



Chapter 1: Introduction

West Springfield Solar EIA Report

TRIO West Springfield Solar LLP

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Basis of Report

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
MWh/p.a.	Megawatt hours per annum
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
MW	Megawatt
MWp	Megawatt peak
NGR	National Grid Reference
NPF4	National Planning Framework 4
NTS	Non-Technical Summary
ORIT	Octopus Renewable Infrastructure Trust
PV	Photovoltaic
SPEN	Scottish Power Energy Networks
UK	United Kingdom



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 TRIO West Springfield Solar LLP (the 'Applicant') proposes to install and operate a solar photovoltaic (PV) array and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (the 'Proposed Development') on land (the 'Site') at the Rankeilour Estate, Fife. The Site location and application boundary are shown in **Figure 1.1**.
- 1.1.2 The Proposed Development would be located within the administrative boundary of Fife Council, approximately 2.7km south west of Cupar, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) NO 33114 11547 and would be known as West Springfield Solar. The Proposed Development would have an installed capacity of c.100MW, comprising 35MW battery storage and 49.9MW solar (with a solar build out of 65MWp).
- 1.1.3 The total area of solar PV array amounts to up to 63.64ha. The maximum height of BESS infrastructure has been assessed as 3.5m.
- 1.1.4 As the Proposed Development would have a generating capacity exceeding 50MW, the Applicant is submitting an application for consent under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989, and also seeking a direction that planning permission is deemed to be granted in terms of Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.
- 1.1.5 The annual power output of the Proposed Development is estimated at 60,300 megawatt hours per annum (MWh/pa), which would provide enough electricity to power approximately 23,000 average Scottish households. The Proposed Development would contribute towards international and national targets for the generation of renewable energy and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
- 1.1.6 The precise grid connection route to Cupar substation would be subject to a separate application, which would require consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989, which is to be the subject of a separate consenting process. The Section 37 application would be progressed by the transmission network operator (Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN)).

1.2 Purpose of the EIA Report

- 1.2.1 This EIA Report has been prepared in accordance with The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (the 'EIA Regulations').
- 1.2.2 Where a development falls within one of the descriptions in Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations 2017 and is considered likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as the nature, size, or location of the development proposal, then an EIA Report is required to be submitted with the application for consent. The Proposed Development falls within Schedule 2 as:

"a generating station, the construction of which (or operation of which) will require a section 36 consent but which is not a Schedule 1 development."



It is considered that the Proposed Development meets the criteria necessary for an EIA Report to be required.

- 1.2.3 This EIA Report presents the findings of the EIA process by describing the Proposed Development, the current condition and future baseline condition at the Site, and the likely impacts which may result from the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. Where appropriate, mitigation is proposed, and any residual impacts are reported.

1.3 The Applicant

- 1.3.1 TRIO West Springfield Solar LLP, is a company owned by Octopus Renewable Infrastructure Trust (ORIT) and managed by BLC Energy Limited.
- 1.3.2 BLC Energy was set up in Scotland in 2022 to develop solar and BESS projects throughout the UK. The three partners have over 60 years' experience in developing renewable energy projects and have previously secured planning consent for three solar projects in Scotland.
- 1.3.3 BLC Energy are based in Perthshire, and are currently developing eleven solar and BESS projects throughout the UK, including five in Scotland. Further information on BLC Energy can be found on the company website at www.blcenergy.com.
- 1.3.4 In 2023, BLC Energy entered into a development services agreement with Octopus Energy Generation (via Octopus Renewable Infrastructure Trust (ORIT)) on an exclusive basis. TRIO West Springfield Solar LLP was set up as the development company and is wholly owned by ORIT and managed by BLC Energy. BLC Energy are developing the Site on behalf of the Applicant, TRIO West Springfield Solar LLP.
- 1.3.5 ORIT is an Impact Fund with a core objective to accelerate the transition to net zero through its investments, building and operating a diversified portfolio of Renewable Energy Assets. ORIT is managed by Octopus Energy Generation.
- 1.3.6 Octopus Energy Generation are one of Europe's largest investors in renewables, operating around £4 billion of green energy generation across seven countries. Octopus Energy Generation operate solar and wind projects across the UK.
- 1.3.7 Further information on Octopus Energy Generation and Octopus Renewable Infrastructure Trust can be found on its company website at <https://www.octopusenergygeneration.com/> and <https://www.octopusrenewablesinfrastructure.com/>.

1.4 Renewable Energy and Planning Policy

- 1.4.1 A separate Planning Statement has been provided which contains a detailed appraisal of the Proposed Development against the relevant statutory Development Plan policies, national planning and energy policy and other material considerations. The statutory Development Plan is made up of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and the Fife Local Development Plan.
- 1.4.2 In recent years, United Kingdom and Scottish Government policies have focused increasingly on concerns about climate change. Each tier of Government has developed



targets, policies and actions to achieve targets to deal with the climate crisis and generate more renewable energy and electricity.

- 1.4.3 The UK Government retains responsibility for the overall direction of energy policy, although some elements are devolved to the Scottish Government. The UK Government has published a series of policy documents setting out how targets can be achieved. Solar PV and battery storage are important technologies to achieve these various goals.
- 1.4.4 The Scottish Government has published a number of policy documents and has set its own targets. The most relevant policy, legislative documents and more recent policy statements published by the Scottish Government include:
- The Scottish Energy Strategy (December 2017);
 - The Scottish Government's declaration of a Climate Emergency (April 2019);
 - The Scottish Climate Change Plan Update (2020);
 - The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 and the legally binding net zero target for 2045;
 - The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (January 2023); and
 - The Scottish Government's annual 'Programme for Government' (September 2024).
- 1.4.5 The Proposed Development is for the generation and storage of electricity from renewable energy sources and comes as a direct response to national planning and energy policy objectives.
- 1.4.6 The Proposed Development would make a significant contribution to the attainment of emissions reduction, renewable energy and electricity targets at both the Scottish and UK levels. Detailed reference to the renewable energy policy framework is provided in the Planning Statement.

1.5 EIA Project Team and Competency

- 1.5.1 EIA coordination has been led by SLR with input from specialist technical and planning consultants.
- 1.5.2 SLR is one of the UK's fastest growing multi-disciplinary environmental consultancies. Within the energy sector, SLR provides a wide range of planning, environmental and technical services relating to the design and development of solar, battery and other renewable energy projects. The company specialises in all aspects of facility development, from initial concept design, through planning and permitting to the detailed design, construction management and decommissioning stages.
- 1.5.3 SLR is a registered Environmental Impact Assessor, Member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and holder of the IEMA EIA Quality Mark. The company has significant experience in the preparation of planning applications and undertaking EIA for a wide variety of projects, including renewable energy, minerals, waste and infrastructure developments.
- 1.5.4 Further information on SLR Consulting Limited can be found on its corporate website at www.slrconsulting.com.



1.5.5 For this project, SLR is responsible for the following technical disciplines:

- EIA;
- BESS design;
- solar design;
- glint and glare assessment;
- flood risk assessment and drainage strategy;
- cultural heritage and archaeology assessment;
- noise assessment; and
- transport and Site access.

1.5.6 SLR is supported by the following specialist consultancies:

- RPS Tetrattech – landscape and visual amenity;
- RPS Tetrattech – ecology; and
- David Bell Planning – planning consultancy.

1.5.7 SLR's environmental specialists, with support from specialist consultants as required, have the skills, relevant competency, expertise and qualifications to undertake EIA for the Proposed Development. **Table 1-1** demonstrates the relevant competency for each technical discipline covered in this EIA Report and accompanying appendices.

Table 1-1: EIA Team Competency

Discipline	Specialist Assessor	Qualifications	Years of Experience
EIA Management and Coordination; EIA Report	SLR: Gavin Spowage Emma Quinn	BSc (Hons) MSc PIEMA BSc (Hons) MSc AIEMA	20 years 7 years
Planning	David Bell Planning: David Bell Pippa Melville	BSc (Hons) Dip UD MCIHT MRTPI BLE(Hons) Dip TCP MRTPI	34 years 24 years
Solar Design	SLR: Isabel Romero	MEng MSc AMEI	6 years
BESS Design & Battery Safety	SLR: Adegboye Adejumo	B Eng (Hons) MSc	10 years
Landscape and Visual	RPS Tetrattech: Stuart Anderson Kerttu Ots	BSc Dip Land Man Dip For. CMLI BSc MLA CMLI	20 years 20 years
Ecology	RPS Tetrattech: Nora Washbourne	MSc, Chartered Biologist	14 years



Discipline	Specialist Assessor	Qualifications	Years of Experience
	Roanne Lilley Rio Stirling	MRes, QCIEEM MSc, QCIEEM	3 years 2 years
Cultural Heritage and Archaeology	SLR: Beth Gray Erin Ashby Katja Watson	MA (Hons) ACIfA FSAScot MA (Hons) MSc PCIfA MA (Hons) MSc PCIfA	8 years 3 years 2 years
Flood Risk and Drainage – Technical Report	SLR: Robert Walker Alexa Hay	BEng (Hons), MSc, C.WEM, MCIWEM BSc (Hons), MSc, MCIWEM	16 years 3 years
Noise – Technical Report	SLR: Alasdair Baxter Calum Armstrong	 BSc, MSc, PGDip Acoustics and Noise Control BSc (Hons)	 20+ years' 2 years
Site Access and Transport – Technical Report	SLR: Iain Lamb	BEng (Hons)	25+ years

1.6 Scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment

- 1.6.1 The Proposed Development was progressed previously by Elgin Energy, under the name of Peterhead Solar Farm. Site survey, feasibility and constraints mapping were undertaken from 2021 until 2025.
- 1.6.2 Following environmental baseline studies, RPS requested Pre-Application Advice from Fife Council (on behalf of Elgin Energy Limited) in July 2022 (refer to **Appendix A**). Detailed Pre-Application Advice was provided by Fife Council in October 2022 (refer to **Appendix B**).
- 1.6.3 The Applicant acquired the project in February 2025. In order to ensure a robust Section 36 application within acceptable timescales, no EIA Screening process has been undertaken. Instead, the Applicant has voluntarily 'screened-in' the project and has undertaken an EIA.
- 1.6.4 The scope of the EIA, rather than being confirmed through a formal Scoping process, has been established by the consideration of the technical topics most likely to give rise to 'significant adverse effects'. From baseline studies and advice from Fife Council's pre-application consultation response, the topics for which it is considered significant effects may arise and are therefore 'scoped-in' to the EIA are Landscape and Visual Impact, Ecology and Cultural Heritage and Archaeology. These topics are assessed within **Chapters 5, 6 and 7** respectively. For all other technical topics, where it is considered that significant effects are unlikely, technical assessments have been undertaken to demonstrate this. Technical reports are provided as appendices to the EIA Report (Volume 4).
- 1.6.5 EIA methodology and assessment procedures are detailed in **Chapter 4: Approach to EIA**.



1.7 Structure of the EIA Report

1.7.1 The EIA Report is presented in four volumes as follows:

- Volume 1: Non-Technical Summary (NTS);
 - The NTS provides a non-technical overview of the EIA Report and is intended for review by the general public. It includes a description of the Proposed Development and a summary of the predicted environmental effects.
- Volume 2: Written Statement (EIA Report);

The EIA Report (this document) is structured as follows:

 - Chapter 1: Introduction;
 - Chapter 2: Site Selection and Design Iterations;
 - Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description;
 - Chapter 4: Approach to EIA;
 - Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual;
 - Chapter 6: Ecology and Biodiversity;
 - Chapter 7: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology; and
 - Chapter 8: Schedule of Mitigation.
- Volume 3: EIA Report Figures and Visualisations; and
- Volume 4: EIA Report Technical Appendices.

1.7.2 A suite of additional supporting documents has been prepared to accompany the application. Included in this, a Planning Statement sets out an assessment of the Proposed Development in the context of national planning, energy policy, local development plan, and emerging planning policies. It also considers the potential benefits and harm which may arise and concludes as to the overall acceptability of the Proposed Development in relation to the planning context.

1.7.3 In addition to the Planning Statement, a Pre-Application Consultation Report (undertaken directly by McDaid PR) has been submitted to support the application. These additional documents do not form part of the EIA Report.

1.8 Viewing the EIA Report

1.8.1 The Applicant has advised Springfield Community Council of the EIA Report being made available. Hard copies of the EIA Report can be viewed at the following location during opening hours:

- Cupar library.

The EIA Report is available for download from the project website at:
<https://www.blcenergy.com/projects/west-springfield/> .



1.8.2 Paper copies of the NTS are available free of charge upon request from:

SLR Consulting Limited,
The Tun,
4 Jackson's Entry,
Edinburgh,
United Kingdom,
EH8 8PJ



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The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 (asp 15). Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/15/contents/enacted>

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 (as amended). Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/102/contents/made>

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (c.8). Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/8/contents>

