed Development and how this has been assessed as part of the EIA having regard to the principles of the 'Rochdale Envelope' approach.

2.5.13. The design and layout of the Proposed Development cannot be confirmed until the detailed design process has been completed. Detailed design will not take place until an Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contractor has been appointed. Furthermore, the scale of the main buildings and structures and their layout will vary depending on the EPC contractor appointed and their selection of plant and equipment. It is also important that sufficient flexibility is retained to allow for evolving development of CCGT and CCP technology in the period between preparing the Application and the start of construction.

2.5.14. A pre-Front-End Engineering Design (FEED) design has been undertaken for the Proposed Development. In addition, two potential EPC contractors have been engaged to provide technology-specific layouts, which use the same principal project components as the pre-FEED design within the same overall footprint, although the sizing and layout of buildings and structures do differ. As such, there are three indicative design layouts that could potentially be developed (Figures 4.1 - 4.3 EIA Report). These do, however, sit within the same overall development footprint/envelope (Figure 3.3 of EIA Report).

2.5.15. To retain flexibility, but also to allow for a robust assessment of the environmental effects of the Proposed Development, the EIA has taken account of each of the indicative layouts and has assessed maximum design parameters for the main buildings and structures (e.g. Gas Turbine Hall, Steam Turbine Hall, Heat Recovery Steam Generator (HRSG) building and stack), which are set out at Table 4-1 (Chapter 4 of the EIA Report). The maximum design parameters are based on the largest possible dimensions of the three indicative design layouts being considered.

2.5.16. Construction of the Proposed Development could (subject to the necessary consents being granted) start as early as Quarter 4 2026. Assuming an approximate 3 to 4 year construction programme followed by a period of commissioning, it is anticipated that the low carbon generating station could enter commercial operation around 2030.

2.5.17. The low carbon generating station will be designed to operate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, with programmed offline periods for maintenance. It is anticipated that the operation of the generating station will create around 50 full time operational roles at the Site. Temporary and contractor employees associated with maintenance activities will also be employed, as required.

2.5.18. The generating station will be able to operate in either baseload or in a flexible (dispatchable) mode in the future. The baseload mode refers to power generation that generally runs continuously

throughout the year and dispatchable mode refers to flexible operation on demand (e.g. when generation from renewables is lower).

2.5.19. In the event of the CCP having an outage (ceasing to operate or requiring maintenance) it could be necessary to operate the generating station for a short period of time in unabated mode with the emissions from the CCGT routed via the HRSG stack. Such occurrences are expected to be infrequent.

2.6. THE APPLICATION

2.6.1. As confirmed above, the Application seeks consent under Section 36 of the 1989 Act and also deemed planning permission under Section 57(2) of the TCP(S)A 1997 for the construction and operation of the low carbon CCGT generating station and all other elements of the Proposed Development, including development ancillary to the construction and operation of the generating station.

2.6.2. The Proposed Development is Schedule 1 development under 'The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017' (the 'EIA Regulations'), being a proposed "*thermal generating station with a heat output of 300 megawatts or more".* An EIA Report, including a Non-Technical Summary of the EIA Report, was therefore produced as part of the Application.

2.6.3. The Application, as submitted to Scottish Ministers in March 2022, comprised the following documents and plans:

- Application Cover Letter.
- A draft copy of the public notice proposed to publicise the Application in national and local newspapers.
- List of Consultees – listing those persons to who the Applicant intends to send a copy of the Application documents, including EIA Report, in addition to a copy of the published notice publicising the Application and stating a date for the submission of representations to the Scottish Ministers on the Application.
- Site Location Plan Ref. 60650403-010.
- Application Site Boundary Plan Ref. 60650403-021.
- Landownership Plan Ref. 60650403-022
- Indicative Layout Plan (Option 1) Ref. 60650403-031.
- Indicative Layout Plan (Option 2) Ref. 60650403-032.
- Indicative Layout Plan (Option 3) Ref. 60650403-033.
- Indicative CCGT/CCP (Main Site) Elevations Plan Ref. 60650403-041.
- Indicative Ancillary Site and Water Treatment Elevations Plan Ref. 60650403-042.
- Indicative Construction Laydown Areas Plan Ref. 60650403-050.
- Indicative Connections Plan Ref. 60650403-060.
- Outline Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy Plan Ref. 60650403-070.
- Pre-Application Consultation ('PAC') Report.
- Planning Statement.
- Design and Access Statement.
- EIA Report:
  - Volume 1: Non-Technical Summary.
  - Volume 2: Main Report.
  - Volume 3: Figures.
  - Volume 4: Appendices.
- Carbon Capture Readiness Report.

- Combined Heat and Power Assessment.

2.6.4. The Applicant undertook pre-application consultation on the Proposed Development. This included two stages of pre-application consultation. Stage 1 provided early information on the proposals and took place in May and early June 2021, while Stage 2 on the Applicant's more developed proposals took place from late August to early October 2021. The PAC Report, which forms part of the Application, details the consultation undertaken, the comments and feedback received and how regard was had to the comments and feedback received.

2.6.5. The Applicant prepared and submitted a Carbon Capture Readiness (CCR) Report to report upon the whether the CCR conditions are met under 'The Carbon Capture Readiness (Electricity Generating Stations) Regulations 2013 the 'CCR Regulations'. This demonstrates that the Proposed Development is CCR and that it is technically and economically feasible to transport the captured carbon dioxide to available storage sites.

2.6.6. The Applicant paid the relevant application fee of £280,000.00 under 'The Electricity (Applications for Consent and Variation of Consent) (Fees) (Scotland) Regulations 2019.

2.6.7. As confirmed above, the Applicant submitted additional information for the purposes of the EIA Regulations to the Scottish Ministers in respect of the Application in February 2023, August 2023 and most recently in May 2025. The additional information has been notified to consultees and publicised in accordance with Regulation 20 of the EIA Regulations. Details of the additional information submitted to date is provided below.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION 1 (FEBRUARY 2023)

2.6.8. Following the submission of the Application in March 2022, concerns regarding security of energy supply arose, independent of the Proposed Development, but which were cited by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) in their comments (dated 1 July 2022) on the EIA Report regarding the assumed 'worst case' operational regime used in the cumulative assessment within the Air Quality Management Assessment. In agreement with SEPA, the operational regime scenarios were revised to consider the existing Peterhead Power Station remaining in operation at full capacity concurrently with the Proposed Development to ensure a more robust worst case scenario.

2.6.9. On the 10 February 2023, the Applicant submitted additional information to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) in response to the comments from SEPA, including revised air quality modelling and a carbon assessment as well as an updated air quality and climate assessments. While providing further clarification, the revised modelling and updated assessments did not alter the assessment findings and as such there was no need to update Chapter 8 'Air Quality' of the EIA Report or any of its supporting appendices.

2.6.10. At the same time, the Applicant also submitted additional bird survey data that had been collected in December 2021 and February 2022, but which had not been available at the time of the submission of the Application.

2.6.11. SEPA submitted a further consultation response to the ECU on 28 March 2023 requesting further information in relation to air quality and climate change readiness and confirmed that it would maintain its holding objection pending receipt and review of that information. Specifically, SEPA raised that an assessment of the Heat Recovery Steam Generator (HRSG) stack height (in unabated

mode) and further Amine assessment were required. Alongside this further clarification with regards to the Carbon Capture Readiness assessment were requested.

2.6.12. In addition, Friends of the Earth (FoE) Scotland submitted an objection (dated 12 May 2022 but not published on the ECU website until 17 February 2023) to the Proposed Development relating to the committed carbon capture rates, operation of both the Proposed Development and the existing Peterhead Power Station, and the perceived limited and short-term economic benefits of the Proposed Development and support for generation and CCS development within national planning policy.

2.6.13. The local planning authority (LPA), Aberdeenshire Council, submitted a consultation response to the ECU on 30 June 2023 confirming that planning officers had reported the Application to the Infrastructure Services Committee of the Council on 15 June 2023 with a recommendation of 'No Objection' to the Application subject to:

- The appended Schedule of Conditions.
- The removal of the objection from SEPA.
- A statement (by the Council) in respect of duties it's under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

2.6.14. The Infrastructure Services Committee agreed the planning officer recommendation of No Objection.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION 2 (AUGUST 2023)

2.6.15. The Applicant submitted a response to SEPA's comments of 28 March 2023 to the ECU on 22 August 2023 including a stack height assessment for the HRSG, concluding negligible adverse impacts which are not significant. The response confirmed that the Amine Assessment would need to be conducted following the license contractor's choice of amine post consent. Lastly, the Applicant clarified the extent of the Carbon Capture Readiness calculations which excluded the existing Peterhead Power Station. SEPA responded on 19 September 2023 confirming that it was now in the position to remove its holding objection, accepting that some uncertainties would be resolved during the Pollution Prevention Control (PPC) permitting stage.

2.6.16. The Applicant also provided a response to FoE Scotland's comments and submitted this to the ECU on 22 August 2023. Although the Applicant was of the view that the response did not constitute additional information for the purposes of the EIA Regulations (as it provided clarification on items related to technology and policy already addressed in the Application) the information was treated in the same way as if it was additional information.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION 3 (MAY 2025)

2.6.17. The following additional information was submitted to the ECU in May 2025:

- Updated Planning Statement (this document);
- Additional Information Report, including:
    - Appendix A – Updated Non-Technical Summary of the EIA Report;
    - Appendix B – Updated EIA Report Chapter 18 'Climate Change and Sustainability' and Appendix 18A 'Sustainability Review'; and
    - Appendix C – Updated EIA Report Chapter 21 'Summary of Likely Significant Effects'.

2.6.18. As confirmed above, Updated EIA Chapter 18 includes a 'worst case scenario' of the existing Power Station remaining operational until 2040 and considers the cumulative impact of both power stations running concurrently for a period, in addition to taking upstream emissions into account. The additional information is being provided to ensure that the Scottish Ministers have sufficient relevant environmental information before them when determining the Application.

2.6.19. The Additional Information Report, at Table 3.1, provides a summary of any changes that have been identified to the environmental assessments reported in the EIA Report since the Application was submitted in March 2022, and taking account of the additional information submitted. Table 3.1. does not identify any changes to the environmental assessments and EIA Report chapters, with the exception of Chapter 18 'Climate Change and Sustainability', which has been updated in line with changes to policy and guidance and case law, and the associated Appendix 18A 'Sustainability Review'. Table 3.1 confirms that Chapter 7 'Legislative Context' should be read in conjunction with updated Chapter 18, which sets out the changes to relevant legislation and planning policy relating to climate change and also Section 4.0 of the Additional Information Report. With regard to residual effects (revised Chapter 21 'Summary of Likely Significant Residual Effects' of the EIA Report), Table 3.1 states that in relation to GHG emissions (revised Chapter 18 'Climate Change and Sustainability'), the re-assessed significance of effect taking into account Scope 3 GHG emissions and the cumulative operations with the existing Power Station operating until 2040 is Moderate Adverse and Significant. While the residual effect remains as Moderate Adverse post mitigation, this is due to the emissions being likely to account for a growing proportion of the Scottish and UK Carbon Budget. However, it is considered that the Proposed Development remains entirely consistent with all relevant policy and good design guidance, and it will demonstrably reduce overall emissions as it can be expected to displace unabated generation from a comparable unabated gas-fired power station.

2.7. THE PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THIS DOCUMENT

2.7.1. The primary purpose of this Planning Statement is to assist the Scottish Ministers in their assessment of the Proposed Development by demonstrating how the Applicant has taken account of relevant policy, notably national energy and climate change policy and national, regional and local planning policy, and the extent to which the Proposed Development complies with those policies. The Planning Statement also has regard to any other relevant material considerations.

2.7.2. The Planning Statement sets out the key benefits of the Proposed Development, including the 'need' for it in terms of decarbonising electricity generation in Scotland and contributing toward the legally binding target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 (as well as the UK Government target of net zero by 2050), and provides an overview of the likely significant environmental effects reported in the EIA Report. Where relevant the Planning Statement cross references the relevant application documents that provide more detail on these matters.

2.7.3. The Planning Statement is structured as follows:

- **Section 3: Legislative Framework** – sets out the legislative framework for the Application.
- **Section 4: Planning History and Planning Designations** – provides an overview of the planning history and planning designations that apply to the Site.
- **Section 5: Energy and Climate Change Legislation and Policy** – provides an overview of relevant Scottish and UK energy, climate change legislation and policy, which establishes clear objectives for decarbonising the power and industrial sectors and achieving the legally binding commitments to achieve 'net zero' in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Section 6: National and Local Planning Policy** – sets out the national and local planning policy of relevance to the Proposed Development.

- **Section 7: Assessment of the Proposed Development** – provides an assessment of the Proposed Development having regard to energy and climate change legislation and policy, planning policy, the EIA undertaken, including updates and the additional information submitted, and any other material planning considerations.
- **Section 8: Conclusions** – sets out the conclusions of the Planning Statement.

3. Legislative Framework

3.1.1. This section of the Planning Statement outlines the legislative framework for the Application and its determination.

3.2. THE ELECTRICITY ACT 1989 AND SECTION 57 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997

3.2.1. As the Proposed Development comprises an electricity generating station with a gross electrical output in excess of 50 MW, consent to construct and operate the generating station must be obtained from the Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the 1989 Act.

3.2.2. When granting consent under Section 36 of the 1989 Act, the Scottish Ministers may also give a direction that planning permission be deemed to be granted, under Section 57(2) the TCP(S)A 1997.

3.2.3. The Application seeks consent for the generating station under Section 36 of the 1989 Act and also deemed planning permission under Section 57(2) of the TCP(S)A 1997 for the generating station and ancillary development. All of the elements of the generating station and the development that is ancillary to its construction and operation are set out in Section 2 of this Planning Statement and described in more detailed within Chapter 4 of the EIA Report.

3.2.4. Schedule 8 of the 1989 Act sets out procedural requirements for applications under Section 36. In particular the application must be in writing and describe by reference to a map the land to which the application relates.

3.2.5. Schedule 9, Paragraph 3, sub-paragraph (1) of the 1989 Act relates to the preservation of amenity and fisheries. It states that in preparing a Section 36 application the applicant shall have regard to:

> *"(a) …the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and*
>
> *(b) shall do what he reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects."*

3.2.6. Sub-paragraph (2) goes on to state that in considering a Section 36 application, the Scottish Ministers shall have regard to the desirability of the matters mentioned in sub-paragraph (1)(a) and the extent to which the applicant has complied with his duty under sub-paragraph (1)(b).

3.2.7. The determination of applications under Section 36 is primarily a matter of energy and climate change policy. However, other matters that may be relevant to the determination of a Section 36 application (particularly in the context of whether to deem planning permission to be granted under Section 57(2) of the 1997 Act) include statements of planning policy and the development plan.

3.2.8. In October and November 2024, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) consulted on a number of changes to electricity infrastructure consenting in Scotland. The UK Government has since issued a response to the consultation and has agreed a policy approach with the Scottish Government. The changes are aimed at streamlining the consenting regime and providing greater certainty while ensuring that local communicates are consulted at an early stage. The changes will require the introduction of new legislation and there will be transitional provision relating to applications already in the system.

3.2.9. It is important to recognise that the Applicant has undertaken extensive pre-application consultation on the Proposed Development. This included two stages of pre-application consultation. Stage 1

provided early information on the proposals and took place in May and early June 2021, while Stage 2 on the Applicant's more developed proposals took place from late August to early October 2021. The PAC Report, which forms part of the Application, details the consultation undertaken, the comments and feedback received and how regard was had to the comments and feedback received.

3.3. THE ELECTRICITY (APPLICATIONS FOR CONSENT) REGULATIONS 1990

3.3.1. The Electricity (Applications for Consent) Regulations 1990 (the '1990 Regulations') set out the requirements for Section 36 consent applications in terms of publicity and the submission of comments or objections by the relevant planning authority and other persons.

3.3.2. Regulation 4 'Publication of notice of application for consent under section 36', paragraph (1) requires notice of an application for consent under Section 36 to be published by the applicant for:

"(a) in two successive weeks in one or more local newspapers circulating in the locality in which the land to which the application relates is situated; and

(b) in the London Gazette, or in Scotland in the Edinburgh Gazette, and in one or more national newspapers."

3.3.3. Regulation 4, paragraph (2) states that a notice published in pursuance of paragraph (1) shall describe, by reference to a map, the land to which the application relates, and shall name a place within the locality in which such land is situated where such a map may be inspected.

3.3.4. At the time the Application was submitted, 'The Electricity Works (Miscellaneous Temporary Modifications) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020' (the 'Coronavirus Regulations') had temporarily suspended the requirement to deposit a map at a locality within the vicinity of the land to which an application relates, and instead required notice of an application and a map to be published on the relevant application website.

3.3.5. A notice publicising the Application was published pursuant to Regulation 4 of the 1990 Regulations in the following newspapers and publications in March 2022, following publication of the Application on the ECU portal:

- The Scotsman – 1 April 2022.
- The Edinburgh Gazette – 1 April 2022.
- The Buchan Observer – 5 and 12 April 2022.
- Press and Journal – 4 and 11 April 2022.

3.3.6. In addition to the above, a copy of the notice as published (including a map/plan showing the land to which the Application relates) and all the Application documents was published on the project website as an alternative to depositing them at a venue within the vicinity of the Site. The project website address is: https://www.ssethermal.com/flexible-generation/development/peterhead-carbon-capture/

3.3.7. Despite the temporary suspension of the requirement to deposit a hard copy of the Application at a location within the vicinity of the Site that was in place at the time, the Applicant also arranged for a copy of the Application to be available for inspection at Aberdeenshire Council, Buchan House, St. Peter Street, Peterhead, AB42 1QF.

3.3.8. The Applicant served notice of the Application on (and provided a USB device containing all of the Application documents) the relevant planning authority, Aberdeenshire Council, in addition to all of

the persons/parties on the List of Consultees, which forms part of the Application, on 1 April 2022. The List of Consultees had been agreed in advance with the ECU.

3.3.9. Regulation 8 'Objections by relevant planning authority' requires the relevant planning authority to serve notification of any objection by it to the application on the Scottish Ministers within 4 months of the date of the application, or within any longer period as may be agreed in writing by the authority with both the Scottish Ministers and the applicant.

3.3.10. Regulation 7 'Objections by other persons' provides persons other than the relevant planning authority with a minimum period of 28 days from the date or latest date of publication of the notice required by Regulation 4 to submit representations to the Scottish Ministers (the EIA Regulations – referred to below – require a minimum period of 30 days).

3.3.11. The notice publicising the Application gave a deadline of 13 May 2022 to submit any representation on the Application, a period of at least 30 days, starting with the day after the final notice was published in the newspapers.

3.4. THE ELECTRICITY WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017

3.4.1. The Proposed Development falls under Schedule 1 of The Electricity Works (EIA) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (the 'EIA Regulations') Category (2) being a *"thermal generating station with a heat output of 300 megawatts or more…"*. As such, the Proposed Development is 'EIA development' for the purposes of the EIA Regulations and an EIA Report (including Non-Technical Summary) has been prepared and forms part of the Application.

3.4.2. In advance of undertaking the EIA for the Proposed Development, the Applicant sought a scoping opinion from the Scottish Ministers pursuant to Regulation 12 of the EIA Regulations. The Applicant's request for a scoping opinion was submitted on 11 May 2021. The Scoping Opinion was issued by the Scottish Ministers on 29 July 2021. In accordance with Regulation 5(3) of the EIA Regulations the EIA Report is based upon the Scoping Opinion, and contains the information that may reasonably be required for reaching a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the Proposed Development on the environment, taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment. The Applicant's scoping opinion request and the Scoping Opinion can be found in Appendix 1A and Appendix 1B of the EIA Report.

3.4.3. Regulation 14 sets out the publicity requirements, where in relation to an EIA application, an applicant submits to the Scottish Ministers and EIA Report. The notice publicising the Application (see paragraphs 3.3.4, 3.3.5 and 3.3.9 above) will satisfy the requirements of Regulation 14 and provide the requisite period for the submission of any representations, being a period of at least 30 days after the last date on which the notice is published.

3.4.4. Regulation 16(1)(b) states that if an applicant sends a copy of the EIA report to any consultation body, the applicant must:

> *"(i) send with it a copy of the application to which the EIA report relates and of any plan submitted with it (unless those documents have already been sent to the consultation body in question);*
>
> *(ii) inform the consultation body that representations may be made to the Scottish Ministers; and*
>
> *(iii) inform the Scottish Ministers of the name of every consultation body to which the developer has sent a copy of the EIA report and the date on which the developer did so."*

3.4.5. The Applicant sent a copy of the Application documents (provided on a USB device) to Aberdeenshire Council and all of the persons/parties on the List of Consultees (that list having been agreed with

the ECU) accompanied by a copy of the notice, which confirmed the date (13 May 2022) for making representations to the Scottish Ministers on 1 April 2022.

3.4.6. Regulations 14 and 18 include requirements for hard copies of the EIA report to be made available for inspection at a location within the vicinity of the land to which the application relates. While those requirements were temporarily suspended (until 31 March 2022) as a result of the Coronavirus Regulations the Applicant arranged for a copy of the Application to be available for inspection at Aberdeenshire Council, Buchan House, St. Peter Street, Peterhead, AB42 1QF as well as being made available on the project website.

3.4.7. As confirmed in Section 2.0 (paragraphs 2.6.7 to 2.6.19), the Applicant submitted additional information for the purposes of the EIA Regulations to the Scottish Ministers in respect of the Application in February 2023, August 2023 and most recently in May 2025. The additional information has been notified to consultees and publicised in accordance with Regulation 20 'Publication of additional information' of the EIA Regulations.

4. Planning History and Planning Designations

4.1.1. This section provides an overview of the planning history of the Site and the planning and environmental designations that apply to it.

4.2. PLANNING HISTORY

4.2.1. The Peterhead Power Station site has an extensive planning history, a summary of which is provided below.

4.2.2. Consent was originally granted for Peterhead Power Station by the Secretary of State for Scotland on 29 March 1973. The consent was granted under Section 2 of 'The Electric Lighting Act 1909' (as amended by 'The Electricity Acts 1947 and 1957') and provided for the construction and operation of a generating plant with a gross electrical output of about 1,320 MW, comprising oil/gas fired boiler units and associated ancillary plant, buildings and civil engineering works, including an oil tank farm, an oil landing terminal jetty to be situated within Peterhead Harbour and an oil pipeline connecting the jetty to the oil tank farm.

4.2.3. The Power Station was originally designed to be oil-fired and first entered operation in 1980 but was subsequently refitted in 1982 for gas-firing. This included the installation of two conventional steam generating Rankine Cycle fired boilers (Units 1 and 2). The boilers were coupled to two 660 MW steam turbine generators.

4.2.4. On 5 June 1991 the Secretary of State granted consent under Section 36 of the 1989 Act (including deemed planning permission) for the extension of the Power Station through the construction of an additional demineralised water storage tank.

4.2.5. Between 1998 and 2000 a repowering project was undertaken to convert Peterhead Power Station into an efficient CCGT power station. The Power Station currently consists of three gas turbines, each with an associated Heat Recovery Steam Generator (HRSG). The steam from the HRSGs is routed to the original Unit 1 steam turbine – the three gas turbines and the steam turbine are together referred to as 'Block 1', which has a capacity of 1,180 MW.

4.2.6. The existing Power Station abstracts cooling water from Boddam Harbour to the south-east, and discharges cooling water via an outfall into Sandford Bay to the north-east.

4.2.7. All electrical output from Peterhead Power Station is exported to the existing electricity grid network via the existing 275kV SSEN Peterhead electricity substation located on the western side of the A90 from the Power Station site.

4.2.8. More recently, on 14 June 2007, the then Scottish Executive granted consent under Section 36 of the 1989 Act (including deemed planning permission) to construct and operate a power station fuelled by a hydrogen rich fuel stream on land adjacent to the existing Power Station. The new power station was proposed to have a capacity of up to 550 MW with natural gas being used to create hydrogen. The CO_2 resulting from the hydrogen production was to be captured and transported to the St. Fergus Gas Terminal for transport offshore via an existing pipeline to the Millar Platform for injection into the Millar oil field so as to achieve enhanced oil recovery. This project did not progress.

4.2.9. On 3 July 2015 planning permission was granted for the construction and operation of a post-combustion CCP and ancillary works linked to one of Power Station's gas turbines. The CCP would have captured and compressed CO_2 emissions from the gas turbine with the CO_2 then being transported via pipeline for storage in Shell's depleted Golden Eye gas reservoir. It was proposed

to capture up to 1Mt CO_2 per annum from the Power Station. The project did not proceed following the UK Government's decision in November 2015 to cancel its £1 billion CCS fund.

4.3. PLANNING DESIGNATIONS

4.3.1. The National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), adopted on 13 February 2023 identifies the Site as forming part of 'National Development 15', which comprises two 'Industrial Green Transition Zones' (IGTZ) – the 'Scottish Cluster' and the 'Grangemouth Investment Zone'. The Site lies within the Scottish Cluster IGTZ.

4.3.2. NPF4 confirms under 'Need' that the national development is required to meet the Scottish Government's targets for emissions reduction and will support a just transition by creating new jobs in emerging technologies and significant economic opportunities for lower carbon industry. It also identifies 'designations and classes of development' that are appropriate to the Scottish Cluster, which include thermal power generating capacity with carbon capture and storage technology.

4.3.3. The Site lies within the administrative area of Aberdeenshire Council. The local development plan for the area is the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (LDP), adopted 13 January 2023. The LDP confirms that the Site lies within the 'Aberdeen to Peterhead Strategic Growth Area', which is to be the main focus for development, including substantial housing, in the area up to 2040 and also the 'Energetica Corridor', the latter being a development initiative along the coastal zone between Aberdeen and Peterhead to create *"…a world-class business and residential location within a high-quality environmental setting".* In addition, the Site lies within the Peterhead (Boddam) Regeneration Priority Area. It is also identified in the LDP for thermal power generation and CCS.

4.3.4. Environmental designations relating to the Site or in close proximity to it, including statutory ecological designations, are set out Chapter 3 'Site and Surrounding Area' of the EIA Report. The nearest ecological designations (see Table 3-1 of EIA Report Chapter 3) are:

- Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) – The Site lies adjacent to the boundary with the cooling water intake and outfall being in the SPA.
- Buchan Ness to Collieston Special Area for Conservation (SAC) – The northern boundary of the SAC is approximately 750 m to the south of the Site. It is separated from the Site by the settlement of Boddam.

4.3.5. Three core footpaths are located adjacent to and within the Site.

4.3.6. Areas in the centre and east of the Site are identified by SEPA Flood Map as being at medium risk to fluvial and pluvial flooding. Medium risk is classified as having a 0.5% chance of flooding each year, showing parts of the existing Power Station together with the access route and the junction of the A90 into the Site to be at risk of flooding during extreme fluvial and pluvial flood events.

4.3.7. In terms of designated heritage assets, there is one Category B listed building within the northern part of the Site boundary, known as Sandford Lodge, and one Category C listed building associated with Sandford Lodge, comprising its walled garden.

5. Energy and Climate Change Legislation and Policy

5.1.1. This section of the Planning Statement provides an overview of Scottish energy and climate change legislation and policy, which establishes clear objectives for decarbonising the power and industrial sectors in Scotland and achieving the legally binding commitment to achieve net zero in terms of greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.

5.1.2. Energy policy is a reserved matter under 'The Scotland Act 1998'. Where appropriate, regard has therefore been had to UK Government energy and climate change policy, which can be relevant to the determination of the applications by the Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the 1989 Act.

5.2. THE CLIMATE CHANGE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2009 & CLIMATE CHANGE (EMISSIONS REDUCTION TARGETS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2024

5.2.1. Part 1 of 'The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009' (the 'Climate Change Act') introduced a statutory framework for greenhouse gas emissions reductions in Scotland initially by setting an interim 42% reduction target for 2020, with the power for this to be varied based on expert advice (provided by the UK Committee on Climate Change), and an 80% reduction target for 2050. Part 1 of the Climate Change Act also requires Scottish Ministers to set annual targets, set out in secondary legislation, for Scottish emissions from 2010 to 2050.

5.2.2. In April 2019, Scotland became one of the first nations in the World to declare a climate emergency, seeking to place climate change at the heart of all policy decisions and actions. Following the First Minister's declaration of a climate emergency, amendments to the Climate Change Act were passed by the Scottish Parliament through 'The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019', which set a net zero emissions target for Scotland by 2045. This amendment to the Climate Change Act also set more ambitious emissions reduction targets for 2020 (56% reduction), 2030 (75% reduction) and 2040 (90% reduction).

5.2.3. The targets set by the Scottish legislation are more ambitious than those set by the UK Government, which is targeting net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

5.2.4. 'The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2024' amends the Climate Change Act to replace the existing system of annual and interim emissions reduction targets with a system of 5-yearly carbon budgets to 2045, although at the time of updating this Planning Statement these budgets are still to be set, and the previous annual targets remain in force.

5.2.5. Projects such as the Proposed Development therefore have a major role to play in the Scottish Government achieving its greenhouse gas emissions target.

5.3. THE FUTURE OF ENERGY IN SCOTLAND: SCOTTISH ENERGY STRATEGY, DECEMBER 2017 (SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT)

5.3.1. 'The Future of Energy in Scotland: Scottish Energy Strategy' (December 2017) sets out the Scottish Government's vision for the future energy system in Scotland. The Strategy identifies a number of key energy priorities such as promoting 'Renewable and local carbon solutions' as well as exploiting 'Oil and gas industry strengths' by supporting investment, innovation and diversifications across the oil and gas sector, including through the development of the potential carbon capture and storage (CCS) resource that has been created by these industries in the North Sea.

5.3.2. Chapter 1 of the Strategy 'A 2050 Vision for Energy in Scotland' confirms that a diverse, well-balanced energy supply portfolio or 'energy mix' will remain essential as Scotland decarbonises, providing the basis for secure and affordable heat, mobility and power in future decades (page 11).

5.3.3. Chapter 3 'Scotland's Route to 2050' sets out various targets, priorities and actions for Scotland's energy system, including the need to ensure system security and flexibility. It notes (page 57) that while renewables will play a huge part in meeting Scotland's future energy needs, there will be roles too for other sources and technologies, including thermal generation with carbon capture. It goes onto state (also page 57):

"Scotland needs a balanced and secure electricity supply. That means a system and a range of technologies which provide sufficient generation and interconnection to meet demand. It means an electricity network which is resilient and sufficiently secure against any fluctuations or interruptions to supply.

For example, efficient and flexible gas-fired generation is a natural complement to a high renewables future – especially when fitted with CCS technology. Gas-fired generation can be scheduled and controlled, meaning that it can be instructed to power up or down depending on rising or falling demand. It provides "inertia", helping to maintain a stable frequency across the network and increasing its resilience."

5.3.4. The Proposed Development will clearly complement and support a high renewables future in Scotland by providing efficient, flexible, low carbon gas-fired generation that will underpin the security of electricity supplies.

5.3.5. The Strategy goes onto stress (page 65) that Scotland's waters provide the largest carbon storage resource in Europe and that it is well placed to realise CCS at commercial scale providing the opportunity to decarbonise power generation and industry.

5.4. THE CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN: THIRD REPORT ON PROPOSALS AND POLICIES 2018 – 2032, FEBRUARY 2018 (SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT)

5.4.1. 'The Climate Change Plan' sets out the path to a low carbon economy while helping to deliver sustainable economic growth and secure the wider benefits to a greener, fairer and healthier Scotland in 2032. The Plan covers a number of 'sector pathways' including electricity; buildings; transport; industry; waste; land use, land use change and forestry; and agriculture.

5.4.2. Part 1 of the Climate Change Plan (page 24) covers Scotland's decarbonisation pathway to 2032. It states that by 2032, Scotland's energy system will be largely decarbonised and be increasingly important as a power source for heat and transport. It states (page 24):

"Emissions reduction and security of supply will be ensured through diverse generation technologies, including gas generation, increased storage, smart grid technologies and improved interconnection. While Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is not a requirement until after 2030, it remains a key technology, supported by the Scottish Government, to meet our long-term emissions reduction targets."

5.4.3. Chapter 1 'Electricity' (page 75) notes that as part of developing a range of technologies in Scotland that aid system security, flexibility and resilience, CCS paired with natural gas, has the potential to be used in future to provide low carbon flexible power generation.

5.4.4. Again, the important future role of projects such as the Proposed Development in ensuring the security, flexibility and resilience of electricity supplies, while contributing to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is recognised by policy.

5.4.5. The Scottish Government published an update to the Climate Change Plan in December 2020. This continues to highlight the potential role of CCS in delivering negative emissions in the electricity system by 2032. It also calls on the UK Government to put clear measures and a stable policy environment in place to support the commercialisation of such technologies.

5.5. THE ENERGY STRATEGY: POSITION STATEMENT, MARCH 2021 (SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT)

5.5.1. 'The Energy Strategy: Position Statement', published in March 2021 was intended to provide a clear view of the Scottish Government's policies in relation to energy in advance of COP21 in November 2021. It reinforces a commitment to remain guided by the key principles set out in Scotland's Energy Strategy (December 2017) and sets out a number of key priorities for the short to medium-term.

5.5.2. A key priority under 'Energy Transition' (page 9) is to invest in decarbonisation projects and the document announces a new £180m 'Emerging Energy Technologies Fund' to support the development of CCS/CCUS and other 'Net Emissions Technologies'.

5.5.3. Chapter 6 'Maximising Scotland's International Potential' states that Scotland's Energy Strategy identifies internationalism as a key area as Scotland transitions to net zero. The development of CCS/CCUS is identified as one key priority area for international collaboration (page 18).

5.5.4. Chapter 8 'Support for Industries and Sectors across the Energy Landscape' includes a section on the oil and gas sector (page 24). It highlights the wealth of skills and expertise in this sector that can be drawn upon to support key aspects of decarbonisation such as CCUS, which in turn will transition works from high carbon to activities that are more consistent with delivering Scotland's net zero target. It goes onto state (page 25):

"The Scottish Government supports the development of a Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) network that can utilise the vast storage potential presented by the geology of the North Sea. It is clear that CCUS will play an important role in helping us to reach net-zero emissions; advice from the Committee on Climate Change describes CCS as a "necessity, not an option" to achieve this goal.

CCS will play a central role across the decarbonisation strategies of key sectors such as heat, industry and power, underpinning the production of low-carbon hydrogen and developing negative emissions technologies, such as bioenergy with CCS (BECCS) and direct air capture and storage (DACS), that the committee for climate change that the Committee on Climate Change and our own Climate Change Plan describe as essential to meet net zero in 2045.

Last year, alongside publication of our Climate Change Plan update, we announced the aforementioned Emerging Energy Technologies Fund to support the development of hydrogen and CCS, and which will add new impetus to the development of NETs. Projects supporting the development of CCS and NETs can access £80 million of the overall total of £180 million in the fund, with the direction of funding being supported by work in 2021 to undertake a NETs feasibility study and a CCUS economic impact assessment.

Utilising legacy oil and gas infrastructure, skills and knowledge, CCUS projects have the potential to secure existing jobs as well as delivering new ones, in a developing supply chain. If successful, existing industries, which are currently some of Scotland's largest carbon emitters will be able to move to a sustainable business model actively supporting and reducing Scotland's emissions."

5.5.5. The Energy Strategy: Position Statement therefore underlines the Scottish Government's support for CCS/CCUS, the importance of this technology in helping Scotland reach net zero emissions and its role in affecting a transition in the oil and gas sector by utilising legacy infrastructure and drawing upon existing skills and expertise).

5.5.6. The Proposed Development has a major part to play in demonstrating CCS/CCUS at a commercial scale and along with the Acorn Project will take advantage of the carbon storage resource that exists offshore in the North Sea, while utilising legacy oil and gas infrastructure, skills and knowledge and promoting and supporting economic growth in Scotland.

5.5.7. The Scottish Government published a draft 'Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan' for consultation in January 2023. While much of the focus of this draft document is on renewable energy it acknowledges the role low carbon technologies such as CCUS and states that the deployment of CCUS for the Scottish Cluster must demonstrate decarbonisation at pace.

5.6. A FAIRER, GREENER SCOTLAND: PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT 2021-22, SEPTEMBER 2021 (SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT)

5.6.1. This document sets out the Scottish Government's programme for government, including key actions, one of which it to 'Secure a Net Zero Nation' ending Scotland's contribution to climate changes, restoring nature and enhancing climate change resilience.

5.6.2. Chapter 3 'A Net Zero Nation' (page 52) refers to the Scottish Government's Energy Transition Programme, which is aimed at funding industry to play a leading role in the development and deployment of new, low carbon technologies, and to support the development of hydrogen and CCS/CCUS. Support for such technologies also includes (page 63) the £180m Emerging Energy Technologies Fund. The document confirms that the Scottish Government is committed to supporting these technologies as part of the energy transition.

5.7. THE TEN POINT PLAN FOR A GREEN INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, NOVEMBER 2020 (UK GOVERNMENT)

5.7.1. 'The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution – Building back better, supporting green jobs, and accelerating out path to net zero', is aimed at delivering a 'Green Industrial Revolution' in the UK, with the foreword by the then Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, stating that the Ten Point Plan will seek to mobilise £12 billion of government investment and potentially three times as much from the private sector, to create and support up to 250,000 green jobs.

5.7.2. The Introduction to the Ten Point Plan (pages 5 to 6) states that:

> *"We will generate new clean power with offshore wind farms, nuclear plants and by investing up to half a billion pounds in new hydrogen technologies. We will use this energy to carry on living our lives, running our cars, buses, trucks and trains, ships and planes, and heating our homes while keeping bills low. And to the extent that we still emit carbon, we will pioneer a new British industry dedicated to its capture and return to under the North Sea…"*

5.7.3. The 'Ten Points' of the Plan are summarised at page 7 of the document. Point 8 is 'Investing in Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage' (CCUS) and is dealt with at pages 22 – 23 of the Plan. It states that CCUS will be an exciting new industry to capture the carbon we continue to emit and revitalise the birthplaces of the first Industrial Revolution. It states that the UK Government's ambition is to capture 10Mt of CO_2 a year by 2030, the equivalent of four million cars' worth of annual emissions. It goes on to set out the Government's commitment to invest up to £1 billion to support

the establishment of CCUS in four industrial clusters, creating 'SuperPlaces' in areas such as the North East, the Humber, North West, Scotland and Wales. Page 24 highlights the function and necessity of CCUS in achieving a green economy and the Government's commitment to establish CCUS in two industrial clusters by the mid-2020s:

"CCUS technology captures carbon dioxide from power generation, low carbon hydrogen production and industrial processes, storing it deep underground where it cannot enter the atmosphere. This technology will be globally necessary, but no one country has yet captured the market. The UK has an unrivalled asset – our North Sea, that can be used to store captured carbon under the seabed. Developing CCUS infrastructure will contribute to the economic transformation of the UK's industrial regions, enhancing the long-term competitiveness of UK industry in a global net zero economy. It will help decarbonise our most challenging sectors, provide low carbon power and a pathway to negative emissions. We will establish CCUS in two industrial clusters by mid 2020s, and aim for four of these sites by 2030, capturing up to 10 Mt of carbon dioxide per year. Developed alongside hydrogen, we can create these transformative "SuperPlaces" in areas such as the heart of the North East, the Humber, North West and in Scotland and Wales. Our £1 billion CCUS Infrastructure Fund will provide industry with the certainty required to deploy CCUS at pace and at scale. These clusters will be the starting point for a new carbon capture industry, which could support up to 50,000 jobs in the UK by 2030, including a sizeable export potential. Alongside this, we will bring forward details in 2021 of a revenue mechanism to bring through private sector investment in industrial carbon capture and hydrogen projects, to provide the certainty investors require."

5.7.4. The UK Government has since set out its ambition to have four CCS/CCUS clusters capable of capturing and storing a combined total of 20 to 30 million tonnes of CO_2 per year by 2030 and in July 2023 announced that the Scottish Cluster would move forward to the next stage of deployment as a 'Track 2 cluster' as part of the Government's CCUS cluster sequencing programme.

5.7.5. The Proposed Development represents an important component in the development of a Scottish CCS/CCUS cluster on the east coast, taking advantage of existing oil and gas infrastructure and the proximity to the vast offshore carbon storage resource in the North Sea. It is therefore clearly consistent with the Ten Point Plan and the objective of developing CCUS as a new industry within the UK.

5.8. THE ENERGY WHITE PAPER: POWERING OUR NET ZERO FUTURE, DECEMBER 2020 (UK GOVERNMENT)

5.8.1. 'The Energy White Paper – Powering our Net Zero Future' (the 'EWP'), was presented to the UK Parliament in December 2020 and builds on the Ten Point Plan. At the core of the EWP is the commitment to achieve net zero and tackle climate change. The EWP seeks to put in place a strategy for the wider energy system that transforms energy, supports a green recovery and creates a fair deal for consumers (page 4). As with the Ten Point Plan, the EWP confirms the UK Government's support for CCUS drawing upon the resource provided by the North Sea.

5.8.2. The Government estimates (Introduction, page 15) that the measures in the EWP could reduce emissions across power, industry and buildings by up to 230Mt CO_2 in the period to 2032 and enable further savings in other sectors such as transport. In doing so, these measures could support up to 220,000 jobs per year by 2030. These figures include the energy measures from the Ten Point Plan as well as additional measures set out in the EWP. However, the EWP recognises that more will need to be done to meet key milestones on the journey to net zero.

5.8.3. The EWP (pages 16 to 17) provides an overview of the Government's key policies and commitments to put the UK on the course to net zero. These are grouped under a number of headings, including 'Transform Energy', 'Support a Green Recovery from Covid-19' and 'Creating a Fair Deal for Consumers'. Those of particular relevance to the Proposed Development are:

"TRANSFORM ENERGY

Supporting the deployment of CCUS in four industrial clusters including at least one power CCUS project, to be operational by 2030 and putting in place the commercial frameworks required to help stimulate the market to deliver a future pipeline of CCUS projects.

SUPPORT A GREEN RECOVERY FROM COVID-19

Increasing the ambition in our Industrial Clusters Mission four-fold, aiming to deliver four low-carbon clusters by 2030 and at least one fully net zero cluster by 2040.

Investing £1 billion up to 2025 to facilitate the deployment of CCUS in two industrial clusters by the mid-2020s, and a further two clusters by 2030, supporting our ambition to capture 10Mt per year by the end of the decade."

5.8.4. The Proposed Development is fully in accordance with the UK Government's key policies and commitments to transform energy as, subject to consents and funding, it has the potential to deliver efficient, flexible gas-fired generation with CCS as part of the Scottish Cluster in the early 2030s.

5.8.5. Chapter 2 of the EWP deals with 'Power' with the stated goal being to use electricity to enable the transition away from fossil fuels and decarbonise the economy cost-effectively by 2050. Figure 3.2 'Electricity demand, Net Zero scenarios' (page 42) highlights how electricity demand could double by 2050 as electricity replaces the use of petrol and diesel in transport and to some extent, gas for heating. This would require a four-fold increase in clean electricity generation with the decarbonisation of electricity being required to underpin the delivery of the net zero target.

5.8.6. Despite the push to increase clean electricity generation and decarbonise the power sector, the EWP states that the UK Government is not targeting a particular generation mix by 2050 and its view remains that the electricity market should determine the best solutions for very low emissions and reliable supply, at a low cost to consumers (page 42). While the EWP (page 43) states that a low-cost, net zero consistent system is likely to be composed predominantly of wind and solar, in order to ensure the system is reliable, it recognises that the system needs to be complemented by technologies which provide power when the wind is not blowing, or the sun does not shine. This includes natural gas with CCS and short-term dispatchable generation providing peaking capacity, which can be flexed as required. Figure 3.4 of the EWP (page 44) details different potential electricity mixes to 2050 and it is notable that gas with CCS is an important component of those mixes.

5.8.7. CCUS is dealt with in further detail at pages 125 and 126 of the EWP. It stresses how the UK is in a strong position to become a global technology leader in CCUS with the potential to store 78 billion tonnes of CO_2. Furthermore, deployment of CCUS could create new markets for UK businesses, at home and abroad, as other countries look to meet their emissions reduction commitments and could support 50,000 jobs in UK by 2030.

5.9. NORTH SEA TRANSITION DEAL, MARCH 2021 (DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS, ENERGY & INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY AND OGUK)

5.9.1. 'The North Sea Deal' is a transformational sector deal for the offshore oil and gas sector in recognition of the key role that it can play in helping the UK meets its net zero commitments. The document recognises (Foreword, page 6) that with declining output of hydrocarbons from the UK Continental Shelf (UKCS) and a projected decline in domestic demand, there is a clear need for determined action to be taken to build on the proven capabilities and skills within the existing sector to support the transition to net zero. It continues:

"The UK already has the capability and skills within the existing sector to lead in new and emerging energy technologies such as Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage (CCUS) and the hydrogen economy as well as to support the growth of new sectors such as offshore wind.

… Delivering large-scale decarbonisation solutions will strengthen the position of the existing UK energy sector supply chain in a net zero world, securing new high-value jobs in the UK, supporting the development of regional economies and competing in clean energy export markets."

5.9.2. The Executive Summary (page 8) states that the North Sea Deal is aimed a delivering on the commitments set out in the oil and gas chapter of the EWP and is closely aligned with the Ten Point Plan. It does this through the implementation of a number of commitments and measures, including supporting up to 40,000 direct and indirect supply chain jobs in decarbonising UKCS production and the CCUS and hydrogen sectors.

5.9.3. The North Sea Deal is built on five key outcomes. These are seen as being closely interlinked, meaning that they must be delivered as an integrated whole for the Deal to achieve its full potential. These include:

- CCUS – a commitment to deploy of two CCUS clusters by the mid-2020s and a further two by 2030. This commitment aims to unlock investment of £2-3 billion in CCUS transport and storage infrastructure from the sector to underpin widespread roll out. The sector's experience and capabilities offshore will enable efficiencies and cost reductions to be achieved as new CCUS projects are executed.
- Supply chain transformation – the North Sea Deal will focus on supporting the transformation of the oil and gas supply chain to service low-carbon energy sectors. The UK's energy supply chain should be competitively positioned to seize the opportunities present by offshore electrification, CCUS and hydrogen both in the domestic market and internationally.
- People & skills – the North Sea Deal will support up to 40,000 high-quality direct and indirect supply chain jobs. Many of the skills present in the oil and gas sector are transferable across the wider energy sector. Offshore renewables, as well as a future CCUS industry will rely heavily on many of the current skillsets in the oil and gas industry.

5.9.4. The Proposed Development clearly aligns with the commitments and intended outcomes of the North Sea Deal. It will form an important component of a Scottish CCS/CCUS cluster that has the potential to draw upon the oil and gas sector's experience and capabilities, affecting supply chain transformation and safeguarding existing jobs and supporting the creation of new employment.

5.10. NET ZERO STRATEGY: BUILD BACK GREENER, OCTOBER 2021 (DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS, ENERGY & INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY)

5.10.1. The 'Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener' published in October 2021 (and updated in April 2022) expands on key commitments in the Ten Point Plan and the EWP and sets out the next steps the UK Government proposes to take to cut emissions, seize green economic opportunities and leverage further private investment in net zero. The Net Zero Strategy sets an indicative delivery pathway for emission reductions to 2037 by sector. It is intended to put the UK on the path for the Sixth Carbon Budget and ultimately on course for net zero by 2050.

5.10.2. Regarding power, the Net Zero Strategy states that the UK will fully decarbonise its power system by 2035 subject to security of supply. It states that the power system will consist of abundant, cheap renewables, cutting edge new nuclear power stations, underpinned by flexibility including storage, gas with CCS and hydrogen (page 19). It therefore clearly identifies a role for new abated gas-fired generation as part of a diverse and decarbonised energy system that is resilient and provides for security of supply.

5.11. BRITISH ENERGY SECURITY STRATEGY, APRIL 2022 (DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS, ENERGY & INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY)

5.11.1. In April 2022, the UK Government published its 'British Energy Security Strategy' policy paper, which reiterates the Government's commitment to invest £1 billion in CCUS technology, helping to decarbonise our industrial clusters.

5.11.2. The British Energy Security Strategy states that *"…gas is currently the glue that holds our electricity system together and it will be an important transition fuel"* and states that billions of pounds are set to be invested by the industry in the development of nascent clean technologies such as carbon capture.

5.12. POWERING UP BRITAIN, MARCH 2023 (DEPARTMENT FOR ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO)

5.12.1. In March 2023, the UK Government published its 'Powering Up Britain' policy paper, accompanied by a 'Energy Security Plan' and a 'Net Zero Growth Plan'. The three documents provide details on the UK Government's measures to increase domestic energy production, resilience in the energy supply and achieve net zero.

5.12.2. The Energy Security Plan re-iterates continued support for the CCS/CCUS industry, including projects across the hydrogen, power, industry and waste sectors. It also underlines the importance of delivering flexibility on the supply side through power CCUS amongst other technologies.

5.12.3. The Net Zero Growth Plan stresses CCUS is of central importance to decarbonising the UK economy and will enable flexible low carbon electricity generation to complement other forms of low carbon power. It also states that CCUS forms part of the most cost-effective route to net zero, and represents a significant economic opportunity, with the potential to support up to 50,000 jobs by 2030 and deliver £4.3 billion in GVA by 2050 through exports.

5.12.4. The Net Zero Growth Plan also highlights that the UK has one of the largest potential CO_2 storage capacities in Europe and sets significant targets for deployment of CCUS. This includes CCUS in

two industrial clusters by the mid-2020s and four clusters by 2030, with the aim of capturing and storing 20-30Mt CO_2 per year by 2030.

5.13. CLEAN POWER 2030 ACTION PLAN, DECEMBER 2024 (DEPARTMENT FOR ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO)

5.13.1. More recently (December 2024), the new UK Labour Government published its 'Clean Power 2030 Action Plan: A new era of clean electricity'. The Action Plan (Summary, page 10) is aimed at delivering a new era of clean energy independence and tackling three major challenges: the need for a secure and affordable energy supply; the creation of essential new energy industries, supported by skilled workers in their thousands; and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit our contribution to the damaging effects of climate change. It states that successful delivery will require rapid deployment of new clean energy capacity across the whole of the UK, including significant amounts of wind and solar power, complemented by flexible capacity, including gas-fired generation with CCUS (page 11).

5.13.2. A key theme of the Action Plan is 'Ensuring energy security' (pages 23 and 24), recognising that it is crucial we complement renewables with flexible capacity to ensure we can deliver clean power no matter the weather. The Action Plan sets out a pathway toward deploying low carbon flexible capacity technologies, including power CCUS, which provide round the clock reliable power. The importance of gas capacity (including gas with CCUS) in maintaining security of supply is further recognised at page 29 in considering what a clean power system could look like in 2030.

5.13.3. The Action Plan considers 'Long-duration flexibility' from page 108 onwards. It recognises that such flexibility can add significant value to the energy system and provide a secure supply of electricity during extended periods of low renewables output. It highlights that there are a number of innovative low carbon technologies such as power CCUS capable of replicating the role of unabated gas. The Action Plan estimates that 40 to 50 GW of dispatchable and long-duration flexible capacity could be needed by 2030 to deliver a resilient clean power system.

5.13.4. Page 111 of the Action Plan notes that power CCUS plants present a great opportunity for low carbon long-duration flexibility. Power CCUS, which is natural gas fuelled generation equipped with carbon capture technology, can provide non-weather-dependent, dispatchable low carbon generation that will support a renewables-based 2030 system. The power CCUS business model, known as the Dispatchable Power Agreement (DPA), has been designed to ensure that power CCUS plays a valuable role, dispatching behind renewables, but ahead of unabated gas generation. The DPA will enable both new build projects, such as the Proposed Development, and the retrofit of existing plants which will be key to enabling the transition away from unabated gas. As well as supporting the clean power mission, the Action Plan recognises that CCUS is vital to decarbonising a range of industrial sectors and the deployment of negative emission projects.

5.14. NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENTS FOR ENERGY, JANUARY 2024 (DEPARTMENT FOR ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO

5.14.1. Revised National Policy Statements (NPSs) for energy infrastructure were published by the UK Government on 22 November 2023 and came into force on 17 January 2024. The new UK Labour Government has recently published a number of consultation draft NPSs but these are not adopted policy and have not been considered further within this Planning Statement.

5.14.2. The adopted NPSs form the primary basis of decisions by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero in England and Wales on nationally significant energy infrastructure projects that require development consent under the Planning Act 2008.

5.14.3. Regarding the applicability of the NPSs in Scotland, paragraph 1.4.2 of the Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1) stated that:

"In Scotland and in those areas of the REZ where Scottish Ministers have functions, the Secretary of State will have no functions under the Planning Act 2008 in relation to consenting energy infrastructure projects except as set out in this Section [Section 1]. However, energy policy is generally a matter reserved to UK Ministers and this NPS may therefore be a relevant consideration in planning decisions in Scotland."

5.14.4. It is therefore clear that the NPSs for energy can be relevant to decisions made by the Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the 1989 Act.

5.14.5. The need that exists for new low carbon electricity generation projects in the UK, such as the Proposed Development, is confirmed in NPS EN-1. This is considered further below.

5.14.6. Section 2.2 of EN-1 confirms the UK Government's legally binding target of achieving net zero in terms of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, as enshrined in law by the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019.

5.14.7. Section 2.3 'Meeting net zero' of EN-1 underlines how the provision of new energy infrastructure will be critical to the UK achieving net zero by 2050, while maintaining adequate, secure and reliable energy supplies and supporting economic growth. Paragraph 2.3.3 confirms the UK Government's objectives for the energy system, which are to ensure our supply of energy always remains secure, reliable, affordable and consistent with meeting the UK's target to cut GHG emissions to net zero by 2050. It states that this will require a step change in the decarbonisation of our energy system. Paragraph 2.3.4 goes onto state:

"Meeting these objectives necessitates a significant amount of energy infrastructure, both large and small-scale. This includes the infrastructure needed to convert primary sources of energy (e.g. wind) into energy carriers (e.g. electricity or hydrogen), and to store and transport them into and around the country. It also includes the infrastructure needed to capture, transport and store carbon dioxide. The requirement for new energy infrastructure will present opportunities for the UK and contributes towards our ambition to support jobs in the UK's clean energy industry and local supply chains."

5.14.8. Paragraph 2.3.6 of EN-1 underlines the need to transform the energy system by:

"… tackling emissions while continuing to ensure secure and reliable supply, and affordable bills for households and businesses. This includes increasing our supply of clean energy from renewables, nuclear and hydrogen manufactured using low carbon processes (low carbon hydrogen), and, where we still emit carbon, developing the industry and infrastructure to capture, transport and store it."

5.14.9. EN-1 therefore underlines the importance of technologies such as CCS/CCUS in decarbonising power generation and industry to achieve net zero by 2050. Furthermore, Section 2.4 'Decarbonising the power sector' of EN-1 sets out how the UK Government is developing business models and commercial frameworks to incentivise and support developers to finance the construction and operation of power stations with carbon capture (paragraph 2.4.5 *"power CCUS"*) and how for power CCUS, it will introduce the Dispatchable Power Agreement Business Model, to incentivise power CCUS to play a role in the electricity system which complements renewables and nuclear.

5.14.10. Section 2.5 'Security of energy supplies' confirms the vital role of energy to economic prosperity and social well-being. Paragraph 2.5.1 states that:

"Given the vital role of energy to economic prosperity and social well-being, it is important that our supplies of energy remain secure, reliable and affordable."

5.14.11. Paragraph 2.5.2 highlights how the UK has highly diverse and flexible sources of gas supply and a diverse electricity mix, which ensures that households, businesses and heavy industry get the energy they need. This underlines the role gas-fired electricity generation with carbon capture has to play as part of a diverse energy mix, complementing the renewables and nuclear.

5.14.12. Part 3 of EN-1 covers 'The need for new nationally significant energy infrastructure projects'. It sets out why the UK Government sees a need for significant amounts of new large-scale energy infrastructure to meet its energy objectives and why it considers that the need for such infrastructure will often be urgent (paragraphs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2). It also notes at paragraph 3.1.2 that it will not be possible to develop the necessary amounts of such infrastructure without some significant residual adverse impacts. It goes on to state that:

"These impacts will be minimised by the application of policy set out in Parts 4 'Assessment Principles' and 5 'Generic Impacts' of EN-1 as well as Part 2 of each technology specific NPS."

5.14.13. Section 3.2 provides guidance on SoS decision-making. Paragraph 3.2.1 confirms that the UK Government's objectives for the energy system are to ensure that supplies of energy always remain secure, reliable, affordable and consistent with net zero emissions by 2050. Paragraph 3.2.2 continues by stating that the UK needs a range of different types of energy infrastructure, while paragraph 3.2.3 states that it is for industry to propose new infrastructure within the strategic framework set by the government. It also states that it is not appropriate for planning policy to set limits on different technologies (paragraph 3.2.4) and that a large number of consented projects and a diversity of supply can aid greater efficiency and affordability.

5.14.14. Importantly, Section 3.2 confirms (paragraphs 3.2.6 to 3.2.8) that decision makers should assess applications for the types of infrastructure covered by EN-1 on the basis that the UK Government has demonstrated that there is a need for those types of infrastructure which is urgent; that substantial weight should be given to that need; and that the decision maker is not required to consider separately the specific contribution of any individual project to satisfying that need.

5.14.15. In considering 'The need for new nationally significant electricity infrastructure' (Section 3.3), EN-1 notes (paragraph 3.3.1) that electricity meets a significant proportion of our overall energy needs and our reliance on it will increase as we transition toward net zero. It goes onto state that we need to ensure that there is sufficient electricity to always meet demand; with a margin to accommodate unexpectedly high demand and to mitigate risks such as unexpected plant closures and extreme weather events. Furthermore (paragraph 3.3.2), the larger the margin, the more resilient the system will be in dealing with unexpected events, and consequently the lower the risk of supply interruption.

5.14.16. The role of gas-fired plants with CCS/CCUS in contributing toward meeting this need is acknowledged at paragraph 3.3.44 of EN-1:

"Combined Cycle Gas Turbines (CCGTs) using natural gas can be equipped with CCS which is intended to reduce emissions compared to unabated gas-fired plants by 90 per cent or more."

5.14.17. Paragraph 3.3.44 also notes that CCGTs can provide flexible generation that is able to ramp up or down to meet demand.

5.14.18. Paragraph 3.3.59 confirms that all of the generating technologies mentioned in EN-1, including gas-fired plants with CCS/CCUS are urgently needed to meet the UK Government's energy objectives by providing security of supply; providing an affordable, reliable energy system and ensuring the system is net zero. Paragraph 3.3.61 goes onto state that the need for all these types of infrastructure is established by EN-1 and a combination of many or all of them is urgently required for both energy security and net zero.

5.14.19. Section 3.3 (paragraphs 3.3.62 to 3.3.63) confirms that the UK Government has concluded that there is a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure. Section 4.2 of EN-1 states which energy generating technologies are low carbon and are therefore CNP infrastructure (Section 4.2, paragraph 4.2.5, bullet point one, confirms that CNP infrastructure includes natural gas-fired generation which is carbon capture ready). Subject to any legal requirements, the urgent need for CNP infrastructure, in achieving the UK's energy objectives, together with the national security, economic, commercial, and net zero benefits, will in general outweigh any other residual impacts not capable of being addressed by application of the mitigation hierarchy in all but the most exceptional cases. Paragraph 3.3.63 goes onto state that the UK Government strongly supports the delivery of CNP infrastructure and it that should be progressed as quickly as possible.

5.14.20. Section 3.4 of EN-1 sets out the need for new nationally significant gas infrastructure and at paragraphs 3.4.10 to 3.4.11 underlines its role in delivering affordable decarbonisation. Paragraph 3.4.11 states that this:

"… means retaining the capability for using natural gas for low carbon dispatchable output in power stations equipped with CCS..."

5.14.21. Section 3.5 of EN-1 deals with 'The need for new nationally significant carbon capture and storage infrastructure'. Paragraph 3.5.1 notes that:

"There is an urgent need for new carbon capture and storage (CCS) infrastructure to support the transition to a net zero economy."

5.14.22. Paragraph 3.5.2 highlights the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) statement that CCS is a necessity and not an option and that:

"CCS infrastructure will also be needed to capture and store carbon dioxide from hydrogen production from natural gas …"

5.14.23. Paragraph 3.5.8 also confirms that:

"…to support the urgent need for new CCS infrastructure, CCS technologies, pipelines and storage infrastructure are considered to be CNP [critical national priority] infrastructure."

5.14.24. Part 4 of EN-1 deals with the 'Assessment principles' that must be considered by applicants and decision makers in preparing and determining applications for nationally significant energy infrastructure. Paragraph 4.1.3 states that decision makers should start with a presumption in favour of granting consent given the level and urgency of need for such infrastructure. Paragraph 4.1.7 of EN-1 confirms that for projects which qualify as CNP infrastructure, it is likely that the need case will outweigh the residual effects in all but the most exceptional cases.

5.15. SUMMARY

5.15.1. It is evident from the above review of energy and climate change legislation and policy, that both the Scottish and UK Governments see a role for gas-fired generation fitted with post-combustion CCP and forming part of a CCS/CCUS cluster in achieving net zero GHG emissions, notably:

- New gas-fired generating capacity with CCS/CCUS will be required to provide vital back-up to intermittent renewable generation so as to ensure the security and reliability of electricity supplies in Scotland so that the electricity grid can meet spikes in demand. This is particularly important given Scotland's increasing reliance on renewables.
- The UK Government has also committed to provide significant investment to facilitate the deployment of four CCS/CCUS clusters by 2030. The Proposed Development forms part of

the Scottish Cluster, from which captured CO_2 will be transported offshore from the St. Fergus Gas Terminal for secure storage in depleted oil and gas fields within the North Sea.

5.15.2. The 'need' for new gas-fired generating capacity is confirmed by the UK Government's NPSs for energy, notably the Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1). In addition, EN-1 confirms that such infrastructure is 'Critical National Priority' infrastructure for the UK and that the urgent need for such infrastructure will in general outweigh any other residual impacts not capable of being addressed by application of the mitigation hierarchy in all but the most exceptional cases.

5.15.3. Further to the above, by underpinning the development of the Scottish Cluster, the Proposed Development will support the North Sea Transition Deal, which seeks to transform the oil and gas sector through the development of technologies such as CCS/CCUS, with these technologies drawing upon the capabilities and skills within the sector and its existing infrastructure, thereby helping to support its supply chain and skilled workforce.

5.15.4. The Proposed Development is therefore clearly in accordance with Scottish energy and climate change legislation and policy and relevant UK energy and climate change policy. That legislation and policy – Scottish energy and climate change legislation and policy – is the primary basis for decisions by the Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the 1989 Act. However, UK Government energy and climate change policy, including the NPSs for energy and the policy set out in NPS EN-1 on CNP infrastructure, is also a relevant consideration in decisions by the Scottish Ministers on Section 36 applications.

6. National and Local Planning Policy

6.1.1. This section of the Planning Statement sets out the national and local planning policy of relevance to the Proposed Development.

6.2. NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 4 (NPF4), FEBRUARY 2023

6.2.1. Scottish Ministers adopted National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) on 13 February 2023 in place of NPF3. NPF4 replaces both NPF3 and Scottish Planning Policy (both 2014). It sets out a national spatial strategy for Scotland to 2045, including the Scottish Government's spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy. Part 1 of NPF4 states that future places will be planned in line with six overarching spatial principles:

- Just transition.
- Conserving and recycling assets.
- Local living.
- Compact urban growth.
- Rebalanced development.
- Rural revitalisation.

6.2.2. By applying these spatial principles, NPF4 will support the delivery of:

- Sustainable places, where we reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity.
- Liveable places, where we can all live better, healthier lives.
- Productive places, where we have a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

6.2.3. NPF4 identifies 18 'National Developments' that are intended to support the delivery of the spatial strategy. Part 3 of NPF4 confirms (page 97) that the designation of a National Development means that the principle of the development does not need to be agreed in later consenting processes, providing more certainty for communities, businesses and investors.

6.2.4. Two 'Industrial Green Transition Zones' are identified as National Development 15. These are the 'Scottish Cluster' and 'Grangemouth Investment Zone'. These National Developments are seen as contributing to the delivery of 'Productive Places'. 'National Developments Statements of Need' are set out at Annex B of NPF4. That for the Scottish Cluster, within which the Proposed Development is located, states:

"The Scottish Cluster encompasses a carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects network and is a key strategic vehicle for industrial decarbonisation, energy generation, and the transportation and storage of captured carbon. The designation relates to projects that form a Scottish Cluster in the first instance specifically Peterhead, St Fergus and Grangemouth. Further industrial transition sites are expected to emerge in the longer term and benefit from the experience gained within the Scottish Cluster but do not form part of this national development. This national development will support the generation of significant economic opportunities for low carbon industry as well as minimising carbon emissions at scale, and will play a vital part in maintaining the security and operability of Scotland's electricity supply and network. The creation of hydrogen and deployment of negative emissions technologies, utilising CCUS, at commercial scale will establish the opportunities to decarbonise industry, transport and heat, as well as other sectors, and pave the way for the transportation and storage infrastructure to support the growing hydrogen economy in Scotland."

6.2.5. NPF4 goes onto confirm under 'Need' that the National Development is required to meet the Scottish Government's targets for emissions reduction and will support a just transition by creating new jobs in emerging technologies and significant economic opportunities for lower carbon industry. It also identifies 'designations and classes of development' that are appropriate to 'Industrial Green Transition Zones', which include:

- Carbon capture with high capture rates and negative emission technologies, transportation and storage of captured carbon forming part of or helping to create an expandable national network.
- Pipeline for transportation and storage of captured carbon and/or hydrogen.
- Onshore infrastructure including compression equipment, supporting pipeline transportation and shipping transportation of captured carbon and/or hydrogen;
- Offshore storage of captured carbon.
- New and/or upgraded buildings and facilities for the utilisation of captured carbon.
- Port facilities for the transport and handling of carbon dioxide and/or hydrogen.
- The application of carbon capture and storage technology to existing or replacement thermal power generation capacity.

6.2.6. Part 2 of the NPF4 sets out 'National Planning Policy', which includes a number of policies aimed at guiding development proposals. The main policies of relevance to the Proposed Development are:

- Policy 1 under 'Sustainable Places' and 'Tackling the climate and nature crises' – states that when considering all development proposals significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises.
- Policy 2 under 'Climate mitigation and adaptation' – sets out the policy principles for development to minimise emissions and adapt to climate change. The Proposed Development will make a positive contribution to climate mitigation and adaption by providing low carbon electricity generation that will contribute to the security of electricity supplies in Scotland.
- Policy 3 under 'Biodiversity' – sets out the policy principles to protect biodiversity, reverse biodiversity loss, deliver positive effects from development and strengthen nature networks. Biodiversity and nature conservation are considered in EIA Report Chapter 11. The Application also includes an Outline Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy (EIA Report Appendix 11H).
- Policy 7 under 'Historic assets and places' – sets out the policy principles to protect and enhance historic environment assets and places, and to enable positive change as a catalyst for the regeneration of places. The potential impact of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage is considered within EIA Report Chapter 16.
- Policy 10 under 'Coastal Development' – sets out the policy principles for development proposals to protect coastal communities and assets and support resilience to the impacts of climate change. Part (a) states that development proposals in developed coastal areas will only be supported where the proposal (i) does not result in the need for further coastal protection measures taking into account future sea level change; or increase the risk to people of coastal flooding or coastal erosion, including through the loss of natural coastal defences including dune systems; and (ii) is anticipated to be supportable in the long-term, taking into account projected climate change. The Proposed Development does not require further coastal protection measures and its adaptability to climate change is addressed in EIA Report Chapters 14 and 18 relating to flood risk and climate change and sustainability.
- Policy 11 under 'Energy' – states that development proposals for all forms of renewable, low carbon and zero emissions technologies will be supported. These include proposals

associated with negative emissions technologies and carbon capture such as the Proposed Development. In considering the impacts of such developments, significant weight will be placed on the contribution of the proposals to renewable energy generation targets and on GHG emission reduction targets. The Proposed Development is for a carbon capture enabled CCGT generating station and EIA Report Chapter 18 assesses its impacts in terms of GHG emissions.

- Policy 13 under 'Sustainable transport' – sets out the policy measures to promote active and sustainable modes of transport. Part (c) states where a development proposal will generate a significant increase in the number of person trips, a transport assessment will be required to be undertaken in accordance with the relevant guidance. The Application includes a Transport Assessment and framework construction traffic management and construction worker travel plans (EIA Report Appendices 10A, 10B and 10C).
- Policy 14 under 'Design, quality and place' – sets out the general policy principles to encourage, promote and facilitate well designed development. The Application includes a Design and Access Statement, which sets out the Applicant's approach to the design of the Proposed Development.
- Policy 19 under 'Heat and cooling' – Part (d) states that National and major developments that will generate waste or surplus heat and which are located in areas of heat demand, will be supported providing wider considerations, including residential amenity, are not adversely impacted. A Heat and Power Plan should demonstrate how energy recovered from the development will be used to produce electricity and heat. Part (e) states development proposals for energy infrastructure will be supported where they (i) repurpose former fossil fuel infrastructure for the production or handling of low carbon energy; (ii) are within or adjacent to a Heat Network Zone; and (iii) can be cost-effectively linked to an existing or planned heat network. With regard to this, the Application includes a CHP Assessment.
- Policy 22 under 'Flood risk and water management' – sets out the principles for strengthening resilience to flood risk and reducing the vulnerability of existing development to flooding. Development proposals will need to be support by an appropriate flood risk assessment (FRA). The Application includes a FRA (EIA Report Appendix 13A).
- Policy 23 under 'Health and Safety' – sets out the principles to protect people and places from environmental harm. Part (d) states Development proposals that are likely to have significant adverse effects on air quality will not be supported. Development proposals will consider opportunities to improve air quality and reduce exposure to poor air quality. An air quality assessment may be required where the nature of the proposal or the air quality in the location suggest significant effects are likely. EIA Report Chapter 8 provide an assessment of the air quality effects of the Proposed Development while Chapter 19 considers major accidents and disasters.
- Policy 26 under 'Business and Industry' – sets out the policy principles to support business and industry uses. Part (a) states the development proposals for business and industry uses on sites allocated for those uses in the LDP will be supported. Part (e) requires development proposals to take account of their impact on residential amenity, sensitive uses and the natural and historic environment. Part (f) states that major developments for manufacturing or industry will be accompanied by a decarbonisation strategy to demonstrate how GHG emissions from the process are appropriately abated. The strategy may include carbon capture and storage. The Proposed Development is in line with policy as it will make an important contribution to the local and regional economy in terms of employment and economic activity. EIA Report Chapter 17 provides information on the Proposed Development's anticipated contribution to the local and regional economy.

6.3. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

6.3.1. The local development plan for the area is the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan (LDP), adopted 13 January 2023). The LDP was written to accord with previous National Planning Framework (NPF3, 2014) and to be consistent with the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan 2020. It sets out the policies that Aberdeenshire Council will use for determining planning applications.

6.3.2. The LDP confirms that the Site lies within the 'Aberdeen to Peterhead Strategic Growth Area', which is to be the main focus for development in the area, including substantial housing, up to 2040 and also the 'Energetica Corridor', the latter being a development initiative along the coastal zone between Aberdeen and Peterhead to create *"…a world-class business and residential location within a high-quality environmental setting".* In addition, the Site lies within the Peterhead (Boddam) Regeneration Priority Area, the main objectives of which is to regenerate the Peterhead and improve its economy and links. Section 5 'The Spatial Strategy' of the LDP states that it also recognises national development as identified in the National Planning Framework.

6.3.3. Appendix 7b of the LDP sets out the settlement strategy for the Buchan area, which includes Peterhead, and identifies land use planning allocations for the area. It confirms that Peterhead is the northern gateway to the Energetica Corridor. The majority of the Site falls under 'Reserved Land' allocation R2, which is for development including that related to Peterhead Power Station, carbon capture and storage and major energy developments as set out in the National Planning Framework. It goes onto state *that "Development on this site must accord with Policy P4 (Hazardous and potentially polluting developments and contaminated land) and the Health and Safety Executive "Planning Advice for Developments near Hazardous Installations", owing to the presence of one or more oil and gas pipelines in the vicinity."*

6.3.4. In land use planning terms the Proposed Development therefore accords with the LDP, which identifies the Site as part of an area reserved for thermal power generation and CCS/CCUS.

6.3.5. The Proposed Development will make a positive contribution to the local and regional economy both during construction and operation. The EIA Report (Chapter 17 'Socio-economic, Tourism and Recreation) estimates that the Proposed Development will generate a significant number of jobs during construction and operation as well as providing supply chain opportunities for businesses within the local and regional economy.

6.3.6. Section 9 'Shaping Places – Layout, Siting and the Design of New Development' of the LDP sets out a number of policies that are aimed at including high quality design in new developments. Policy P1 'Layout, siting and design' sets out general principles for the design of new development, although these are more aimed at place-making than infrastructure developments. The Policy states that new development should include measures to enhance biodiversity or geodiversity in proportion to the opportunities available and the scale of the development and seek to minimise waste during construction and operation.

6.3.7. As will be demonstrated later within this Planning Statement, the approach taken by the Applicant to the design of the Proposed Development is both proportionate and appropriate and it represents good design that is in keeping with its context. Furthermore, the Proposed Development includes proposals to enhance landscaping and biodiversity at the Site and measures to minimise waste during construction and operation.

6.3.8. Policy P2 'Open space and access in new development' states that existing and potential public access routes, including core paths, should be protected. Construction of new paths must comply with published best practice.

6.3.9. A number of core paths will be affected by the construction of the Proposed Development. However, appropriate diversions will be implemented during construction and the original routes will be reinstated once construction works are complete.

6.3.10. Policy P4 'Hazardous and potentially polluting developments and contaminated land' states that the Council will refuse development if there is a risk that it could cause significant pollution, create a significant nuisance, or present an unacceptable danger to the public of the environment. Where such development is considered acceptable buy the appropriate authorities, satisfactory steps must be taken to mitigate any residual negative impacts. It goes onto state that the Council will take the advice of the Health and Safety Executive when determining planning applications for development within the consultation zones for hazardous installations of pipelines.

6.3.11. The EIA for the Proposed Development demonstrates that it will not result in significant levels of pollution or result in nuisance. A number of measures will be employed during construction and the operation of the low carbon generating station will be strictly controlled through the PCC Permit.

6.3.12. The EIA has included an assessment (EIA Report, Chapter 19) of the Major Accidents and Disasters that have the potential to arise during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. Taking account of mitigation any risks are considered to be as low as reasonably practicable' (ALARP).

6.3.13. It is possible that the Proposed Development may require Hazardous Substances Consent and fall under the Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) Regulations. This will be determined at the detailed design stage and the requirements for applications and licensing will be discussed with the Hazardous Substances Authority, the Health and Safety Executive and SEPA.

6.3.14. Section 10 of the LDP deals with 'Natural Heritage and Landscape'. Policy E1 'Natural heritage' states that the Council will in general not allow development where it may have an adverse effect on a nature conservation site designated for its biodiversity or geodiversity importance unless certain circumstances apply. For example, in the case of an internationally designated nature conservation site, there are imperative reasons of overriding public importance, there is no alternative solution and suitable compensatory measures are implemented.

6.3.15. Policy E1 goes on to state that development should seek to avoid any detrimental impact on protected species through the carrying out of surveys and submission of protection plans to describe appropriate mitigation where necessary. A baseline ecological survey should also be prepared for all major developments where there is evidence to suggest that a habitat, geological feature or species of importance may exist on the site. Furthermore, all developments should identify measures that will be taken to improve biodiversity and geodiversity in proportion to the potential opportunities available and the scale of the development.

6.3.16. The EIA Report includes a Habitats Regulation Assessment (EIA Report, Appendix 11F), which confirms that the Proposed Development will not result in an adverse impact on the integrity of any designated European site. Furthermore, the EIA has not identified (taking account of mitigation) any significant effects upon habitats or protected/notable species, while proposals are included to enhance biodiversity at the Site (set out in the Outline Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy Plan, EIA Report, Figure 11H.1) that will result in a net gain in terms of biodiversity value.

6.3.17. Policy E2 'Landscape' states that development will be refused where it causes unacceptable effects through its scale, location or design on key natural landscape elements, historic features or the composition or quality of the landscape character.

6.3.18. Section 11 of the LDP 'The Historic Environment' includes policies aimed at protecting heritage assets, including listed buildings, scheduled monuments and archaeological sites. These include

Policies HE1 'Protecting historic buildings, sites, and monuments' and HE2 'Protecting historic and cultural areas'.

6.3.19. The EIA for the Proposed Development does identify a number of limited moderate adverse effects in terms of landscape and visual amenity and for cultural heritage. It is not always possible to eliminate such effects in the case of thermal generating stations, particularly in relation to landscape and visual amenity. The main buildings and structures are large and their size and scale is dictated by technology requirements, with limited scope to reduce their effects. In the case of Proposed Development, it will sit within an existing power generation site that is already dominated by the large buildings and structures associated with the existing Peterhead Power Station. It will be viewed from the surrounding area within that context. The limited adverse landscape and visual and cultural heritage effects of the Proposed Development need to be weighed against its substantial benefits, not least the contribution that it will make to GHG emissions reductions, the security and reliability of electricity supplies and the local and regional economy.

6.3.20. Section 12 focuses on protecting resources within Aberdeenshire, including the water environment, mineral deposits, prime agricultural land, peat and other carbon rich soils, open space and important trees and woodlands. Policy PR1 'Protecting important resources' such as air quality, the water environment and trees and woodland amongst others, and states that in all cases, development which impacts on such features and resources will only be permitted when the public economic or social benefits clearly outweigh the value of the feature or resource to the local community and there are no reasonable alternatives.

6.3.21. The above resources, where relevant to the Proposed Development, have been assessed as part of the EIA and no significant adverse effects have been identified.

6.3.22. Policy PR2 'Protecting important development sites' states that the Council will protect and not allow alternative development on site that may reasonably be needed in the future for improvements to transport, generating and providing energy, waste management, education, other community infrastructure and site to support national developments identified in the National Planning Framework. It goes onto state that:

"National developments that directly affect the area covered by this plan include proposals for contribution to capturing and storing carbon and making use of heat generation, specifically at Peterhead power station but also at other locations associated with the pipeline from the central belt to St Fergus, and high-voltage electricity transmission infrastructure, including cabling, substations, and converter stations, again at a range of locations but expected to include sites associated with the electricity substation south of Peterhead."

6.3.23. Policy PR2 therefore confirms that the Site is an appropriate location for the Proposed Development given its status in National Planning Policy.

6.3.24. Section 13 deals with 'Climate Change'. The foreword to this section of the LDP recognises that for Aberdeenshire tackling climate change means reducing the use of energy (both in the distribution of development and within developments themselves), conserving water, promoting energy generation by renewable sources, sustaining existing carbon stores (such as peat and wood), and dealing with long-term flood risks.

6.3.25. Policy C3 'Carbon sinks and stores' states:

"C3.2 We support the development of carbon capture and storage developments, including proposals for woodland that can store carbon for long periods of time. In line with the national planning framework, we also support the development of carbon networks aimed at storing CO_2 in offshore oil and gas fields, especially around Peterhead and the gas fired power station."

6.3.26. The Proposed Development therefore accords with Policy C3.

6.3.27. Policy C4 'Flooding' identifies the need for flood risk assessments for developments in medium to high category of flood risk of 0.5% to 10% annual probability (1 in 200 years to 1 in 10 years). Development should avoid such areas except where it is a development to effect flooding or erosion, it is consistent with the flood storage function of a floodplain, it would otherwise be unaffected by flooding or it is essential infrastructure. In such circumstances, development should be designed to be flood resilient and use construction methods to assist in the evacuation of people and minimise damage. It must not result in increased severity of flood risk elsewhere through altering flood storage capacity or the pattern and flow of flood waters.

6.3.28. The Application includes a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) (EIA Report, Appendix 13A). Subject to the implementation of mitigation, the FRA confirms that the Proposed Development will not result in unacceptable effects or risks in relation to flooding.

6.4. SUMMARY

6.4.1. No conflict has been identified between the Proposed Development and national or local planning policy.

6.4.2. Aberdeenshire Council submitted its consultation response on the Application to the ECU on 30 June 2023 confirming that planning officers had reported the Application to the Council's Infrastructure Services Committee on 15 June 2023 with a recommendation of 'No Objection' to the Application subject to the appended Schedule of Conditions, removal of the holding objection from SEPA (SEPA withdrew its objection on 19 September 2023) and a statement (by the Council) in respect of duties it's under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The Infrastructure Services Committee agreed the planning officer recommendation of 'No Objection'. The planning officer's report did not identify any conflict between the Proposed Development and relevant policies of NPF4 or the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2023.

7. Assessment of the Proposed Development

7.1.1. This section sets out the assessment of the Proposed Development having regard to Scottish energy and climate change legislation and policy, other relevant energy and climate change policy, national and local planning policy, the EIA undertaken by the Applicant, including the additional information submitted pursuant to the EIA Regulations, and any other material planning considerations.

7.2. THE NEED FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

7.2.1. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (amended by The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019) sets a legally binding target for Scotland of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. This is a more ambitious target that the one set by the UK Government (net zero by 2050), although the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2024 amended the Climate Change Act to replace the existing system of annual and interim emissions reduction targets with a system of 5-yearly carbon budgets to 2045. However, those budgets are still to be set, and the previous annual targets remain in force.

7.2.2. It is clear from the review of Scottish energy and climate change policy, including the Scottish Energy Strategy (2017), and relevant UK Government energy and climate change policy at Section 5.0, that there remains an important role for modern, flexible gas-fired generation fitted with post-combustion CCP, in ensuring the security of UK electricity supplies, while helping to decarbonise power generation, contributing toward achieving net zero GHG emissions as we head toward the 2040s.

7.2.3. New abated gas-fired generation will be required to provide back-up to renewable generation to ensure the reliability and security of Scottish electricity supplies and that fluctuations in electricity demand, including peaks in demand, and demand when generation from renewables is lower, can be met. This is vital given Scotland's heavy and increasing reliance on renewable generation, notably wind, which is intermittent in nature. The UK Government has committed investment of up to £1 billion to facilitate the deployment of four CCS/CCUS clusters by 2030, so as to support its ambition to capture 20 to 30 Mt CO_2 emissions per year by 2030 from both power generation and industry. Consistent with the UK Government's ambition of four CCS/CCUS clusters by 2030, the Proposed Development will form part of the Scottish Cluster, with the captured CO_2 being transported offshore from the St. Fergus Gas Terminal by Acorn for secure storage in depleted oil and gas fields within the North Sea.

7.2.4. By underpinning the development of the Scottish Cluster, the Proposed Development will also support the UK Government's North Sea Transition Deal (March 2021), which seeks to transform the oil and gas sector through the development of CCS/CCUS, with these technologies drawing upon the capabilities and skills within the sector and its existing infrastructure, thereby helping to support its supply chain and skilled workforce in the future.

7.2.5. The need for projects such as the Proposed Development is further underlined by the new UK Labour Government's Clean Power 2030 Action Plan, December 2024, and the revised NPSs for energy that came into force in January 2024.

7.2.6. The Clean Power Action Plan confirms that there is a need for the rapid deployment of new clean energy capacity across the whole of the UK, including significant amounts of wind and solar power, complemented by flexible capacity, including gas-fired generation with CCUS (page 11). It recognises (pages 23 and 24) that it is crucial that we complement renewables with flexible capacity to ensure we can deliver clean power no matter the weather. The Action Plan sets out a pathway toward deploying low carbon flexible capacity technologies, including power CCUS, which provide round the clock reliable power. The importance of gas capacity (including gas with CCUS) in

maintaining security of supply is further recognised at page 29 in considering what a clean power system could look like in 2030.

7.2.7. The Clean Power Action Plan considers 'Long-duration flexibility' from page 108 onwards. It recognises that such flexibility can add significant value to the energy system and provide a secure supply of electricity during extended periods of low renewables output. It highlights that there are a number of low carbon technologies such as power CCUS capable of replicating the role of unabated gas. The Action Plan estimates that 40 to 50 GW of dispatchable and long-duration flexible capacity could be needed by 2030 to deliver a resilient clean power system. Page 111 of the Action Plan notes that power CCUS plants present a great opportunity for low carbon long-duration flexibility.

7.2.8. While the revised NPSs for energy form the primary basis of decisions by the SoS in England and Wales on nationally significant energy infrastructure projects that require development consent under the Planning Act 2008, paragraph 1.4.2 of the Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1) confirms that they can be relevant to decisions made by the Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the 1989 Act.

7.2.9. The 'need' for new gas-fired generating capacity is confirmed by EN-1 with the role of gas-fired plants with CCS/CCUS in contributing toward meeting this need being acknowledged at paragraph 3.3.44. Paragraph 3.3.44 goes onto note that CCGTs can provide flexible generation that is able to ramp up or down to meet demand. Paragraph 3.3.59 continues, stating that all of the generating technologies mentioned in EN-1, including gas-fired plants with CCS/CCUS, are urgently needed to meet the UK Government's energy objectives by providing security of supply; providing an affordable, reliable energy system and ensuring the system is net zero. This is reinforced at Section 3.4 of EN-1, with 3.4.11 underlining the importance of *"… retaining the capability for using natural gas for low carbon dispatchable output in power stations equipped with CCS..."*

7.2.10. EN-1 (Section 3.3, paragraphs 3.3.62 to 3.3.63) confirms that the UK Government has concluded that there is a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure. Paragraph 3.3.63 states that the UK Government strongly supports the delivery of CNP infrastructure and it that should be progressed as quickly as possible. CNP infrastructure (EN-1, Section 4.2, paragraph 4.2.5, bullet point one) includes natural gas-fired generation which is carbon capture ready. The Proposed Development is therefore CNP infrastructure. Paragraph 4.1.3 of EN-1 confirms that that decision makers should start with a presumption in favour of granting consent given the level and urgency of need for such infrastructure. Paragraph 4.1.7 continues by stating that for projects which qualify as CNP infrastructure, it is likely that the need case will outweigh the residual effects (effects not capable of being addressed by mitigation) in all but the most exceptional cases.

7.2.11. NPF4 identifies the Scottish Cluster at part of National Development 15. Part 3 of NPF4 confirms (page 97) that the designation of a National Development means that the principle of the development does not need to be agreed in later consenting processes, providing more certainty for communities, businesses and investors (i.e. it confirms the 'need' for that development). Annex B of NPF4 sets out 'National Developments Statements of Need' and confirms that the Scottish Cluster encompasses energy generation and CCS and relates to projects at Peterhead, St. Fergus and Grangemouth. NPF4 goes onto confirm under 'Need' that the Scottish Cluster is required to meet the Scottish Government's targets for emissions reduction and will support a just transition by creating new jobs in emerging technologies and significant economic opportunities for lower carbon industry.

7.2.12. The need for the Proposed Development in terms of contributing toward net zero GHG emissions (and the legally binding targets of the Scottish and UK Governments) and ensuring the security of UK electricity supplies is clearly set out in national energy and climate changes policy. Notably, the

Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1), which can be relevant to decisions made by the Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the 1989 Act, confirms the 'need' for new gas-fired generating capacity with CCS/CCUS, that such gas-plants are CNP infrastructure and decision makers should start with a presumption in favour of granting consent given the level and urgency of need for such infrastructure. Furthermore, that the need case for CNP infrastructure will outweigh its residual effects in all but the most exceptional cases. In determining the Application, the Scottish Ministers should have regard to this policy, which is important and relevant.

7.3. CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

7.3.1. Chapter 6 of the EIA Report 'Consideration of Alternatives' sets out the alternatives that have been considered by the Applicant in respect of the Proposed Development. The consideration of alternatives has taken into account Schedule 4 (Parts 2 and 3) of the EIA Regulations, which states that the EIA Report should contain "*A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects*."

7.3.2. The Site has been selected by the Applicant for the Proposed Development, as opposed to other potentially available sites, for a number of reasons, notably that it is part of the identified location for a National Development (National Development 15) within NPF4 for the Scottish Cluster Industrial Green Transition Zone, encompassing energy generation and CCS. Other key reasons for the selection of the Site include:

- Previous studies (relating to proposals for a pilot CCP advanced between 2011 and 2015) have confirmed the feasibility of the Site as a location for CCP/CCS.
- The Site (the area to be developed) comprises mostly of previously land that is located within the operational boundary of the existing Peterhead Power Station.
- The availability of an existing skilled workforce with knowledge of the power sector.
- The Site benefits from excellent links to existing water, gas and electricity grid infrastructure and also has good transport links via the A90 and waterborne options via Boddam Harbour and Peterhead.
- The majority of the Site is within the control of the Applicant.

7.3.3. For the above reasons, no other sites were considered as a potential location for the Proposed Development.

7.3.4. In terms of the consideration of alternative technologies, Chapter 4 'The Proposed Development' of the EIA Report (paragraph 6.4.1.1) confirms that the Applicant selected CCGT technology fitted with post-combustion CCP, as this is the most technologically mature method for delivering low carbon thermal generation electricity, while it is also possible to connect into Acorn for the transportation and storage of the captured CO_2. A hydrogen fuelled generating station was not considered as this technology is not yet sufficiently developed and has not been tested at scale.

7.3.5. At this stage, a decision on the choice of vendor for the CCGT generating station and licensor for the CCP equipment has not been made and this will not take place until the detailed design stage for the Proposed Development. As a result, a degree of flexibility has to be retained in terms of the layout and dimensions of the main buildings and items of plant. To provide for this flexibility and the robust EIA of the Proposed Development, the Applicant has therefore assessed three layout options and maximum (and where relevant minimum) design parameters for those options, in order to provide a reasonable 'worst-case' assessment of the likely significant environmental effects.

7.3.6. Nine different areas were considered within the operational boundary of the existing Peterhead Power Station for the different layouts. These are detailed at Section 6.5.2 of Chapter 6 of the EIA Report. Option 4A, to the north/north-west of the existing Power Station, was selected as it:

- has the lowest platform level of all options (reducing the need for earthworks and limiting visual impact);
- maintains the ability to separate the Proposed Development from the existing Power Station;
- provides the scope for integration of the proposed CCGT with the existing cooling water infrastructure; and
- is the best related to the Acorn Project and its proposed infrastructure.

7.3.7. The design of the Proposed Development has been an iterative process that has taken account of the EIA scoping process and consultation as detailed at Chapter 6 of the EIA Report (paragraphs 6.5.2 to 6.5.4). The design refinements and decisions that have been made to the Proposed Development are detailed at paragraph 6.5.5.

7.3.8. The 'do-nothing' scenario was ruled out on the basis that is would not support the development of the Scottish Cluster and the emissions reduction and economic and employment benefits that would be linked to the Cluster.

7.3.9. It is considered that the approach taken to the consideration of alternatives by the Applicant is both proportionate and appropriate.

7.3.10. There is no change to Chapter 6 'Consideration of Alternatives' of the EIA Report as a result of the additional information that has been submitted.

7.4. LAND USE

7.4.1. As confirmed above, the Site is identified as part of National Development 15 in NPF4 (Scottish Cluster Industrial Green Transition Zone) for encompassing energy generation and CCS/CCUS. This is also recognised in the Aberdeenshire LDP and its Proposals Map confirms the Site is part of an area reserved for such development. Furthermore, much of the Site lies within the boundary of the existing Peterhead Power Station site.

7.4.2. The Site extends to approximately 89 ha to accommodate the low carbon generating station and also to facilitate the necessary works to the existing cooling water, gas and electricity grid connections and allow for construction laydown areas and various ancillary works. However, the actual land take for the Proposed Development is far less, with the CCGT and CCP area extending to just under 6 ha, while construction laydown areas will require around 15 ha. Furthermore, much of the land to be developed is previously developed land. The land that will be used for the CCGT/CCP area was previously part of an oil tank area used by the existing Power Station and also includes a disused gas turbine building that will be demolished to make way for the new development.

7.4.3. In land use planning terms, the Proposed Development is therefore in accordance with national and local planning policy, is appropriate given its location within an existing operational power station site and will not result in a significant change in the character of land use within the area.

7.4.4. There are no changes to the proposed land use as a result of the additional information that has been submitted.

7.5. DESIGN

7.5.1. The approach taken by the Applicant to the design of the Proposed Development is detailed in Chapter 4 'The Proposed Development' and Chapter 6 'Consideration of Alternatives' of the EIA Report and also the Design and Access Statement (DAS) that also forms part of the Application.

7.5.2. Chapter 4 of the EIA Report explains the degree of flexibility that has been retained within the design of the Proposed Development, why this is necessary (detailed design will not take place until an EPC contractor has been appointed later in the process and the scale of the main buildings/structures and their layout will depend on the contractor appointed and their selection of plant and equipment) and also how this flexibility has been assessed within the EIA having regard to the principles of the Rochdale Envelope approach.

7.5.3. Chapter 6 of the EIA Report sets out how a number of different areas were considered within the operational boundary of the existing Power Station site for the Proposed Development. The area to the north/north-west of the existing Power Station was selected for a number of reasons, including providing the lowest platform level (reducing the need for earthworks and limiting visual impact – the CCGT/CCP area will sit behind an existing embankment to the north/north-west) and scope for integration of the proposed CCGT with the existing cooling water infrastructure, while it is also best related to Acorn. Furthermore, the selection of this area maximises the use of previously developed land within the existing Power Station site.

7.5.4. The main buildings for the CCGT and CCP are large and their size, scale and design is largely dictated by technology requirements, with limited scope to reduce their effects on the surrounding landscape. However, the new buildings and structures will not sit in isolation given the existence of the existing Power Station, which is a prominent feature within the landscape. Furthermore, the proposed location of the CCGT/CCP area immediately to the north/north-west of the existing Power Station will assist in consolidating its built form with that which already exists. The new low carbon generating station will therefore be viewed within the context of the existing Power Station, which will remain in-situ.

7.5.5. The most visible buildings and structures at the Site will be the Absorber/Absorber Stack (130 m AOD), the HRSG stack and building (96 m and 67 m AOD), the CO_2 stripper (64 m AOD), the steam turbine hall (46 m AOD) and the gas turbine hall (43 m AOD). The cooling water, gas, electrical grid connections and CO_2 tie-in works will involve low level or below ground works and as such will not be particularly visible or prominent.

7.5.6. The Proposed Development has taken its design references from the existing Power Station and it reflects the industrialised context within which it will be sited. The main built elements will be simple and functional in form and detailing, predominantly comprising of steel skeletons covered in appropriate cladding/external facing materials. The latter will be chosen to achieve holistic colour and treatment of the buildings/structures. It is envisaged that the cladding and external facing materials for the main buildings/structures will comprise predominantly of metal cladding systems and concrete. There are a number of possible cladding solutions under consideration and a decision on which to employ will be made at the detailed design stage. The 'Indicative CCGT/CCP (Main Site) Elevations Plan' provides an indication of how the new low carbon generating station will appear.

7.5.7. An 'Outline Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy Plan' (Drawing Ref. 60650403-070 & Appendix 11H, EIA Report) has been prepared for the Proposed Development. This sets out a range of enhancement measures, including planting proposals for the Site. Planting will include native scrub planting to the inner embankment slope to the north/north-west of the CCGT/CCP area; scrub planting and meadow sowing to the west of this area; areas of woodland planting and the removal

of invasive non-native species within the Site. The landscaping and biodiversity proposals are considered further below.

7.5.8. The DAS describes how the Site will be accessed and the access arrangements within it for various users.

7.5.9. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development incorporates the principles of good design and that it will be appropriate to and in keeping with its context and setting.

7.5.10. There are no design changes resulting from the additional information that has been submitted.

7.6. SOCIO-ECONOMICS, TOURISM AND RECREATION

7.6.1. The socio-economic, tourism and recreation effects of the Proposed Development are assessed at Chapter 17 of the EIA Report). Potential effects upon the local economy, a number of core paths (required to be temporarily diverted) and recreation and tourism have been assessed.

7.6.2. The Proposed Development will generate a substantial number of jobs during both construction and operation. It is estimated that during the approximate 4 year construction programme, there will be a gross average number of 776 construction workers with this rising to a peak of 1,300 in months 23 and 24. Taking account of leakage (the number of jobs filled by people living outside of the assessment area – in this case the Aberdeenshire Council area), the Proposed Development will result in 145 net direct construction jobs within the Aberdeenshire Council area during this 4 year period with a further 125 net indirect/induced jobs (e.g. supply chain jobs), a total net employment figure of 270. Outside of the Aberdeenshire Council area the total net employment figure will be 811. The Proposed Development will therefore have a major beneficial short-term effect on employment during construction.

7.6.3. There will also be minor beneficial effect on the local economy from the use of local accommodation and services by construction workers.

7.6.4. During operation, it is estimated that a total net employment figure of 51 will result within the Aberdeenshire Council area (34 net direct and 17 indirect/induced job). There will only be limited leakage outside the assessment area. This will represent a minor beneficial long-term effect on the economy.

7.6.5. The Applicant is committed to maximising the use of local companies to support the Proposed Development as far as possible and will engage with the local supply chain through activities such as ‘Meet the Buyer’ type events. The Applicant will also identify measures to support education, skills and the local community.

7.6.6. The construction phase of the Proposed Development may have some adverse effects on local receptors such as walkers and users of recreational routes as a number of core paths will require temporary diversions to facilitate construction activities. However, as construction will be limited in duration and suitable diversions will be made it is expected that any effect will be negligible. There will be no effects during operation as the core paths will have been returned to normal after construction.

7.6.7. Tourism and visitors’ attractions within the area are not expected to be directly impacted by the construction phase. There is potential for indirect effects from construction traffic, however, this will be temporary. Furthermore, there is sufficient visitor accommodation within a 60 minute drive time of the Site to accommodate peak construction job numbers. Effects during construction are therefore assessed as being negligible and no direct effects are expected to occur during operation. creation.

7.6.8. No cumulative effects or significant adverse residual effects are identified as a result of the socio-economic assessment.

7.6.9. There is no change to the assessment of socio-economic, tourism and recreation effects as a result of the additional information that has been submitted.

7.7. COMBINED HEAT AND POWER

7.7.1. The Application includes a 'Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Assessment Report'. Although not a statutory requirement, a CHP Assessment has been undertaken to demonstrate that consideration has been given to waste heat and how it could be used in the future. In the absence of any published guidance, the CHP Assessment has been undertaken with reference to the Environment Agency's 'CHP Ready Guidance for Combustion and Energy from Waste Power Plants', February 2013.

7.7.2. The Proposed Development meets the BAT tests outlined in the CHP-R Guidance. It will be designed and built as 'CHP-Ready' to supply any identified viable heat load up to a potential maximum of 82 MWth based on a 'Heat Export Feasibility Study'. This will allow for the future implementation of CHP at the Site if and when identified heat loads become economically viable when considered alongside the proposed operating regime of the CCGT.

7.7.3. The CHP Assessment has indicated that there are a number of theoretical identified heat users within a 15 km radius of the Site. Although there are large heat loads that relate to domestic, small industrial and education within this search area, none of these are considered to offer economically viable opportunities for a heat network at present. It is not therefore proposed to install CHP equipment at the Site from the outset, however, the Proposed Development has been designed to be CHP-Ready, with sufficient space allocated for a future retrofit of a heat offtake within the Site, should that be required. This is considered to be BAT for plant such as the Proposed Development.

7.7.4. There is no change to the CHP Assessment resulting from the submission of the additional information.

7.8. CARBON CAPTURE READINESS

7.8.1. The Applicant has prepared and submitted a Carbon Capture Readiness (CCR) Assessment Report in accordance with the CCR Regulations as the Proposed Development involves a thermal generating station with a capacity of greater than 300 MW.

7.8.2. The Assessment has been prepared with reference to the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) guidance 'Carbon Capture Readiness (CCR) – A Guidance Note for Section 36 Electricity Act 1989 consent applications', November 2009.

7.8.3. The Proposed Development has been specifically designed, at the outset, to include post-combustion CCP, CO_2 compression facilities and a connection to third party CO_2 transportation and storage infrastructure (the Acorn Project). Despite this, the CCR Assessment has been undertaken to fulfil the requirements of the CCR Guidance, notably that sufficient space exists for the CCP equipment and that the transport and storage of CO_2 is technically and economically feasible. The CCR Assessment confirms the following:

- There is sufficient space at the Site for the CCP. The estimated CCP area requirement is just over 3 ha, whereas over 46 ha is available at the Site.
- The CCP would be connected to the Acorn Project. Discussions are on-going with Acorn, however, it has been confirmed that the tie-in to the CO_2 transportation infrastructure will be on-site. It is currently proposed that the tie-in will be in the north-west part of the Site (this has

been a factor in the selection of the location within the existing Power Station site for the Proposed Development).

- The exact routing of the CO_2 transportation is still to be determined but this will run northwards from the Site to the St. Fergus Gas Terminal. From St. Fergus it is proposed to transport the CO_2 offshore for storage beneath the North Sea.
- The nearest hydrocarbon fields and saline aquifers for the storage of CO_2 are located in the Northern and Central North Sea Basin (NCNS Basin). Acorn has identified the Goldeneye field as the primary storage site. Goldeneye has previously been investigated and deemed suitable for CO_2 storage and a storage permit has been filed.
- The estimated capacity of Goldeneye and the reserve site is 150 Mt CO_2. The Proposed Development would emit a maximum of 53.5 Mt CO_2 over its lifetime, which represents only 36% of the overall available capacity. As such, there is sufficient capacity available.

7.8.4. The economic feasibility of the Proposed Development is contingent upon the award from the UK Government of a Dispatchable Power Agreement (DPA) contract and also funding from its CCS Infrastructure Fund. The Scottish Cluster has been selected by the UK Government as a Track-2 Cluster as part of its CCUS cluster sequencing programme.

7.8.5. It is considered that the Proposed Development satisfies the requirements of the CCR Regulations and Guidance.

7.8.6. There is no change to the CCR Assessment as a result of the submission of the additional information.

7.9. HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES CONSENT AND COMAH

7.9.1. The Proposed Development will entail some CO_2 being held within the CCP and also within on-site pipework while the CCP involves the use of solvents (amines) that will require some solvent storage. It is therefore anticipated that Hazardous Substance Consent (HSC) may be required under 'The Town and Country Planning (Hazardous Substances) (Scotland) Regulations 2015' and that lower tier Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) licensing may also be required under the COMAH Regulations 2015.

7.9.2. The requirement for HSC and lower tier COMAH will be determined at the detailed design stage of the Proposed Development. The requirements for applications and licensing will be discussed with the Hazardous Substances Authority, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and SEPA.

7.9.3. Chapter 19 of the EIA Report provides an assessment of the Major Accidents and Disasters (MADs) that have the potential to arise during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. The assessment of MA&D is considered below.

7.10. MAJOR ACCIDENTS AND DISASTERS

7.10.1. As mentioned above, Chapter 19 of the EIA Report provides an assessment of the MADs that have the potential to arise during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development, including an assessment of the reasonably foreseeable worst-case environmental consequences, the measures envisaged to prevent or mitigate the adverse effects of such events on the environment, and details of the preparedness for and proposed response to MADs hazards and threats. The assessment has taken account of relevant COMAH sites and other MADs sites within the vicinity of the Site as well as sensitive receptors.

7.10.2. Major accidents are incidents such as fires and explosions that could result in serious harm to people. They also have the potential to cause widespread damage to property and the environment. Disasters can be naturally occurring events, such as earthquakes, landslides and flooding.

7.10.3. The engineering design, construction and operation of the Proposed Development will incorporate appropriate standards and mitigation measures necessary to reduce the risks of MADs to an acceptable level (i.e. 'As Low As is Reasonably Practicable' (ALARP)), which is the standard expected by the regulatory authorities (e.g. HSE and SEPA). As well as a PPC Permit, if appropriate, the low carbon generating station will be regulated under a COMAH Licence regulated by the HSE.

7.10.4. Potential MADs and their likelihood and tolerability and significance taking account of mitigation measures are detailed for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development at Tables 19-4 and 19-5 of Chapter 19. It is considered that the MADs risk for decommissioning would be the same as that for construction.

7.10.5. With the implementation of the mitigation measures described in Tables 19-4 and 19-5, the MADs risks are considered to have been mitigated to 'tolerable' and 'tolerable if ALARP' and therefore the effects are considered as not significant for both construction and operation. No additional mitigation measures are identified as necessary and in terms of potential cumulative effects, it is not considered that cumulative schemes will result in any new significant major accidents risks during construction or operation. Residual effects on sensitive receptors are not considered likely and effects are therefore assessed as not significant.

7.10.6. There is no change the assessment of effects at Chapter 19 as a result of the submission of the additional information.

7.11. AIR QUALITY

7.11.1. The potential air quality effects and impacts of the Proposed Development on both human health and ecological receptors is considered at Chapter 8 'Air Quality' of the EIA Report. The potential emissions assessed include dust during constriction; emissions from road traffic and plant and machinery during construction; process emissions from the operation of the low carbon generating station and its CCP; and also emissions resulting from the eventual decommissioning of the Proposed Development.

7.11.2. Through the use of standard construction management measures, which reduce dust and emissions from site clearance and site preparation activities, emissions to air from construction activities are assessed to have no significant adverse effects on human or ecological receptors. Such measures would include standard best practice construction measures such as appropriate storage of materials, suppression of dust from soil movement and material storage, cleaning of vehicles and locating construction plant away from sensitive receptors. By controlling construction activities through measures set out in a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) – to be agreed with the planning authority and relevant statutory consultees – the effects of construction dust are assessed as not significant.

7.11.3. Based on expected vehicle movements, construction traffic air impacts are considered to be negligible at all human receptors and the effect is therefore assessed as not significant.

7.11.4. The environmental effects on air quality from construction of the Proposed Development have therefore been identified as not significant. No additional mitigation other than the implementation of an appropriate CEMP has been identified as necessary for the construction phase of the Proposed Development.

7.11.5. During operation, impacts could arise due to process emissions from the generating station and its CCP (e.g. stack emissions, including ammonia-based emissions which are assessed in respect of human health).

7.11.6. An assessment of the operational effects of the Proposed Development has been undertaken using atmospheric dispersion modelling and taking into account a number of conservative assumptions.

7.11.7. Predicted ground level concentrations of relevant air pollutants (principally nitrogen oxides, ammonia and amines) due to air emissions from the operation of the Proposed Development have been assessed. Effects at the identified human receptors are assessed as not significant.

7.11.8. The deposition of nutrient nitrogen on sensitive ecological receptors from the air emissions of nitrogen oxides and ammonia has also been calculated. Effects on ecological receptors from emissions are assessed to be not significant.

7.11.9. Emissions from the Proposed Development during operation will be controlled and regulated by the PPC Permit and in accordance with the use of Best Available Techniques (BAT). The Permit will need to be granted prior to operation of the Proposed Development.

7.11.10. In certain weather conditions, due to the initial water content of the emissions from the CCP absorber stack and the relatively low temperature of the emissions release, there is potential for the plume released from the stack to be visible.

7.11.11. As confirmed in Section 2.0, the Applicant submitted additional information (Additional Information 1) on air quality in February 2023 in response to SEPA's consultation response of July 2022. This included revised air quality modelling, a carbon assessment and updated air quality and climate assessments. A further response was received from SEPA in March 2023 requesting further information and maintaining its holding objection. The Applicant submitted additional information (Additional Information 2) in August 2023, following which, in September 2023, SEPA confirmed it was in a position to remove its holding objection.

7.11.12. There is no change to the assessment of air quality effects at Chapter 8 as a result of the submission of the additional information.

7.12. NOISE AND VIBRATION

7.12.1. The assessment of noise and vibration effects during construction and operation of the Proposed Development is set out in Chapter 9 of the EIA Report.

7.12.2. Key noise sensitive receptor (NSR) locations have been selected, which are considered to be representative of the nearest and potentially most sensitive existing receptors in all directions around the Proposed Development. It is considered that if noise and vibration levels are suitably controlled at the NSR identified, then noise and vibration levels will be suitably controlled at other sensitive receptors in the surrounding area.

7.12.3. Noise levels during construction and operation have been predicted by computer modelling and the results compared with measured baseline noise levels at the identified receptors during the day, evening and night. National standards have been applied to determine whether there is the potential for significant effects without further mitigation measures being applied.

7.12.4. Given the distance between the Proposed Development Site and the nearest residential NSRs (a minimum distance of approximately 325 m), no significant vibration impacts are expected. Vibration has therefore been scoped out of the assessment.

7.12.5. Noise is likely to be generated throughout the construction phase by works such as initial site preparation, earthworks and excavation, construction of buildings and infrastructure, including piling, operation of temporary facilities, as well as from construction traffic on the local road network.

7.12.6. Construction noise effects at all residential NSRs during construction of the Proposed Development within core working hours are predicted to be not significant due largely to the separation distances between the works and the NSRs.

7.12.7. It may be necessary for some construction activities to take place continuously over day, evening and night periods during peak construction times, although the exact nature of the works is unknown at this stage. Construction activities taking place outside core working hours will therefore be planned, managed and controlled appropriately so they meet the BS 5228 ABC noise limits and follow the suggested noise mitigation set out at Section 9.5 of Chapter 9.

7.12.8. Without additional mitigation, night-time working at all representative receptors is predicted to result in significant adverse effects in the short-term during construction. This is largely due to the existing low levels of ambient noise at these receptors during the evening and night-time. Additional mitigation is therefore proposed, which may include use of a temporary acoustic barrier, enclosure or other measures. Such mitigation would ensure any residual effect is reduced to not significant.

7.12.9. It is anticipated that there will be either no change or a very low change in road traffic noise due to traffic flows along the construction traffic routes to the Site. Therefore, noise effects due to construction traffic are predicted to be not significant.

7.12.10. The Proposed Development will involve the operation of a CCGT and CCP and other plant and equipment. Modelling software has been used to assess the likely effects of operational noise at NSRs using conservative assumptions to provide a worst-case assessment, based on the three indicative layouts. Without additional mitigation, there could significant effects at some residential properties, particularly at night when background noise levels are lower. With mitigation in place, the predicted increase in operational noise levels would typically be just perceptible under normal environmental conditions. The need for noise mitigation will therefore be considered during the detailed design stage. It is anticipated that such mitigation would result in effects that are classified as not significant. The mitigation measures would demonstrate use of Best Available Techniques (BAT) for the control of noise for the PPC Permit.

7.12.11. There is no change to the assessment of effects at Chapter 9 as a result of the submission of the additional information.

7.13. TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

7.13.1. An assessment has been undertaken which considers the potential effects of the construction, operation of the Proposed Development on traffic and transport. The findings of the assessment are set out in Chapter 10 of the EIA Report and have been informed by a Transport Assessment (Appendix 10A of the EIA Report). The EIA Report also includes a Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) (Appendix 10B) and a Framework Construction Worker Travel Plan (CWTP) (Appendix 10C).

7.13.2. The assessment considers the predicted number of vehicle movements generated during the construction and operation of the Proposed Development, and the sensitivity (including pedestrian and cyclist safety) and capacity of the local road network. Public rights of way (PRoW), including footpaths and cycle route networks, that cross roads within the study area have also been considered and have helped define the sensitivity of the road links.

7.13.3. As baseline traffic flows on the road network are projected to increase year on year, to undertake a worst-case assessment, a future year for baseline traffic flows of 2026 was modelled.

7.13.4. The traffic generated by the construction of the Proposed Development will result in temporary increases in traffic flows, including HGVs, on the roads leading to the Site. The effects of construction traffic on pedestrian amenity, severance, fear and intimidation, highway safety, driver delay and hazardous loads have been assessed using relevant guidance. Effects at all road sections and junctions within the study area are anticipated to be not significant.

7.13.5. Several traffic management measures will be implemented during construction to minimise traffic impacts upon the local road network. This would include both final CTMP and CWTP that the appointed contractors would be required to adhere to. It is anticipated that detailed versions of these documents could be secured by planning conditions.

7.13.6. During the operational phase, approximately 50 staff will be employed, working two shifts. Additionally, during planned maintenance and outages, which would occur infrequently (once every two to five years) and be short in duration (approximately three months), approximately 200 additional staff could be on-site on any one day. Additional HGV traffic will also be generated by deliveries associated with operations and maintenance plant/equipment. However, the traffic flows during operation will be considerably lower than those during construction. Overall traffic effects during operation are assessed as not significant.

7.13.7. There is no change to the assessment of effects at Chapter 10 as a result of the submission of the additional information.

7.14. BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE CONSERVATION

7.14.1. Chapter 11 of the EIA Report sets out the findings of the assessment that has been undertaken of the potential impacts and effects of the Proposed Development on biodiversity and nature conservation. The baseline information for the assessment has been assembled through a combination of desk studies and field surveys. These are detailed within Appendices 11B to 11E and 11G of the EIA Report.

7.14.2. The Applicant has carried out a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the Proposed Development, which is reported in the 'Statement to Inform Appropriate Assessment' (Appendix 11F, EIA Report). An 'Outline Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy Plan' has also been prepared and is provided at Appendix 11H of the EIA Report. This sets out the outline strategy for mitigating adverse landscape and long-term biodiversity effects, provides details of committed landscape and biodiversity enhancements, and includes a scheme for monitoring the effectiveness of these measures.

7.14.3. The assessment of impacts and effects on all relevant habitats and species was undertaken following industry-standard best practice guidelines published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

7.14.4. There are eleven statutory designated sites for nature conservation within 15 km of the Site. Some of these designations have overlapping or entirely coincident boundaries. Of the eleven statutory designated sites, three are SPAs, one is an SAC, two are Ramsar sites and five are SSSIs. Buchan Ness to Collieston Coast SPA is immediately adjacent to the Site. As part of the HRA for the Proposed Development, the potential for likely significant effects on the qualifying features of any of these designated sites was investigated. It was determined that the possibility of likely significant effects from the following impacts could not readily be discounted without further detailed appraisal:

- waterborne pollution of designated sites during construction;

- airborne pollution of designated sites during construction;
- disturbance of qualifying species during construction; and
- airborne pollution of designated sites during operation.

7.14.5. In view of the above, the HRA included an 'Appropriate Assessment'. Owing primarily to the limited numbers and distribution of qualifying species in the zone of influence of the Proposed Development, disturbance during construction was concluded to have no adverse effect on the integrity of any designated site. Waterborne pollution during construction was concluded to be satisfactorily controlled by pollution controls set out in the Framework CEMP (or Demolition EMP for decommissioning). Airborne pollution during construction was found by modelling to be insignificant at designated sites, and similarly airborne pollution during operation was also found by modelling to be insignificant at those sites, in both cases using worst-case predictions. For operational air quality, this included use of worst-case figures from modelling multiple operational stack positions and types. Therefore, it is expected that no conservation objectives of designated sites will be compromised, and no adverse effects on site integrity are predicted.

7.14.6. An in-combination assessment found that there was no realistic probability of significant in-combination effects. It was therefore concluded, in view of best scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective information, that the Proposed Development will have no adverse effect on the on-site integrity of any designated site, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

7.14.7. The EIA also concludes that there will be either no effects or negligible effects on nationally designated nature conservation sites (e.g. SSSIs) within the potential zone of influence of the Proposed Development.

7.14.8. The design of the Proposed Development, including the location of temporary laydown areas, has sought to minimise impacts on habitats at the Site. The most important habitats within the potential zone of influence of the Proposed Development (outside of designated sites) are the coastal habitats immediately to the north and east. There will be no works within these habitat areas, except for works to tie-in cooling water pipework to the existing cooling water outfall. This work will be at the inland end of the cooling water outfall and will result in the loss of a maximum 0.04 ha of unimproved neutral grassland, which is considered to be negligible. Air quality modelling suggests that the Proposed Development will also have a negligible effect on the habitat from airborne pollution.

7.14.9. Other habitats at the Site and within its vicinity are all of low ecological importance and any losses will be of very low significance.

7.14.10. The potential impacts and effects of the Proposed Development on the following protected/notable species have also been assessed:

- oysterplant;
- invasive non-native species of plant;
- bats;
- badger;
- water shrew;
- brown hare;
- hedgehog;
- barn owl;
- general breeding birds;
- non-breeding waterbirds, and
- grey seal.

7.14.11. The only species for which a significant effect may arise, in the absence of mitigation, is barn owl. A temporary moderate adverse effect on this species could occur due to disturbance of nesting birds during the construction and/or decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. However, this effect will only arise should this species breed in the outbuildings near to Sandford Lodge, which is not believed to have occurred at the time of carrying out baseline surveys in 2021. Furthermore, with the implementation of mitigation, involving the provision of two nest boxes prior to the commencement of construction, the impacts on barn owl from construction-related disturbance are expected to be reduced such that the residual effect will be negligible.

7.14.12. For all other species, no significant adverse effects are predicted from the Proposed Development.

7.14.13. Notwithstanding the above, a range of mitigation measures will be implemented to avoid any possible impacts on protected/notable species, as follows:

- pre-construction surveys will be carried out to confirm that no protected species are present in working areas;
- following completion of construction, all temporary construction laydown areas will be removed. As a minimum these will be restored to the same habitat that was present during baseline surveys. However, to deliver ecological enhancement, additional habitat improvements will also be made, as described in the Outline Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy Plan;
- biosecurity measures will be adopted to prevent the spread of invasive non-native plant species. Moreover, all identified sea buckthorn and Japanese rose within the Proposed Site will be eradicated;
- construction phase lighting will be kept to a minimum and used only in locations where needed. Lighting will be direction lighting and will use beam deflectors or similar to minimise light spill onto surrounding areas; and
- operational phase, permanent lighting will be designed taking account of best practice guidelines to minimise illumination of retained semi-natural habitats (e.g. scrub, woodland and areas of pasture) and will not, where possible, exceed 1 lux.

7.14.14. As mentioned above, an Outline Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy Plan has been prepared for the Proposed Development, setting out a range of enhancement measures that will be implemented and which exceed mitigation requirements. These will ensure that there is an overall ecological improvement provided by the Proposed Development. The Strategy includes the following enhancement measures:

- The habitat in the field north of the Sandford Lodge access track will be enhanced to create an area suitable for breeding wader species. This will include the creation of small ‘scrapes’ (shallow depressions which hold some water for much of the year), and potentially a larger pond in an area where ground conditions are damp, with scattered rushes. Other habitat enhancements to be investigated and implemented where possible will include the creation of areas of marsh/swamp. The aim will be for this area to become floristically diverse, and suitable for breeding and non-breeding waders. To increase breeding success, it will be necessary for the area to be fenced to exclude larger mammals (e.g. badger, otter and fox).
- Native scrub planting will be carried out on the inner embankment slope on the west side of the CCGT/CCP area. Species to be used may include gorse, blackthorn (in small amount) and hawthorn.
- Native woodland planting will be carried out around the western edge of the CCGT/CCP area at the top of the embankment slope.

- As stated above, the invasive non-native species sea buckthorn and Japanese rose present in the existing vegetation will be eradicated from the Site.
- A total of five bat boxes will also be installed in suitable locations within the Site, including at least one which is suitable to support a maternity colony.

7.14.15. Although not a statutory requirement in Scotland, an assessment of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was carried out using DEFRA's Biodiversity Metric Tool 3.0. It is recognised that newer version of the tool has become available since the baseline assessment submitted with the EIA Report in 2022, however the outcome of the assessment is not considered to have changed. Furthermore, the assessment will be revisited based on any final agreed plan for biodiversity mitigation and improvements. A description of the assessment is provided at Appendix 11H of the EIA Report (Volume 4). It was concluded that for 'area habitats' there would be a loss of -5.58%. This constitutes a small net loss for area habitats (results above -5% and below +5% are considered no net loss). For linear habitats, enhancement of the hedgerows along the track to Sandford Lodge gave a net gain result of +253%.

7.14.16. It should be noted that the faunal benefits of the proposed ponds/scrapes at the northern-most construction laydown area to benefit bird species such as waders are not taken account of or quantified in habitat BNG calculations above. Therefore, although the BNG calculations show a small net loss in terms of area habitats, it is considered reasonable to conclude that the Proposed Development will result in an overall BNG when the enhancements to linear habitats and wetland bird species habitat are taken into account. This is considered to be consistent with NPF4 Policy 3b, which requires all major development (including National Developments and EIA development) to include *"significant biodiversity enhancements"*.

7.14.17. There is no change to the assessment of effects at Chapter 11 as a result of the submission of the additional information.

7.15. WATER ENVIRONMENT AND FLOOD RISK

7.15.1. Chapter 12 of the EIA Report sets out the findings of the assessment of the Proposed Development upon the water environment. It should be read in conjunction with Chapter 13 'Flood Risk'.

7.15.2. The assessment has involved identifying key water bodies that may receive runoff or discharges either during construction or operation or that may be affected by temporary construction works, and assessing the potential contamination risk to these water bodies. The study area for surface water was defined based on the potential for impacts to occur (i.e. the surrounding 1 km and includes those watercourses crossed by or close to the Site as well as numerous ordinary watercourses in the study area).

7.15.3. The Den of Boddam Burn is culverted through the Site and discharges into Sandford Bay near Furrah Head. To accommodate the Proposed Development the culvert will be diverted from its existing route around the north of the Site and then tie-in with the existing discharge location at Sandford Bay.

7.15.4. It is proposed to discharge surface water runoff from the Site to Sandford Bay via the existing Power Station outfall, following suitable pollution prevention measures, including a combination of filter drains, oil interceptors and a filtration system for removal of sediment and pollutants. Bunds will be used in areas where spillages may occur. A Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) has been designed and will be implemented to restrict help restrict surface water discharge to the existing greenfield run-off rate. A detailed drainage strategy, which will have regard to the findings of the Flood Risk Assessment (Appendix 13A, EIA Report), will be defined and prepared for the Proposed

Development in consultation with the SEPA. It is anticipated that this will be secured by planning conditions.

7.15.5. With these measures, the effects of the Proposed Development upon surface water drainage and flood risk are not anticipated to be significant.

7.15.6. A Water Framework Direct Assessment (Appendix 12A, EIA Report) has been undertaken, which considers the potential effects of the construction and operational phases in relation to the following:

- cause a deterioration of a waterbody from its current status or potential; and/or
- prevent future attainment of good status or potential where not already achieved.

7.15.7. Construction activities such as earthworks, excavations, site preparation, levelling and grading operations can result in the disturbance of soils, and changes to groundwater and surface water runoff and flows which result in impacts upon groundwater and surface water resources. There is a risk that leaks and spillages of hazardous substances could pollute nearby surface watercourses if their use is not carefully controlled and spillages enter existing waterbodies. Through the implementation of a CEMP and embedded mitigation, including water quality monitoring, no significant adverse effects are predicted for the water environment during construction. The effect on all waterbodies is considered not significant.

7.15.8. Given the low importance of the Den of Boddam Burn for morphology, and based on its already heavily modified nature, including the culvert beneath the existing Power Station and the straightened nature of the channel upstream of the Site, the impacts of diverting the Burn are assessed as having a neutral (not significant) effect.

7.15.9. Cooling water from the low carbon generating station will be discharged to the North Sea (Sandford Bay) under a PPC Permit regulated by SEPA and be subject to monitoring and limit values on chemical and thermal releases. The proposed volumes associated with the cooling water discharge and the minimal anticipated thermal uplift will fall within the existing permit limits, and any impacts of thermal discharges are therefore assessed as having no impact on the temperature status of the North Sea. Further assessment of effluent quality and concentrations will be considered as part of the PPC Permit application.

7.15.10. No impacts are expected on the Water Framework Directive classifications for the North Sea and Sandford Bay area.

7.15.11. No significant impacts are predicted to surface water quality as a result of suspended fine sediments or chemical spillages during construction. Additionally, no significant impacts are anticipated for existing groundwater resources.

7.15.12. Foul water from welfare facilities will be treated on site using a package treatment plant and discharged to Sandford Bay via the existing Power Station outfall. The impact of foul water discharge is therefore considered to be not significant. Furthermore, there are no significant impacts reported for water quality, potential surface water pollution, water course morphology, groundwater resources or demand for water as a result of the operation of the Proposed Development.

7.15.13. Flood risk effects during construction, taking account of relevant control measures and mitigation are predicted to be minor adverse, which is not significant (Chapter 13, EIA Report, Section 13.6.2).

7.15.14. During operation, Chapter 13 of the EIA Report (Section 13.6.3) identifies that potential flood risk impacts may occur if appropriate mitigation is not applied. The risks are:

- flooding of the Site; and

- increased flooding of local roads and nearby properties through modification of ground levels and increased hardstanding, resulting in increased flow toward the A90.

7.15.15. Flood risk effects during operation, in terms of flooding at the Site, are predicted to be short-term but permanent major adverse due to the lack of freeboard resulting in the potential for shallow but widespread flooding at the Site, which is significant. This would be mitigated through the removal of a culvert to the Den of Boddam (at the Millbank garage site) and raising the Proposed Development platform. Flood risk effects in terms of flooding of local roads and residential properties are predicted to be minor adverse, which is not significant. Flood risk effects for the decommissioning phase, assuming that plant and equipment is removed but hardstanding and concrete is left in place, are expected to be no different to operation.

7.15.16. Subject to the implementation of all mitigation measures, no cumulative effects or significant adverse residual effects are identified in respect of flood risk.

7.15.17. There is no change to the assessment of water environment or flood risk effects as a result of the additional information submitted.

7.16. GROUND CONDITIONS

7.16.1. An assessment of the potential effects of the Proposed Development on ground conditions has been undertaken and the findings are reported at Chapter 14 'Ground Conditions' of the EIA Report. A desk-based assessment of historical ground conditions information and information from historical site investigations has been used to identify the potential effects associated with ground conditions using a source-pathway-receptor risk based approach. This is presented in Appendix 14A 'Phase 1 Desk-based Assessment' of the EIA Report.

7.16.2. The bedrock geology beneath the Site is Peterhead Pluton, classified as a low productivity aquifer. The superficial deposits beneath the Site are Hatton Till, Blown Sand and Marine Beach Deposits. Bedrock is anticipated to be present at an approximate depth of 8 to 20 m below ground level. The groundwater was indicated to be discontinuous and was encountered at highly variable depths beneath the Site, mostly within the superficial deposits. There are no records of surface water abstractions within the study area for the assessment, with the exception of one private abstraction approximately 470 m to the west.

7.16.3. The construction phase may introduce new sources of contamination due to potential leaks and spillages and could disturb and mobilise existing contamination within soils. Historical and current areas of potential contamination have been identified and areas of higher risk will be subject to further assessment before construction to inform the development of the detailed design and to validate assumptions made in the initial risk assessment.

7.16.4. Potential impacts during the construction phase include:

- Mobilising existing contamination in soil and groundwater as a result of ground disturbance and potential dewatering.
- Increasing the potential for contaminants in unsaturated soils to leach to groundwater in open excavations.
- Increasing the potential for contaminated surface run-off to migrate to surface water and groundwater receptors as a result of leaching from uncovered stockpiles.
- Introducing new sources of contamination, such as fuels and oils used by/in construction plant.
- Creating preferential pathways for the migration of soil contamination and gases, for example, along new below ground service routes, service ducts and as a result of potential dewatering.
- Introducing new human health receptors such as site staff during and post construction.

7.16.5. Best practice measures will be adopted to minimise pollution risks including the adoption of working methods to manage contamination risk to soils, groundwater, surface water, implementation of appropriate pollution incident control plans and procedures and the safe storage of fuel, oils and equipment. Impacts will be managed by appropriate construction mitigation measures (which will be outlined in the CEMP) and as such adverse effects on geology, soils or groundwater are not anticipated and have been assessed as not significant.

7.16.6. Potential impacts to soil quality, groundwater and watercourses could potentially occur during construction and or operation because of accidental spills from the handling or leakage of fuels, lubricants, stored chemicals and process liquids. However, with appropriate management, housekeeping and preventative maintenance practices (such as appropriate storage of potentially contaminating chemicals), as required by the PPC Permit that will be needed for the operational Site, potential impacts to soil and groundwater will be minimised. As such, effects have been assessed as not significant.

7.16.7. There is no change to the assessment of effects within Chapter 14 as a result of the additional information submitted.

7.17. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY

7.17.1. A landscape and visual impact assessment has been undertaken which considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity. The findings are presented in Chapter 15 'Landscape and Visual Amenity' of the EIA Report.

7.17.2. Baseline data has been gathered through desk study, review of aerial photography, consultation and site visits. Summer and winter photography has also been obtained from viewpoints.

7.17.3. The study area adopted for the assessment is relatively open and as such views tend to be expansive, particularly from higher ground and the coast. The topography tends to be gently undulated and generally falls from west to east toward the coast, although with local variation such as the series of low hills west of Boddam and south of Peterhead, which results in localised restriction of views. Trees and woodland are relatively sparse, largely limited to around rural properties or forming geometric shelterbelts along field boundaries, with some larger forestry blocks inland to the east. There are frequent open and fragmented views towards the Site, particularly from areas of higher ground to the west. The undulating topography in combination with existing buildings often limit more distant views, particularly from the south of Boddam and north of Peterhead. The existing Power Station is a notable and dominant feature in views toward the Site.

7.17.4. The study area for landscape and visual effects (extending 10 km from the Site) includes areas where it is considered that there is potential for significant direct or indirect effects on landscape character or sensitive views due to the construction or operation of the Proposed Development. The area in which the Proposed Development is likely to be visible has been defined using a computer model which shows the 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility' (ZTV) considering the largest possible dimensions for the main buildings and structures and a worst-case stack height up to a maximum of 130m above ordnance datum. The ZTV and 10 km radius study area have been used to identify locations which have potential views of the Site as well as those where visibility would be unlikely. Final viewpoints and sensitive receptors were identified through these methods and agreed with the planning authority.

7.17.5. The study area is not subject to any statutory or protected landscape designations or any national level landscape designations. However, parts of one local landscape designation, the North East

Aberdeenshire Special Landscape Area, are located within the study area to the north and south of Peterhead.

7.17.6. The Site and immediate surrounding area are influenced by a variety of man-made elements, including wind energy, electrical infrastructure and the existing Peterhead Power Station, as well as areas of residential dwellings. Beyond this to the west is a typical agricultural landscape containing few notable features.

7.17.7. The potential landscape impacts of the Proposed Development primarily relate to the visibility of proposed buildings and structures (temporary and permanent), including how this affects the overall landscape character of the area. The Proposed Development is assessed as likely to result in a moderate impact on the landscape, in terms of its physical elements during construction and operation because of the additional built elements and landscape changes such as landscaping and permanent diversion of the Den of Boddam Burn. The effects on overall landscape character are not however assessed as being significant.

7.17.8. Changes in views may give rise to adverse or beneficial visual effects, through obstruction in views, alteration of the parts of the view and the opening up of new views by removal of screening. To help to interpret the visual effects of the Proposed Development, a number of photomontages have been prepared which indicate existing baseline views and also representations of the Proposed Development using the maximum proposed heights of key built elements.

7.17.9. A total of eleven representative viewpoints have been assessed. The majority would experience visual amenity effects that are classified as adverse, but not significant during construction and operation. At two of the closest receptors at Viewpoint 4 (Reform Tower, Meet Hill, Peterhead) and Viewpoint 8 (Stirling Village / Lendrum Terrace), effects would be classified as significant due to the introduction of built structures against the skyline, making them more prominent and extending the amount of the view which includes large scale development. Additionally, there will be significant adverse effects during construction and operation experienced by residential receptors at Sandford Villa, Newmill of Sandford, Sandford Bungalow and Millbank Farm. Residential receptors at Bevailey and Millbank would experience significant adverse effects during the construction phase only. The remaining residential receptors will experience minor adverse effects, at most, during construction and operation.

7.17.10. An Outline Landscaping and Biodiversity Management Strategy Plan (Appendix 11H, EIA Report) has been produced and will be implemented. This includes proposals for planting at the Site, including enhancements to biodiversity, although this will not reduce the significance of visual effects at these locations.

7.17.11. The air quality assessment (Chapter 8, EIA Report) has identified the potential for the emissions from the CCP absorber stack to result in a visible plume. It is predicted that the average plume length is to be 203 m based on 2020 meteorological data.

7.17.12. It is not possible to eliminate all of the landscape and visual effects associated with thermal generating stations. The main buildings and structures for thermal generating stations are large and their size and scale is largely dictated by technology requirements, with limited scope to reduce their effects on landscape and visual amenity. In the case of Proposed Development, it will sit within an existing power generation site that is already dominated by the large buildings and structures associated with the existing Peterhead Power Station. It will be viewed within the context of the existing Power Station.

7.17.13. As confirmed in Section 5.0, the NPSs for nationally significant energy infrastructure can be relevant to decisions made by the Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the 1989 Act. It is notable that the Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1), paragraphs 5.10.5 and 5.10.13, recognises that

virtually all nationally significant energy infrastructure projects will have adverse effects on landscape as well as visual effects for many receptors around proposed sites. Furthermore, the NPS for Natural Gas Electricity Generating Infrastructure (EN-2) acknowledges (paragraph 2.5.3) that it is not possible to eliminate the landscape and visual impacts associated with a natural gas electricity generating station. With regard to decision-making, EN-1 (paragraph 5.10.35) states that the scale of energy projects means that they will often be visible across a very wide area and that decision-makers should judge whether any adverse impact will be so damaging that it is not offset by the benefits (including need) of the project.

7.17.14. The limited landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development therefore need to be weighed against its benefits, not least the contribution that it will make to the climate change objectives and the legally binding targets of achieving net zero GHG emissions. The low carbon generating station will also contribute to the security of electricity supplies in Scotland (providing much needed flexible back-up to intermittent renewable generation) and have significant benefits for the local and regional economy.

7.17.15. There is no change to the assessment of landscape and visual effects as a result of the additional information submitted.

7.18. CULTURAL HERITAGE

7.18.1. Chapter 16 of the EIA Report sets out the findings of the assessment of the potential effects of the Proposed Development upon cultural heritage assets. It identifies the location, type and significance of cultural heritage assets and their setting, and reports on the predicted impacts of the Proposed Development on these resources. The assessment considers the likely significance of effects upon cultural heritage assets by reference to their significance and the magnitude of any impacts. Chapter 16 has been informed by a detailed desk based Cultural Heritage Desk Based Assessment (Appendix 16A, EIA Report).

7.18.2. The Proposed Development has the greatest potential to impact on the setting of above ground scheduled monuments and built heritage and below ground archaeology during its construction phase. It is considered that the construction phase has potential to affect heritage assets in the following ways:

- Partial or total removal of below ground heritage assets.
- Compaction of archaeological remains by construction traffic and structures.
- Changes to local waterbodies that could affect preservation levels of heritage assets.
- Vibration effects that could cause physical damage during construction.
- Other adverse effects on the setting of heritage assets (e.g. due to visual intrusion, noise, severance, access and amenity etc).

7.18.3. Impacts on built heritage for a range of receptors was assessed. Sandford Lodge (Category B listed) and its associated walled garden (Category C listed) are located within a non-designated garden, all of which are within the Site. Due to the scale of the Proposed Development, it is envisaged that opportunities to provide effective landscape screening, over and above that already embedded in the design, will be limited. However, an additional bund is to be constructed to replace the existing bund, which is to be removed. Provision of this bund will maintain the significance of effect of Sandford Lodge at moderate adverse.

7.18.4. Due to the degree of previous disturbance within and surrounding the Site the Aberdeenshire County Archaeologist has confirmed that no archaeological mitigation works are required.

7.18.5. As with landscape and visual effects, the limited effects of the Proposed Development upon cultural heritage needs to be weighed against its very significant benefits.

7.18.6. There is no change to the assessment of cultural heritage effects in Chapter 16 as a result of the additional information submitted.

7.19. CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

7.19.1. As confirmed in Section 2.0, in line with recent case law and evolving policy and guidance, notably the Supreme Court decision in the R (Finch) – v – Surrey County Council case, and an update in the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) GHG Assessment guidance with regard to considering 'upstream' greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the Applicant has updated Chapter 18 'Climate Change and Sustainability' of the EIA Report submitted as part of the Application to consider the cumulative impact of both the Proposed Development and the existing Power Station running concurrently for a short period, in addition to taking upstream emissions into account. A updated version of the chapter was provided as part of the additional information submitted to the ECU in May 2025.

7.19.2. For the purposes of the Application, updated EIA Chapter 18 includes a 'worst case scenario' of the existing Peterhead Power Station remaining operational until 2040, which is the year the Applicant has committed to achieve net zero Scope 1 GHG emissions by. However, given the assumed deployment of new low carbon sources of flexible power, the Applicant expects to see reduced running of the existing Power Station over this period. The updated chapter has been provided to ensure that the Scottish Ministers have sufficient relevant environmental information when determining the Application.

7.19.3. The Proposed Development, involving the delivery of a new low carbon generating station, forming part of the wider Scottish Cluster, will clearly make a positive contribution toward climate change and sustainability objectives, including the Scottish Government's target to achieve net zero in terms of greenhouse gas emission by 2045. Updated Chapter 18 presents the assessment of the potential effects of the Proposed Development on climate change and considers the potential impact of future climate change and the surrounding environment. The assessment has been informed by an updated Sustainability Review, Appendix 18A of the EIA Report (also submitted as part of the additional information in May 2025), which includes an assessment of the Proposed Development during its operational phase against key sustainability themes.

7.19.4. The assessment of climate change and sustainability effects with Chapter 18 takes account of the following:

- a Lifecycle Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Impact Assessment; and
- a Climate Change Resilience (CCR) Assessment.

7.19.5. An In-combination Climate Change Impact (ICCI) Assessment was scoped out at the EIA scoping stage as it was accepted that other technical assessments and licences would identify, assess and mitigate these risks (Chapter 18, Table 18-6).

7.19.6. The study area for the GHG Impact Assessment includes all GHG emissions from within the Proposed Development Site boundary arising during all stages of the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. It also includes emissions arising from directly related offsite activities such as transport, and where possible, treatment of materials and waste disposal.

7.19.7. The identified receptor for GHG emissions is the global climate as the effects are not geographically constrained which means all development has the potential to result in a cumulative effect on GHG emissions. Therefore, for the purposes of the GHG Impact Assessment, the global climate will be used as the sensitive receptor. The UK's and Scotland's relevant five-year carbon budgets will be used as a proxy for the global climate, when they become available. At the time of updating Chapter 18, Scottish carbon budgets had not been proposed of ratified and therefore existing annual targets have been used to contextualise GHG emissions.

7.19.8. With regard to determining the significance of GHG emissions, IEMA (2022) guidance states that there are currently no agreed methods to evaluate levels of GHG significance and that professional judgement is required to contextualise the project's emission impacts. In GHG accounting, it is considered good practice to contextualise emissions against pre-determined carbon budgets (IEMA, 2022). Emissions from the Proposed Development have therefore been contextualised against Scottish and UK carbon budgets.

7.19.9. The study area for the CCR assessment is the Proposed Development itself. The types of receptors considered at risk to climate change are:

- construction phase receptors (i.e., workforce, plant and machinery);
- the Proposed Development assets and their functionality (i.e., pavements, structures, earthworks and drainage, technology assets, etc.); and
- end-users (i.e., staff and commercial operators etc.).

7.19.10. The significance of climate change risks is determined as a function of the likelihood or a climate risk occurring and the consequence to the receptor if the hazard occurs.

7.19.11. Section 18.5 of Chapter 18 sets out the development design and impact avoidance measures for the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development that have been factored into the GHG Impact Assessment and CCR Assessment.

7.19.12. Section 18.6 sets out likely impact and effects for the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. For the GHG Impact Assessment, these can be summarised as follows:

- Construction – Minor Adverse and Not Significant.
- Operation – Moderate Adverse and Significant (Chapter 18 explains at paragraph 18.6.2.32 that overall emissions from the Proposed Development will be demonstrably lower than a corresponding, unabated power station (76% lower generation carbon intensity than the existing Peterhead power station under the baseline 'do nothing' scenario), and that the Proposed Development is consistent with policy and good practice, but that the contextualisation of emissions against Scottish and UK carbon budgets and targets leads to an overall evaluation of significance for the Proposed Development's GHG impact of Moderate Adverse and Significant).
- Decommissioning – Moderate Adverse and Significant (Chapter 18 paragraph 18.6.3.2 explains that at this stage of the design, details regarding decommissioning activities have not been developed, however, they are assumed to be commensurate with emissions generated during the construction stage. Paragraph 18.6.3.3 goes onto state that as these decommissioning emissions would happen after net zero targets for both Scotland and the UK, the impact of any emissions would be classed as Moderate Adverse and Significant. Along with all residual emissions taking place beyond Scotland's net zero date of 2045, they would require to be balanced by removals elsewhere.

7.19.13. For the CCR Assessment likely impacts and effects can be summarised as follows:

- Construction – No significant climate change risks identified (Table 18-22 of Chapter 18 confirms that all risk levels are negligible or minor).
- Operation – No significant climate change risks identified (Table 18-28 of Chapter 18 confirms that risks are negligible or minor with the exception of the impact of droughts on the establishment of target habitats which has a risk level of 'Moderate' but that this is not significant as habitats restoration/enhancement areas will be monitored to determine the success of establishment).
- Decommissioning – No significant climate change risks identified (Table 18-27, Chapter 18 confirms that all risk levels are negligible or minor).

7.19.14. Cumulative effects are considered at Section 18.8 of Chapter 18. Paragraph 18.8.1.1 explains that climate change is the result of cumulative impacts as it is the result of innumerable minor activities, and that a single activity may itself result in a minor or insignificant impact, but when combined with many other activities, the cumulative impact could be significant. The nature of GHGs is such that their impact on receptors (the global climate) is not affected by the location or their source. The GHG emissions assessment presented is by its nature a cumulative assessment and considers whether the Proposed Development would contribute significantly to emissions on a national level.

7.19.15. Paragraph 18.8.1.3 of Chapter 18 continues by stating that it is generally not possible to define a study area for the assessment of effects of GHG emissions or to undertake a cumulative effects assessment as the identified receptor is the global climate and therefore effects are not geographically constrained. However, due to the Proposed Development occupying the same site location as an existing Power Station (Peterhead 1) and the potential for an inter-relationship in meeting grid generation needs with Peterhead 1, their cumulative emissions (Scope 1 and Scope 3 WTT) from the commencement of construction of the Proposed Development are presented in **Error! Reference source not found.** of Chapter 18. The combined operation of the existing Power Station and the Proposed Development has been described as the Future Modified Baseline in other chapters of the EIA Report and defined in Chapter 2 as the worst case. The Applicant has assumed as a worst case that the existing Power Station operating all three units (up to 1,180 MW) with an estimated annual load factor of 20%. In this scenario (paragraph 18.8.1.4) the existing Power Station is expected to provide a supporting role in conjunction with the Proposed Development up to 2040 in the event that the latter is commissioned. During an estimated 10-year period (2030-2039) emissions will be produced by both the existing Power Station and the Proposed Development, after which time operations and emissions will cease for the existing Power Station as it is decommissioned.

7.19.16. Paragraph 18.8.1.5 of Chapter 18 confirms that the cumulative effects of the two power stations operating together does not materially impact the outcome or significance of the operation GHG Assessment. Cumulative effects are not relevant to the CCR Assessment as it considers the impact of climate change on the Proposed Development itself (Chapter 18, paragraph 18.8.1.6).

7.20. COMBINED AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

7.20.1. Chapter 20 'Combined Amenity Effects and Summary of Inter-Project Effects' of the EIA Report considers the potential combined effects of the Proposed Development in addition to its potential cumulative effects with other identified plans and projects.

7.20.2. Table 20-2 in Chapter 20 summarises the combined effects of the Proposed Development during construction and Table 20-3 summarises the combined effects during operation. While there is the

potential for combined effects at some receptors during the construction and operational phases, it is considered that the significance of those combined effects would be no greater than the significance of any individual effect and the identified mitigation measures and commitments remain appropriate and no further measures are required as a result of the combined effects assessment.

7.20.3. In terms of cumulative effects, several other developments have been identified that may be constructed and operated in future that have the potential to generate cumulative effects together with the Proposed Development. These include (but are not limited to) the construction and operation of the Acorn Project and its associated CO_2 transportation infrastructure (to which the Proposed Development will connect), the NorthConnect Converter station and its associated underground electrical cables and a large-scale mixed-use development, including approximately 800 homes.

7.20.4. The potential for cumulative effects of the Proposed Development with these other developments has been considered for all of the environmental topics by a review of the available information (including published environmental information where available). Each chapter of the EIA Report details the full cumulative assessment for each topic (Chapters 8 to 19 of the EIA Report). The assessment has concluded that based on currently available information, no new significant cumulative effects are expected to occur during the construction or operation of the Proposed Development.

7.20.5. No material change has resulted to the combined and cumulative assessment as a result of the additional information submitted, including updated EIA Chapter 18, which now considers the cumulative effects of the existing Power Station operating with the Proposed Development. At paragraph 18.8.1.5 of Chapter 18 it is concluded that the two power stations operating together does not materially impact the outcome or significance of the operational GHG Assessment.

7.21. RESIDUAL EFFECTS

7.21.1. Updated Chapter 21 'Summary of Likely Significant Residual Effects' of the EIA Report provides a summary of the likely significant residual effects of the Proposed Development taking account of embedded mitigation and impact avoidance measures. These are set out at Table 21-1 of Chapter 21. The only change to the residual effects at Table 21-1 of the updated chapter relates to GHG emissions as a result of the updated assessment reported in updated Chapter 18. The significant residual effects of the Proposed Development identified (after mitigation) are set out below:

- A Moderate Adverse effect on visual amenity during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases on the Site landscape elements due to the introduction of built structures against the skyline, making them more prominent and extending the amount of view which includes large scale development. Mitigation opportunities are limited due to the size and scale of the Proposed Development but an integrated design approach that considers massing and placing of taller structures to minimise potential effects has the potential to reduce visual impacts.
- A Minor Adverse effect on visual amenity for residents during construction, operation and decommissioning at Viewpoint 6 and a Moderate Adverse effect on users of the northern half of the core path due to views of the Proposed Development during construction and operation.
- A Moderate Adverse effect on visual amenity for residents during construction, operation and decommissioning at the following viewpoints due to the presence of the Proposed Development:
  - Viewpoint 4;
  - Viewpoint 8; and
  - residential Receptors at Sandford Villa, Newmill of Sandford and Sandford Bungalow.

- A Moderate Adverse effect on visual amenity during for residential receptors at Bevailey and Millbank during construction and decommissioning.
- A Moderate Adverse effect to the setting of Sandford Lodge as a result of the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.
- A Moderate Adverse effect in relation to the low potential for removal of previously unrecorded archaeological remains.
- A Major Beneficial effect related to direct and indirect, and induced employment created by the construction phase of the Proposed Development on the wider impact areas economy.
- A Moderate Adverse effect in terms of GHG emissions during the operational and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development.

7.22. PLANNING CONDITIONS AND OBLIGATIONS

7.22.1. The Applicant has discussed draft planning conditions with the ECU. The ECU provided a schedule of draft planning conditions to the Applicant for comment. The ECU has also consulted Aberdeenshire Council on the wording of the draft planning conditions.

7.22.2. The Applicant submitted its final comments on an updated schedule of draft planning conditions to the ECU and Aberdeenshire Council on 2 September 2024.

7.22.3. The planning conditions will be used to secure details of the design and layout of the Proposed Development and a number of plans and strategies (e.g. CEMP, CWTP, Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy) to control the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development.

7.22.4. The Applicant has not identified any mitigation that will require entering into a planning obligation and a planning obligation has not been identified as necessary by Aberdeenshire Council or the ECU.

7.23. SUMMARY

7.23.1. The assessment of the Proposed Development set out in this section confirms the following:

- There is a clear need for the Proposed Development, and this is confirmed by Scottish energy and climate change legislation and policy and Scottish planning policy in the form of NPF4, which identifies the Proposed Development as part of a National Development (the Scottish Cluster), the need for which is confirmed and not open to debate. Furthermore, the Uk Government's NPSs for energy, notably EN-1, which can be relevant to decisions made by the Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the 1989 Act, confirms the need for new CCGT generating stations with CCS/CCUS and states that such infrastructure is CNP infrastructure for the UK, including Scotland, and that the urgent need for such infrastructure will in general outweigh any other residual impacts in all but the most exceptional cases.
- The Applicant has taken a proportionate approach to the consideration of alternatives.
- The Proposed Development is appropriate in land use planning terms and incorporates the principles of good design, including appropriate landscape and biodiversity enhancement.
- The Proposed Development will be CHP Ready and satisfies the requirements of the CCR Regulations.
- The Proposed Development will have significant benefits for the local and regional economy and help underpin the development of the Scottish Cluster. The EIA undertaken identifies major beneficial effects for socio-economics, tourism and recreation (mainly through the

provision of a significant number of direct and indirect construction jobs and the creation of supply chain opportunities) as well as sustainability.

- The EIA for the Proposed Development has identified a limited number of significant adverse residual effects. These include Moderate Adverse effects relating to landscape and visual amenity, cultural heritage and GHG emissions (the operational GHG emissions assessment being based on a 'worst case' scenario of the Proposed Development operating in combination with the existing Power Station up to 2040).
- No conflict has been identified between the Proposed Development and national or local planning policy. Aberdeenshire Council submitted its consultation response on the Application to the ECU on 30 June 2023 confirming that planning officers had reported the Application to the Council's Infrastructure Services Committee on 15 June 2023 with a recommendation of 'No Objection' to the Application subject to the appended Schedule of Conditions, removal of the holding objection from SEPA (SEPA withdrew its objection on 19 September 2023) and a statement (by the Council) in respect of duties it's under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The Infrastructure Services Committee agreed the planning officer recommendation of 'No Objection'. The planning officer's report did not identify any conflict between the Proposed Development and relevant policies of NPF4 or the Aberdeenshire LDP.

7.23.2. In determining the Application, Scottish Ministers must take account of relevant policy and weigh any adverse residual effects of the Proposed Development against its benefits – the 'Planning Balance'. Those benefits are substantial and include the Proposed Development's contribution toward important energy and climate change objectives and targets, the security and reliability of electricity supplies in Scotland and the local and regional economy, in accordance with Scottish energy and planning policy. Furthermore, Aberdeenshire Council's own assessment of the Application is that there is no conflict between the Proposed Development and relevant policies of NPF4 or its own LDP. With regard to the weighing of benefits against adverse effects, it is important to note that NPS EN-1, which as stated earlier within this Planning Statement, can be relevant to decisions in Scotland under Section 36 of the 1989 Act, confirms that the urgent need for CNP infrastructure, such as that proposed, will in general outweigh any residual impacts of the development in all but the most exceptional cases. CNP policy (paragraph 4.2.15 of NPS EN-1) in effect creates a presumption in favour of consent. The exception to this is where infrastructure will present an unacceptable risk to, or unacceptable interference with, human health and public safety, defence, irreplaceable habitats or an unacceptable risk to the achievement of net zero, flood risk, coastal erosion or navigation. The Proposed Development will not result in any such unacceptable risks or interferences.

8. Conclusions

8.1.1. This Updated Planning Statement has assessed the proposed Peterhead Low Carbon Power Station Project (the 'Proposed Development') having regard to Scottish energy and climate change legislation and policy, other relevant energy and climate change policy (e.g. issued by the UK Government), national and local planning policy, the EIA undertaken by the Applicant (including updates and additional information) and any other material planning considerations.

8.1.2. The following conclusions can be drawn from the updated assessment:

- While Scottish energy and climate change legislation and policy forms the primary basis for decisions by the Scottish Ministers under Section 36 of the 1989 Act, UK Government energy and climate change policy can be relevant to decisions by the Scottish Ministers on energy infrastructure projects.
- The need for the Proposed Development is confirmed by Scottish energy and climate change legislation and policy, relevant UK Government energy and climate change policy and national planning policy in the form of NPF4, with NPF4 identifying the Proposed Development as part of a National Development (the Scottish Cluster), the need for which is confirmed and not open to debate. The Proposed Development will help underpin the development of the Scottish Cluster and also contribute toward ensuring the reliability and security of electricity supplies in Scotland by providing flexible back-up generation that will add resilience to the system given the increasing reliance on intermittent renewable technologies. Furthermore, the UK Government's NPSs for energy infrastructure, notably EN-1, confirms the need for new CCGT generating stations with CCS/CCUS and states that such infrastructure is CNP infrastructure for the UK, including Scotland, and that the urgent need for such infrastructure will in general outweigh any other residual impacts in all but the most exceptional cases.
- The Applicant has taken a proportionate approach to the consideration of alternatives reflecting the fact that the Site forms part of an existing power station site and is within a location that is identified in NPF4 as part of National Development 15 (the Scottish Cluster Industrial Green Transition Zone) where thermal power generation capacity with CCS/CCUS technology is considered to be appropriate development.
- The Proposed Development is also appropriate in land use planning terms, being located within an existing operational power site that is in a location identified at national level (NPF4) for thermal power generation and CCS/CCUS, while it primarily involves the use of previously developed land.
- The approach that has been taken by the Applicant to the design of the Proposed Development is considered to be both proportionate and appropriate given the context within which it will sit. It represents good design and incorporates appropriate landscape and biodiversity enhancements.
- The Proposed Development will be CHP Ready and also satisfies the requirements of the CCR Regulations and relevant guidance.
- The Proposed Development will have significant benefits for the local and regional economy and help underpin the Scottish Cluster. The EIA undertaken identifies major beneficial effects for socio-economics, tourism and recreation (mainly through the provision of a significant number of direct and indirect construction jobs and the creation of supply chain opportunities) as well as sustainability.
- The EIA for the Proposed Development has identified a limited number of significant adverse residual effects. These are Moderate Adverse effects relating to landscape and visual amenity (primarily views from residential properties), cultural heritage (setting impacts to Sandford Lodge and in relation to the low potential for removal of previously unrecorded archaeological

remains) and GHG emissions (the operational GHG Assessment being based on a 'worst case' scenario of the Proposed Development operating in combination with the existing Power Station).

- No conflict has been identified between the Proposed Development and national or local planning policy. Aberdeenshire Council submitted its consultation response on the Application to the ECU on 30 June 2023 confirming that planning officers had reported the Application to the Council's Infrastructure Services Committee on 15 June 2023 with a recommendation of 'No Objection' to the Application subject to the appended Schedule of Conditions, removal of the holding objection from SEPA (SEPA withdrew its objection on 19 September 2023) and a statement (by the Council) in respect of duties it's under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The Infrastructure Services Committee agreed the planning officer recommendation of 'No Objection'. The planning officer's report did not identify any conflict between the Proposed Development and relevant policies of NPF4 or the Aberdeenshire LDP.

8.1.3. In determining the Application, Scottish Ministers must take account of relevant policy and weigh any adverse residual effects of the Proposed Development against its benefits – the 'Planning Balance'. Those benefits are substantial and include the Proposed Development's contribution toward important energy and climate change objectives and targets, the security and reliability of electricity supplies in Scotland and the local and regional economy, in accordance with Scottish energy and planning policy. Furthermore, Aberdeenshire Council's own assessment of the Application is that there is no conflict between the Proposed Development and relevant policies of NPF4 or its own LDP. With regard to the weighing of benefits against adverse effects, it is important to note that NPS EN-1, which as stated earlier within this Planning Statement, can be relevant to decisions in Scotland under Section 36 of the 1989 Act, confirms that the urgent need for CNP infrastructure, such as that proposed, will in general outweigh any residual impacts of the development in all but the most exceptional cases. CNP policy (paragraph 4.2.15 of NPS EN-1) in effect creates a presumption in favour of consent. The exception to this is where infrastructure will present an unacceptable risk to, or unacceptable interference with, human health and public safety, defence, irreplaceable habitats or an unacceptable risk to the achievement of net zero, flood risk, coastal erosion or navigation. The Proposed Development will not result in any such unacceptable risks or interferences. Its substantial benefits clearly outweigh its limited adverse residual effects, and it should therefore be approved in line with the CNP infrastructure approach.

8.1.4. To conclude, it is considered this Planning Statement demonstrates, taking account of the additional information submitted to the Scottish Ministers, that the original conclusions of the March 2022 application submission remain valid, and that the Proposed Development complies with relevant energy and planning policy and that in view of its very substantial benefits Section 36 consent and deemed planning permission should be granted.