

# Report

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| Report to:       | <b>Community and Enterprise Resources Committee</b>            |
| Date of Meeting: | <b>29 August 2023</b>  |
| Report by:       | <b>Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)</b> |

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| Subject: | <b>Hagshaw Energy Cluster Development Framework</b> |
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ inform the Committee of the work undertaken to prepare and adopt the Development Framework for the Hagshaw Energy Cluster as Supporting Planning Guidance

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the Development Framework for the Hagshaw Energy Cluster, which will be used as Supporting Planning Guidance, be noted.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. In late 2019, South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) was invited by NatureScot to take part in a pilot cross-boundary project bringing together renewable energy developers, working cross-boundary alongside East Ayrshire Council, NatureScot and Architecture and Design Scotland, to explore how a more strategic, joined-up approach to renewable energy development could be taken that could achieve greater longer term and multiple benefits.
- 3.2. The project centres around Hagshaw Hill, which sits on the western edge of South Lanarkshire, between the communities of Coalburn and Douglas in South Lanarkshire and Muirkirk in East Ayrshire. The area is well established as a renewable energy location; the original Hagshaw Hill Windfarm, constructed in 1995, was Scotland's first commercial windfarm. Since that time, further windfarm development has taken place with the operational windfarm developments and those consented but not yet implemented having a generating capacity of 584 MW, comprising approximately 190 turbines. There is future potential for proposals for the re-powering of existing windfarms (involving the replacement of the original turbines with new larger turbines), possible extensions to existing developments and the co-location of other renewable energy technologies such as hydrogen generation and solar energy which makes Hagshaw an ideal area of focus for this work.
- 3.3. In July 2021, Land Use Consultants (LUC) were commissioned by NatureScot, in collaboration with the 2 councils and windfarm developers, to prepare a development framework for the cluster. The framework sets out a long-term vision for the Hagshaw cluster as a place which *'delivers optimised renewable energy generation and contributes towards Scotland's Just Transition to Net Zero, whilst delivering*

*sustainable and inclusive growth for local communities. Integrated nature-based solutions, with enhanced connectivity supporting healthy, resilient communities and ecosystems, in response to the challenges of climate and biodiversity emergencies’.* The vision is underpinned by 6 interrelated themes that projects should seek to deliver on: -

- ◆ Realising the renewable energy opportunity
- ◆ Resilient and connected communities
- ◆ Co-ordinated enhancement of nature
- ◆ A strong identity, of heritage, people and place
- ◆ Inclusive, sustainable growth
- ◆ Outdoor recreation to support health and wellbeing

- 3.4. The purpose of the Framework is twofold. Firstly, it sets out, at a strategic level, the opportunities for the cluster in terms of maximising renewable energy output and provides guidance on the location and design of future renewable energy projects in the subject area. The surrounding landscape has undergone significant change as a result of the opportunities created by renewable energy projects and it is important that a shared and collaborative vision is taken to manage any future development so that the distinctive character of the area and its communities is retained, and where possible enhanced.
- 3.5. The Framework is also an opportunity to deliver a far greater range and scale of social, economic and environmental benefits for communities, the environment, and the local economy in a more collaborative and co-ordinated way while minimising any negative environmental impacts. The approach of bringing windfarm developers together in this way is the first time of its kind in Scotland. It provides a vision for the future of the area, with the flexibility to evolve in order to address future challenges and achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2045.
- 3.6. A copy of the Development Framework for the Hagshaw Energy Cluster as Supporting Planning Guidance is contained in Appendix 1 of this report and can be viewed online via the following [link](#).

#### **4. Current position**

- 4.1. A report on a draft Framework was presented to the Planning Committee on 11 October 2022 with the purpose of ultimately adopting the document as Supporting Planning Guidance (SPG) The Committee agreed to approve the draft Framework document and for a 6-week consultation process to be carried out which was undertaken in November and December 2022. The Planning Committee agreed that, if following consultation, no significant changes were required to be made to the draft document, the guidance would be adopted by the Council as SPG. If significant changes were required a further report would be brought to Planning Committee.
- 4.2. The consultation did not raise any significant issues and the Framework has received support across the area and the renewable energy industry. Some minor changes have been made to reflect representations received. In addition, it has been updated to reflect the new Onshore Wind Policy Statement published by the Scottish Government in December 2022 and the adoption of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) in February this year. The overall principles and vision in the draft version remain unchanged.
- 4.3. Since the report to the Planning Committee, the Council has appointed an Economic Development Officer on a temporary contract with the specific remit for the communities of Coalburn, Douglas, Glespin, Lesmahagow and Rigsides, in the Douglas

Valley, in which Hagshaw sits. The SLC administered Douglas Valley Advisory Group (DVAG) has been set up as a 10 member strong group, featuring representation from all the community councils/Tenants and Residents Association plus individual community members. Their key aim is to provide strategic overview and direction to new investment proposals and to advise the Council on community benefit investment. They are currently progressing an Outdoor Recreation and Adventure Tourism Feasibility Study and Concept Designs for the Douglas Valley area.

- 4.4. The potential value of community benefit from the Hagshaw Cluster at a generating capacity of 584 MW is £2.9 million per annum, the Councils position is that the Renewable Energy Fund (REF) is the preferred mechanism for distributing funds and the DVAG as an initiative that would provide strategic direction. Community benefits generated by windfarms can be administered out with the Council at operators' discretion and discussions are ongoing with operators as to future community benefit funding structures and mechanisms.
- 4.5. Enterprise and Sustainable Development remain the point of contact for the Developer Group and Landowner Forum who meet quarterly to maintain communications and development in relation to priorities highlighted in the Development Framework.

## **5. Next Steps**

- 5.1. As a result of the Framework being adopted as SPG, it is now a material consideration in determining related planning applications alongside NPF4 and the adopted South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2. Opportunities to apply this approach to other clusters of renewable energy development within South Lanarkshire will be explored. The Framework is designed to be in place for at least 10 years and will be reviewed and updated as required, for example to reflect the changing baseline context, or to respond to changing planning and/or energy policy. To reflect the changing response to the climate and biodiversity emergency, and the evolution of renewable energy technologies, the implementation of the Framework will be monitored by the 2 planning authorities and reviewed every 5 years.
- 5.2. The Outdoor Recreation and Adventure Tourism Feasibility Study and Concept Designs scope will be procured and managed through Economic Development with community, landowner and stakeholder input. Further priorities will be identified for pursual with the DVAG.
- 5.3. Negotiations will continue with communities and operators as to the mechanism for administering community benefit funds for the benefit of the local area.

## **6. Employee Implications**

- 6.1. The monitoring of the document and subsequent implementation of the project will be carried out using existing staff resources within Planning and Regulatory Services.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1. There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

## **8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**

- 8.1. In accordance with the relevant legislation, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report for the draft Framework has been prepared and submitted to the statutory Consultation Authorities (Historic Environment Scotland, NatureScot and Scottish Environment Protection Agency) for their consideration. They have confirmed that a SEA is not required.

- 8.2. The Framework will enable renewable energy generation to contribute positively and efficiently towards Scotland's Just Transition to Net Zero, whilst delivering sustainable and inclusive growth for local communities. Delivery of integrated nature-based solutions, with enhanced connectivity supporting healthy, resilient communities and ecosystems, in response to the challenges of the climate and biodiversity emergency.

## **9. Other Implications**

- 9.1. There are no risks or other implications as a result of this report.

## **10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 10.1. This report does not introduce a new or recommend a change to existing policy, function or strategy, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

**David Booth**

**Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)**

7 August 2023

## **Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes**

- ◆ Focused on people and their needs
- ◆ We will work towards a sustainable future in sustainable places
- ◆ We will work to recover, progress and improve
- ◆ Caring, connected, sustainable communities

## **Previous References**

- ◆ Planning Committee - 11 October 2022 - South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2 Supporting Planning Guidance: Hagshaw Energy Cluster Development Framework

## **List of Background Papers**

- ◆ A Development Framework for the Hagshaw Energy Cluster Consultative Draft October 2022
- ◆ Report to Executive Committee March 2022 Community Benefit Funds New Contributions Douglas West Windfarm

## **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact: -

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