Alvah and Forglen Community Council, Banff

Secretary email: secretary.alvahforglencc@gmail.com

Alvah and Forglen Community Council has the following comments and observations on planning application APP/2025/0205 | Formation of 35MW Solar Farm, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with an Installed Capacity of up to 14.9MW, Substation and Associated Infrastructure at Brownside Farm Mountblairy Banff Aberdeenshire AB45 3YD

Alvah and Forglen Community Council recognises that meeting the governments plans for renewable energy will require increased use of solar and wind, however the Alvah area has already experienced considerable disruption for underground cables to be laid for the 950MW Moray East offshore wind farm.

This year has seen an application for between 5 and 10 years of further disruption to the area for the 2000MW Caledonia offshore wind farm underground cables to be laid across Alvah. In total between them these two wind farms will have the capacity to supply over 3 million homes with 2,950MW of renewable generated electricity. The extra 35MW of the proposed solar farm would appear to add little to the mix.

While the proposed location for the solar farm is for the most part unobtrusive due to the existing and proposed new hedgerow planting the community council has concerns on the following:

1. Possible glare and glint for properties lying to the south and below the site outwith the 1km study area dealt with in the application.

2. The suitability of locations within the Deveron Valley Special Landscape Area to host solar farms which by their nature occupy a large amount of space and have potential to impact on the landscape character and setting. It would not want this solar farm, if approved, to serve as a precedent for others within the Deveron Valley SLA at a later date.

3.Lack of detailed information on the grid connection from the solar farm to the Macduff sub station which the community council is lead to believe will be the subject of a further separate application at a later date.

While the applicant has stated in the PAC and in person at a presentation to the community council their intent is to lay the cables underground there is still an element of uncertainty whether over ground cables would need to be used and which may be determined by factors outwith the applicant's control.

Alvah and Forglen Community Council would object to any use of over ground grid connection from Brownside solar farm to Macduff substation as being detrimental to the character of the Deveron Valley SLA.

Doug Hill
Chair
Alvah and Forglen Community Council