

By Email

Public Petitions Clerks
The Scottish Parliament
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21 May 2015

John Muir House
Haddington
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Dear Ms Robinson

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1537

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to abandon the proposal for the development of an Energy Park at Cockenzie, and ensure that any future proposals are subject to full public consultation and do not extend beyond the existing footprint of the former power station

I refer to your letter of 29 April 2015 following consideration by the Scottish Parliament Petitions Committee of Petition PE1537 on 28 April 2015. In your letter you are seeking the assurance of East Lothian Council that in its consideration of any future proposals at the Cockenzie site, East Lothian Council will in good faith actively and meaningfully consult with the petitioner and the local community, giving due consideration to any concerns they may raise.

There are two aspects to this response - the Council's role as planning authority and the Council's wider role in relation to economic development and community planning.

The Council's role as planning authority

Strategic Planning

As referred to in our previous correspondence, the Council has recently completed consultation on its Main Issues Report, which is the first stage in preparing its Local Development Plan. The consultation considered that the former Cockenzie Power Station site could continue to serve energy production as identified in the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework (NPF) 3. Officials are now considering all of the responses received as it begins to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP) for publication in Autumn 2015. Concerns raised regarding the proposal contained within the consultation will be considered and will inform finalised proposals for use of the site in the proposed Local Development Plan. A report summarising the consultation responses received was submitted to East Lothian Council on the 21st April and a summary of responses can be found here - [Responses to MIR consultation - Local Development Plan - East Lothian Council](#).

The publication of the proposed Local Development Plan will be followed by a period whereby formal representations regarding any proposal within the LDP can be made. The publication of the proposed Local Development Plan will be advertised and all respondents to the Main Issues Report consultation will be notified of its publication.

Planning Applications – specific proposals

In respect of any specific proposals which may come forward to the Council through the planning application process, the Council encourages all applicants to engage as early as possible with local communities and can assist applicants by suggesting methods of doing so. The Council does not take on a role in consulting on behalf of applicants. Clearly, any applicant must comply with legislation in respect of consultation. The Council would advertise and neighbor notify any proposals in accordance with statutory requirements. Any

community concerns raised through the process would be considered by the planning authority in finalising their recommendation and contained within their report to Planning Committee.

Cross-Party Member Officer Working Group

In recognition of the significance and scale of the potential Scottish Enterprise proposal, East Lothian Council, at its meeting of 26 August 2014, committed to engage with all parties in relation to the emerging proposals at that time and to ensure all potential opportunities and concerns were identified. A cross-party Member/Officer Working Group was established to oversee option and engagement activity and this Group continues to meet, recognising the strength and depth of community concern regarding the site, the key opportunity the site presents in terms of economic development and its significance as a natural asset.

Since my last letter to you, officers from the Council have met with representatives of the petitioner, representatives of Cockenzie and Port Seton and Prestonpans Community Councils and with Longniddry Community Council to discuss future engagement with the Council regarding the site and there is broad agreement that a forum is established to provide a mechanism for dialogue and discussion.

The Council remains committed to working with community representatives, Scottish Enterprise, site owners Scottish Power and other potential investors to secure a sustainable future for the site moving forward.

I hope this answers the question to the committee's satisfaction.

Yours sincerely

Angela Leitch
Chief Executive