

**Delegated or Committee Planning Application Report and Report of handling as required by Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008 relative to applications for Planning Permission or Planning Permission in Principle**

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**Reference No:** 12/00838/PP

**Planning Hierarchy:** Local application.

**Applicant:** Northern Energy Developments Limited

**Proposal:** Development of land without compliance with Condition 1 of Planning Permission reference 08/00309/DET - Erection of a wood fired combined heat and power plant and formation of vehicular access.

**Site Address:** Land to north of Dalinlongart Waste Disposal Site, Sandbank

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**DECISION ROUTE**

**(i) Local Government Scotland Act 1973**

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**(A) THE APPLICATION**

**(i) Development Requiring Express Planning Permission**

- Erection of a wood fired combined heat and power plant and formation of vehicular access (permission to extend original permission by 3 years to 9 June 2016).

**(ii) Other specified operations.**

- None.
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**(B) RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions, reasons and advisory notes set out below.

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**(C) HISTORY:**

Planning permission (ref. 08/00309/DET) for the erection of a wood fired combined heat and power plant and formation of vehicular access was granted on 9 June 2008.

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**(D) CONSULTATIONS:**

None.

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**(E) PUBLICITY:**

Regulation 20(1) Advert (publication date 4 May 2012, expiry 25 May 2012).

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**(F) REPRESENTATIONS:**

No letters of representation have been received.

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**(G) SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Has the application been the subject of:

- (i) **Environmental Statement: N**
  - (ii) **An appropriate assessment under the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994: N**
  - (iii) **A design or design/access statement: N**
  - (iv) **A report on the impact of the proposed development e.g. Retail impact, transport impact, noise impact, flood risk, drainage impact etc: Y**
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**(H) PLANNING OBLIGATIONS**

- (i) **Is a Section 75 agreement required: N**
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- (I) **Has a Direction been issued by Scottish Ministers in terms of Regulation 30, 31 or 32: N**
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- (J) **Section 25 of the Act; Development Plan and any other material considerations over and above those listed above which have been taken into account in the assessment of the application**

- (i) **List of all Development Plan Policy considerations taken into account in assessment of the application.**

**Argyll and Bute Structure Plan 2002**

STRAT SI1 Sustainable Development;  
STRAT DC5 Development in Sensitive Countryside;  
STRAT DC8 Landscape and Development Control;  
STRAT RE2 Other Forms of (Non-Wind Energy) Renewable Energy Related Development.

**Argyll and Bute Local Plan (August 2009)**

LP ENV 1 Development Impact Setting, Layout and Design including Appendix A Sustainable Siting and Design Principles;  
LP ENV 10 Development Impact on Areas of Panoramic Quality;  
LP ENV 19 Development Setting, Layout and Design including Appendix A Sustainable Siting and Design Principles;  
LP BAD 1 Bad Neighbour Development;  
LP REN3 Other (Non-Wind) Forms of Renewable Energy Related Development

**(ii) List of all other material planning considerations taken into account in the assessment of the application, having due regard to Annex A of Circular 4/2009.**

SPP, Scottish Planning Policy, 2010  
Annex to Planning Advice Note 45: Renewable Energy Technologies

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**(K) Is the proposal a Schedule 2 Development not requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment: N**

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**(L) Has the application been the subject of statutory pre-application consultation (PAC): N**

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**(M) Has a sustainability check list been submitted: N**

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**(N) Does the Council have an interest in the site: Y** Argyll and Bute Council own the Dalinlongart Waste Management site.

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**(O) Requirement for a hearing (PAN41 or other): N**

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**(P) Assessment and summary of determining issues and material considerations**

Planning permission (ref. 08/00309/DET) was previously granted on 9 June 2008 for a wood fired combined heat and power plant within the Council's Waste Management Facility at Dalinlongart. This permission is due to expire on 9 June 2013. The applicant's agent has confirmed that due to unforeseen delays in the procurement process and the offer of a grid connection date beyond 9 June 2013, a revised construction schedule has been adopted for the project. As a result, it may not be possible to implement this consent within the prescribed period and as a precautionary measure, the applicants request an extension to the approved permission by which development must commence by three years to 9 June 2016.

The scheme is unchanged from the previous approval and the only physical change has been some tree felling on the western side of the approach road to the Waste Management Facility to the south of the development site. In respect of policy assessment, the Argyll and Bute Local Plan together with the Argyll and Bute Structure Plan forms the Development Plan (the Cowal Local was still in force at the time of the last approval). The original report is replicated and updated below for consistency with a new advisory note for commencement of development.

The proposal is still considered to be acceptable in terms of use, siting, design and materials subject to the conditions below but requires to be determined by Committee due to Council ownership of the site.

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**(Q) Is the proposal consistent with the Development Plan: Y**

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**(R) Reasons why planning permission or a Planning Permission in Principle should be granted**

Planning permission has already been granted for the proposed development and this application is to extend the life of the permission by a further three years and covered by an advisory note.

The scheme is unaltered from the originally approved scheme. The proposed biomass plant and associated works would have a limited visual impact in the surrounding landscape and consistent with policies STRAT SI1, STRAT DC5, STRAT DC8, and STRAT RE2 of the Argyll and Bute Structure Plan; and to policies LP ENV1, LP ENV 10, LP ENV 19, LP BAD 1 and LP REN 2 of the Argyll and Bute Local Plan (2009). The proposed development would accord with the policies above and there are no material considerations which would justify refusal of permission.

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**(S) Reasoned justification for a departure from the provisions of the Development Plan.**

*n/a*

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**(T) Need for notification to Scottish Ministers or Historic Scotland: N**

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**Author of Report: Brian Close**

**Date: 23 May 2012**

**Reviewing Officer: David Eaglesham**

**Date: May 2012**

**Angus Gilmour  
Head of Planning & Regulatory Services**

## CONDITIONS AND REASONS RELATIVE TO APPLICATION REF. 12/00838/PP

1. For the avoidance of doubt, the development shall be implemented in accordance with the details specified on the application form dated 16 April 2012 and accompanying site location plan no. MG372/PA/F/01; and to the following drawings approved under planning permission ref. 08/00309/DET – HG347/PA/F/01, HG347/PA/F/02, HG347/PA/F/09, HG336/PA/F/04, HG347/PA/F/06, HG347/PA/F/05, unless the prior written approval of the Planning Authority is obtained for an amendment to the approved details under Section 64 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

**Reason:** *For the purpose of clarity, to ensure that the development is implemented in accordance with the approved details.*

2. No development shall be commenced until a Construction Method Statement (CMS) has been submitted to and has been approved in writing by the Planning Authority following consultation with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the provisions of the duly approved CMS.

**Reason:** *In order to ensure that construction activities have regard to pollution control and amenity considerations.*

3. No development shall be commenced until a detailed Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) Scheme (designed in accordance with the agreed Draft Drainage Assessment/SuDS Strategy) has been submitted to and has been approved in writing by the Planning Authority following consultation with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Scottish Water. This shall have regard to the provisions of the outline drainage assessment submitted with the application and shall seek to minimise surface water run-off from the site. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the provisions of the duly approved scheme.

**Reason:** *In order to prevent potential pollution of controlled waters.*

4. No development shall be commenced until a Site Waste Management Plan has been submitted to and has been approved in writing by the Planning Authority following consultation with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. This shall address the intended means of dealing with waste arising during the construction process and during the operational phase of the development. The development shall be implemented and operated in accordance with the provisions of the duly approved management plan.

**Reason:** *In the interests of waste minimisation and pollution control.*

5. Prior to the commencement of development, samples and/or full details of the materials/colour finishes to be applied to the boiler/turbine building, the cooling plant, chimney, wood chip handling equipment and portable buildings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. These shall comprise recessive colours appropriate to a forested location (e.g. a non-reflective material, dark green in colour). The development shall be completed in accordance with the duly approved details and shall be retained as such unless any subsequent variation thereof is agreed in advance in writing by the Planning Authority.

**Reason:** *In order to help assimilate the development into its landscape setting in the interests of visual amenity.*

6. All emissions from the combined heat and power plant shall discharge from a chimney which shall not exceed an overall height of 30.0 metres.

**Reason:** *In order to ensure that chimney height is limited to that necessary to safeguard air quality, in the interests of visual amenity.*

7. Prior to the commencement of development, a dispersion modelling exercise shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority to ensure that the air quality of the residential properties at Ballochyle and Sandhaven will not exceed stated objectives by the grounding of the plume from the 30-metre high stack.

**Reason:** *In the interests of the amenity of the area and the protection of local air quality.*

8. Prior to the commencement of development, a chimney height assessment using Technical Guidance Note D1 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, if the boiler is not to require authorisation as a prescribed process by SEPA.

**Reason:** *In the interests of the amenity of the area and the protection of local air quality.*

9. Prior to commencement of development, section drawings through the site indicating a finished floor level for the boiler/turbine building relative to a fixed datum on the existing forestry road on the eastern boundary shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. This shall also include full details of any cut and fill operations required and the development shall be implemented in accordance with the duly approved details.

**Reason:** *In order to minimise the overall height of the building relative to surrounding ground levels in the interests of visual amenity.*

10. No development shall commence until the developer has secured a programme for the management of woodland within 50m of the site boundary (including the selective felling, management and re-stocking of this area), in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority. Thereafter this area shall be retained and managed in accordance with the duly approved programme unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

**Reason:** *In order to ensure tree management and replacement in the interests of visual amenity.*

11. Prior to commencement of development, a Noise Impact Assessment for the chipping operation and operation of the plant shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The levels of noise arising from the operation of the combined heat and power plant shall not exceed the existing pre-determined background noise levels at the boundaries of the nearest noise sensitive properties (at Balagowan, Gleann Ban - and at An Creachan, Glen Kin) as agreed with the Planning Authority in consultation with Public Protection. All noise measurements shall be conducted in accordance with BS4142:1997.

**Reason:** *In order to prevent noise disturbance to nearby properties.*

12. Prior to the commencement of development, a scheme for the protection of the nearest residential properties from noise from the boiler/turbine plant and chipping operation shall be submitted to and be approved in writing by the Planning Authority. This scheme shall include details of any sound insulation to be provided on the western and northern elevations of the boiler/turbine building to achieve the noise limits specified in condition 11 above, and of any acoustic barriers to the site of the chipping operation. The

development shall not be implemented and operated otherwise than in accordance with the duly approved details.

**Reason:** *In order to ensure compliance with the terms of the permission.*

13. Prior to the commencement of operation of the combined heat and power plant, a noise assessment plan shall be submitted and approved by the Planning Authority which shall include details of the monitoring to be carried out in order to ensure compliance with conditions 11 and 12 above.

**Reason:** *In order to prevent noise disturbance to nearby properties.*

14. Notwithstanding any submitted details, wood chipping shall only take place between the hours of 0700 and 1800 hours Mondays to Fridays, excluding Scottish public holidays, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority in consultation with Public Protection.

**Reason:** *In order to prevent noise disturbance to nearby properties.*

15. Notwithstanding any submitted details, vehicle movements, collections and deliveries, and all other on-site external operations including the handling and loading of woodchips, to, from and within the site shall be limited to 0700 and 1800 hours Mondays to Fridays, excluding Scottish public holidays, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Planning Authority in consultation with Public Protection.

**Reason:** *In order to prevent noise disturbance to nearby properties.*

16. The development shall only operate with the abatement equipment, including the electrostatic precipitator, in operation. In the event of failure of any abatement plant, the operator shall cease the combustion process as soon as reasonably practicable and the process shall not recommence until the abatement plant has returned to full working order.

**Reason:** *In the interests of the amenity of the area and the protection of local air quality.*

17. Prior to the commencement of development, details of the wood chip storage arrangements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, and the development shall not be operated other than in accordance with the duly approved details. These plans shall make particular reference to the management of dust on site.

**Reason:** *In the interests of amenity.*

18. Prior to work starting on site, full details of any external lighting to be used within the site and along its access shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. Such information shall include full details of the location, type and angle of direction and wattage of each light, which shall be so positioned and angled to prevent any glare or light spillage outwith the site boundary. For the purposes of this condition, any external lighting installations shall be designed to conform with Scottish Executive Guidance Note Controlling Light Pollution and Reducing Lighting Energy Consumption and having regard to the Institute of Lighting Engineers Guidance.

**Reason:** *In order to avoid the potential of light pollution infringing on surrounding land uses/properties.*

## **ADVISORY NOTES TO APPLICANT**

3. This planning permission will last until 9 June 2016, unless the development has been started within that period.
4. In order to comply with Section 27A(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, prior to works commencing on site it is the responsibility of the developer to complete and submit the attached 'Notice of Initiation of Development' to the Planning Authority specifying the date on which the development will start.
5. In order to comply with Section 27B(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 it is the responsibility of the developer to submit the attached 'Notice of Completion' to the Planning Authority specifying the date upon which the development was completed.
6. The applicant was previously advised by Scottish Water (for permission ref. 08/00309/DET) that:

- Due to the size of the development it is necessary for Scottish Water to assess the impact of this development on our existing infrastructure. In this regard the developer is strongly advised to make contact with Scottish Water Development Planning Team to discuss further.

For the advisory note above, the applicant/developer is advised to contact Scottish Water directly (Planning and Development Services, 419 Balmore Road, Glasgow G22 6NU, Susan Miller, Customer Connections, Tel. 0845 601 8855 or at [www.scottishwater.co.uk](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk))

7. The applicant/developer was previously advised (for permission ref. 08/00309/DET) that in terms of construction and operational noise the Public Protection Service can use powers under the Control of Pollution Act 1974 (as amended) to control the noise from construction/operational work.

Prior to the commencement of any construction works, the applicant is requested to discuss with the Council's Area Environmental Health Manager, Mr. Jo Rains, tel 01369 707120 ext 24

8. The applicant/developer was previously advised by Scottish Environment Protection Agency (for permission ref. 08/00309/DET) that this activity will not be directly regulated by SEPA and issues or nuisance arising from this activity will be the responsibility of the Environmental Health Department of Argyll and Bute Council. The applicant is provided with Regulatory Advice by SEPA on CAR Regulations and Pollution Prevention and Waste Management that is included in SEPA's response dated 9th April 2008.



**APPENDIX A – RELATIVE TO APPLICATION NUMBER: 12/00838/PP (the following appendix has been replicated from the original permission ref. 08/00309/DET but updated in terms of the Argyll and Bute Local Plan replacing the Cowal Local Plan).**

## **PLANNING LAND USE AND POLICY ASSESSMENT**

### **A. Settlement Strategy**

The 2.60 hectare site forms part of a larger forestry plantation of Dalinlongart Wood that already contains the Council's Waste Disposal Site. Within the Argyll and Bute Local Plan , the site is located within an area of 'Sensitive Countryside' located between an area of Panoramic Quality to the west and Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park area to the east.

The proposal is subject to adopted structure plan policies STRAT SI 1, STRAT DC5 and STRAT RE 2 which support the principles of sustainable development, including renewable forms of electricity generation. There is a general presumption in favour of the development established by these policies, provided that local environmental considerations are not compromised.

Policy REN 3 of the Argyll and Bute Local Plan supports biomass projects in locations outside settlements and areas designated for nature conservation, subject to there not being unacceptable local environmental, servicing, access or electricity distribution consequences, and also subject to 'bad neighbour' considerations being satisfied in terms of policy LP BAD 1.

**Accordingly, in terms of the settlement strategy, the proposal would be consistent with policies STRAT DC5 of the Argyll and Bute Structure Plan, and policy LP REN 3 of the Argyll and Bute Local Plan.**

### **B. Location, Nature and Design of Proposed Development**

#### **i) Location**

The proposal is for the construction of a wood fired combined heat and power plant on 2.6 hectares of land forming part of Tilhill Forestry plantation established in 1974. The site is owned by Argyll and Bute Council who have agreed a 30 year lease with the applicant.

The site lies to the west of the Council's Dalinlongart Waste Disposal Site operated by Shanks and adjacent to the access that serves this site leading south from the B836. This access has been designed to cater for heavy vehicles and is well surfaced with passing places. The site is close to an extensive network of forest roads allowing fuel delivery to the site without using public roads. To the west of the site lies a disused waste tip and beyond that Glen Kin. The Waste Disposal Site and its associated industrial buildings are well screened by forestry plantation from a number of surrounding vantage points. The site lies halfway between the minor settlement of Clachaig and the small town settlement of Sandbank although the site would not be visible from these areas due to topography and dense forestry plantations. The nearest residential building is a single property Balagowan in a sheltered location some 600m away on the opposite side of the B836 road.

#### **ii) Nature and Design of Proposed Development**

The wood fuel power plant development comprises a boiler and turbine house measuring 32.2m by 21.44m in area and 21m high. This will be finished externally in a combination of recessive coloured cladding and glazing and will be served by associated cooling plant (10m x 5m in area and 16m high) and a 30m high stack. The plant will utilise moving grate

technology to dry then combust timber, linked to a condensing steam turbine. The process utilises a confined combustion chamber and low risk technology already proven in use in Europe and Scandinavia. Electricity will be exported via a connection to the existing 33KV overhead power line 300m to the east, which would be the subject of a separate Electricity Act application. Only 20% of the application site is to be occupied by structures and their associated hardstandings so that the remainder of the site will be porous/semi-porous surfaces. Sustainable Urban Drainage Measures are proposed with the intention of limiting surface water run-off to close to pre-development values.

### **C. Natural Environment**

The site is not subject to any nature conservation designation and is therefore acceptable in principle for biomass energy production in terms of structure plan policy STRAT RE 2 and local plan policy LP REN 3. Given that the development site is surrounded by plantation woodland where woodland to the south has recently been felled but will be restocked, and access is already available direct from an existing road, the proposal does not have any adverse consequences for nature conservation interests. Scottish Natural Heritage did not previously object to the proposal.

### **D. Built Environment – Listed Buildings, Designed Landscape**

The development will be located south of an area of dense forested plantation adjacent to the existing Waste Disposal Site. An area of plantation woodland to the south of the development site has recently been clearfelled but will be restocked. Due to topography and presence of similar forestry plantations in the surrounding area, the site is well screened from existing settlements and any historic or important traditional buildings e.g. Clachaig Conservation Village, Ballochyle House, Invereck and Benmore Gardens. There are no sites designated for historic significance in the vicinity such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings.

West of Scotland Archaeology Service previously commented that no known archaeological issues are raised as the site is located within an area of forestry plantation that is likely to have compromised the survival of any archaeological material.

### **E. Landscape Character**

The site lies on the edge of the Upland Forest Moor Mosaic landscape character type at the foot of rising ground dominated by the presence of large-scale forestry plantations, where ongoing harvesting operations have cleared large tracts of the high moorland slopes. Popular road routes (A815, B836 and A880) and surrounding settlements are shielded from the site by the effect of intervening topography, generally characterised by forested (or recently harvested) slopes.

The original intention to 'key-hole' the site within existing coniferous woodland was to allow suitable screening to be retained around the edges of the site. The existing Waste Disposal Site and associated industrial buildings immediately adjacent and uphill of the application site have successfully blended into the surrounding landscape with only very limited visual impact, usually from higher vantage points. Given the siting and backdrop of forested slopes with low impact buildings and plant and existing overhead power lines and pylons, it is anticipated that these will conspire to limit the overall impact of the development on the wider landscape. It is unlikely that the presence of a tall building and its associated chimney will be noticeable in this wooded context from Strath Eck or from the National Park area. Management of the surrounding land as continuous cover with no clearfelling to the north of the site will assist in the assimilation of the plant in its surroundings as will colouring of the plant and equipment to help it merge with its forested backdrop. Scottish

Natural Heritage previously expressed no objections to the proposed development in respect of adverse landscape consequences.

**Accordingly, the proposal would be consistent with policies STRAT DC8 of the Argyll and Bute Structure Plan, and policy LP ENV 10 of the Argyll and Bute Local Plan.**

#### **F. Road Network, Access and Parking**

The biomass boiler is rated at 5.4MWe and will process approximately 7.5 wet tonnes of wood chips per hour. The plant will consume 60,000 tonnes of timber per year sourced from a 50 km radius supplied predominately from local forests using the forest road network. It is anticipated that this will save up to 200,000 lorry miles per year transporting timber from Cowal to the Central Belt. The plant will consume a mix of wood chips from in forest chipping operations and round wood which will be chipped on site.

The close proximity and existing network of forest roads have influenced site selection. Timber would be delivered to the plant using the existing road serving the waste disposal site that passes the application site. As mentioned, this road is well surfaced and designed with passing places. No road improvements are required. Parking and manoeuvring space for vehicles will be provided on site. Deliveries of timber would be restricted to between the hours of 0700 and 1800 Monday - Friday only and are expected to amount to 9 vehicles per day. This additional traffic is not of significance either in terms of the existing volume of traffic using the local road network.

#### **G. Infrastructure**

The site is to be connected to the potable water supply. An indicative detailed drainage plan in respect of surface water, foul and effluent drainage was submitted to SEPA and Public Protection. Electricity will be exported by way of an overhead pole mounted line to a nearby 33kv route, subject to a separate Electricity Act consent.

#### **H. Other Key Policy Matters**

##### Pollution issues

Air quality - Particle emissions from the stack are to be less than 50mg/m<sup>3</sup> with the use of an electrostatic precipitator to remove dust particles from flue gases. NO<sub>x</sub> levels will be less than 400mg/m<sup>3</sup> and CO less than 370mg/m<sup>3</sup>. Emission monitoring equipment is to be installed to ensure that design levels are adhered to. Ash production will be via a water based system and quantities will be low (around 500kg/day) due to the efficiency of the combustion process. Subject to SEPA licensing, this potash will be sold as forestry or agricultural fertiliser.

Based on submitted data, and that the agent has confirmed that the maximum capacity of the project will be <20MW gross thermal input, the plant will be subject to Clean Air Act and will require a chimney height assessment including a dispersion modelling exercise, and conditions to that effect are recommended.

Noise - The plant will operate 24hrs/day with deliveries and on-site external operations being restricted to the normal working day. The maximum noise outside the plant building will be 55dB(A) at 100 metres from the plant building. (Noise levels of a passing car travelling at 60km/h at 7m distance is 70dB(A), a typical office environment generates 60dB(A). The presence of woodland surrounding the plant will have a mitigating and dampening effect on this level of noise. Some chipping can generate noise levels of up to 85dB(A) immediately adjacent to the chipping unit but such an impact will be limited by a

restriction placed on timing of such activity. Intermittent noise from the delivery of wood will be limited to normal working hours.

While Public Protection previously had no objection in principle, conditions were recommended in respect of noise from plant and operation, restriction of operating times, dust, combustion and lighting.

Bad neighbour considerations - In view of the location of the nearest dwelling 600 metres away and the fact that the existing waste disposal unit has an 'industrial' presence in the landscape it was considered that the particular 'keyholing' of the plant within the plantation woodland and surrounding topography will assist in reducing and absorbing any potential environmental and visual impact. However, subject to mitigation measures being incorporated in construction, management measures being required in operation, and monitoring measures being required to demonstrate compliance with the parameters set by conditions, the development will not amount to a 'bad neighbour' in terms of adopted local plan policy LP BAD 1.

#### Energy policy considerations

The power plant is proposed to have an installed capacity of 5.4MW, with a net output of 5.0MW, once the energy consumed by the process has been taken into account. It is expected to have over 90% productivity, compared with wind turbines, which only generate electricity for around 30% of the time. The plant is estimated to produce 40,000MWh of electricity per annum with a CO<sub>2</sub> saving of 15,000 tonnes per annum (450,000 tonnes over the lifetime of the project). This site forms part of a larger national strategy which aims to establish up to 10 sites within Scotland; including one to serve Kintyre, another to serve North Argyll, and one to serve Arran. Planning permission was recently granted for a similar site within Mid-Argyll at Achnabreck.

Government energy policy has set a renewable target of 31% by 2010 and 50% by 2020. In view of disproportionate reliance to date on wind power, the government is currently reviewing the Renewable Supply Obligation (RSO) with consideration being given to the expansion of biomass generation. The development would entail environmental benefits in terms of carbon savings, reduced road haulage of timber, and use of currently discarded forestry by-product i.e. dead wood, small diameter material and brash.

#### Economic considerations

Currently, transportation is a major cost for the forestry industry, absorbing up to 60% of the timber price. Forecast increased production in future years and growth in the recycling of wood and paper will have consequences for the economics of low value wood sourced from locations remote from the point of processing or consumption. Local use of timber minimising transport will cut costs and improve returns.

The total investment proposed in this project amounts to £12 million. Biomass is unique among renewable energy sources as it will help sustain local employment. This project is estimated to be capable of supporting 30 direct/indirect jobs.

## I. Conclusion

Local Plan policy LP REN 3 supports biomass electricity generation in forms, scales and locations where it will help to sustain local businesses and economies, unless there are unacceptable environmental, servicing, electricity distribution or access consequences including cumulative impacts, effects on communities, tourist routes, or tourist facilities or

attraction, and residential amenity. Principal considerations in this case are in terms of Policy ENV 19 (development setting, layout and design) and BAD 1 (bad neighbour consequences in terms of noise and air quality).

While SEPA and Public Protection previously had no objections in principle, safeguarding conditions were recommended in respect of operating hours and vehicle movements, design of stack in terms of air quality, noise assessment, external lighting, construction method statement, waste management statement and SuDS system. Additional conditions are recommended in respect of a suitable permanent screening of the site, section details and materials.

In terms of design the plant buildings are of a low impact design where materials are proposed to blend with the surroundings, and raise no serious concerns in visual terms. With regards to the character of the application site and surrounding developed land and uses and their associated relationship with the proposed building, the proposed development is regarded as consistent with the adopted structure and local plan policies quoted above.