



The Planning Inspectorate
Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

DNS: EIA Scoping Direction Addendum

3214855: Alwen Forest Wind
Farm Grid Connection

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Prepared by:

Christopher Sweet MPlan

This Scoping Direction Addendum supersedes and replaces that issued on 13 January 2020 and is issued to correct a slight inconsistency identified by the applicant. No substantial changes have been made.

This Scoping Direction Addendum is provided on the basis of the information submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 19 November 2019, in addition to consultation responses received. The advice does not prejudice any recommendation made by an Inspector or any decision made by the Welsh Ministers in relation to the development, and does not preclude the Inspector from subsequently requiring further information to be submitted in relation to the DNS application under Regulation 24 of [The Town and Country Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) (as amended) (“The 2017 Regulations”).

1. Introduction

The Planning Inspectorate (“the Inspectorate”) received a request under [Regulation 33](#) of the 2017 Regulations for a Scoping Direction in relation to the proposed development of a grid connection to serve a proposed wind farm development by Innogy Renewables UK (Innogy).

The request was accompanied by a Scoping Report (SR) ([Scoping Report update: Grid connection](#)) that outlines the proposed scope of the Environmental Statement (ES) for the proposed development.

This Direction has taken into account the requirements of the 2017 Regulations as well as current best practice towards preparation of an ES. In accordance with the 2017 Regulations the Inspectorate has consulted on the SR and the responses received from the consultation bodies have been taken into account in adopting this Direction.

This Scoping Direction Addendum relates specifically to the proposed grid connection and should be read in conjunction with the Scoping Direction issued by the Inspectorate on 27 September 2018, which relates to the wider wind farm proposal. In line with best practice, the ES should cover all aspects of the windfarm and grid connection.

The Inspectorate is authorised to issue this Scoping Direction on behalf of the Welsh Ministers.

2. Site Description

The preferred corridors for the grid connection lie to the east and south of the Llyn Brenig Reservoir, as shown at Figure 2.4 of the SR.

3. Proposed Development

The proposal is a grid connection to serve the proposed Alwen Forest Wind Farm.

The scope of the EIA should include all elements of the grid connection as identified in the SR, both permanent and temporary, and this Scoping Direction is written on that basis.

In line with the requirements of [Regulation 17](#) and [Schedule 4](#) to the 2017 Regulations, any reasonable alternatives considered should be presented in the ES. The reasons behind the selection of the chosen option should also be provided in the ES, including where environmental effects have informed the choices made.

4. History

The proposed corridors lie within areas of commercial forestry. The SR sets out the current position as follows. *In the western section of the grid connection corridor, the connection to the Alwen Forest Wind Farm lies within land owned by DCWW but managed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) on behalf of the Welsh Ministers. The Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) Clocaenog Substation, in the east of the proposed grid connection corridor, lies within Clocaenog Forest, part of the Welsh Government Woodland Estate, managed by NRW. One of the proposed wind farm grid connection corridors also passes through a section of Brenig Forest, owned and directly managed by DCWW.*

5. Consultation

In line with [Regulation 33\(7\)](#) of the 2017 Regulations, formal consultation was undertaken with the following bodies:

- Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC)
- Denbighshire County Council (DCC)
- Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
- Cadw

Responses received are included in **Appendix 1**.

6. Environmental Impact Assessment Approach

The Applicants should satisfy themselves that the ES includes all the information outlined in [Schedule 4](#) of the 2017 Regulations. In addition, the Applicant should ensure that the Non-Technical Summary includes a summary of all the information included in Schedule 4. Consider a structure that allows the author of the ES and the appointed Inspector and Decision Maker to readily satisfy themselves that the ES contains all the information specified [Regulation 17](#) and Schedule 4 of the 2017 Regulations. Cross refer to the requirements in the relevant sections of the ES and include a summary after the Contents page that lays out all the requirements from the Regulations and what sections of the ES they are fulfilled by.

As the assessments are made, consideration should be given to whether standalone topic chapters would be necessary for topics that are currently proposed to be considered as part of other chapters, particularly if it is apparent that there are significant effects and a large amount of information for a particular topic.

There may also be topic areas scoped out of the ES where the developer may wish to include application documents that sit outside of the ES and provide information that will support their consultation(s) and the decision-making process. The developer is encouraged to liaise with key consultees regarding non-ES application documents which are not a legislative requirement of the DNS regime. If agreement cannot be reached over

non-ES application documentation, then the developer may wish to explore whether the Inspectorate can help provide clarity via its statutory preapplication advice service.

The ES should focus on describing and quantifying significant environmental effects. Policy considerations / arguments relating to those impacts should be addressed in other documentation supporting the application (e.g. a Planning statement), which cross references the ES where necessary.

Assessment should be carried out on a 'worst case scenario' basis where specific design choices have not been determined. For example, as observed by DCC, the SR suggests that a maximum span of 100-110m between poles could be achieved for overhead lines. However, assessment should account for the fact that a shorter span may be necessary at points along the route. It should also account for the full range of equipment that might be required, e.g. where twin poles and cable stays may be needed.

6.1 Baseline

[Schedule 4](#) of the 2017 Regulations states that the 'baseline scenario' is "A description of the relevant aspects of the **current** state of the environment" (emphasis added). The baseline of the ES should reflect actual current conditions at that time.

6.2 Reasonable Alternatives

In line with the requirements of [Regulation 17](#) and [Schedule 4](#) to the 2017 Regulations, any reasonable alternatives studied by the Applicant should be presented in the ES. The reasons behind the selection of the chosen option should also be provided in the ES, including where environmental effects have informed the choices made.

It is worth bearing in mind that under the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) ("the Habitats Regulations") unless it can be clearly shown to the Welsh Ministers that the project would have no adverse effect on the integrity of any designated sites, it would have to be shown that there is no feasible alternative solution (see advice note from [IEMA](#)). Further advice regarding the Habitats Regulations is provided in the final chapter of this Screening Direction.

6.3 Currency of Environmental Information

For all environmental aspects, the applicant should ensure that any survey data is as up to date as possible and clearly set out in the ES the timing and nature of the data on which the assessment has been based. Any study area applied to the assessments should be clearly defined. The impacts of construction, operation and decommissioning activities should be considered as part of the assessment where these could give rise to significant environmental effects. Consideration should be given to relevant legislation, planning policies, and applicable best practice guidance documents throughout the ES.

The ES should include a chapter setting out the overarching methodology for the assessment, which clearly distinguishes effects that are 'significant' from 'non-significant' effects. Any departure from that methodology should be described in individual aspect assessment chapters. Where professional judgement has been applied this should be clearly stated.

The ES topic chapters should report on any data limitations, key assumptions and difficulties encountered in establishing the baseline environment and undertaking the assessment of environmental effects.

6.4 Cumulative Effects

Based on the information set out in the scoping request, the approach to the assessment of cumulative impact, i.e. that a single assessment of cumulative effects which incorporates both the grid connection and the wind farm proposal will be produced, is considered appropriate.

Effects deemed individually not significant from the assessment, could cumulatively be significant, so inclusion criteria based on the most likely significant effects from this type of development may prove helpful when identifying what other developments should be accounted for. The criteria may vary from topic to topic.

All of the other development considered should be documented and the reasons for inclusion or exclusion should be clearly stated. Professional judgement should be used to avoid excluding other development that is close to threshold limits but has characteristics likely to give rise to a significant effect; or could give rise to a cumulative effect by virtue of its proximity to the proposed development. Similarly, professional judgement should be applied to other development that exceeds thresholds but may not give rise to discernible effects. Where appropriate, the process of refinement should be undertaken in consultation with relevant consultees as design choices are finalised.

The scope of the cumulative assessment should be fully explained and justified in the ES.

The Planning Inspectorate's guidance for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects – [Advice Note 17: Cumulative Effects Assessment](#) sets out a staged process for assessing cumulative impacts that may be of relevance to the Applicant.

6.5 Mitigation

Any mitigation relied upon for the purposes of the assessment should be explained in detail within the ES. The likely efficacy of the mitigation proposed should be explained with reference to residual effects. The ES should provide reference to how the delivery of measures proposed to prevent / minimise adverse effects is secured (through legal requirements or other suitably robust methods) and whether relevant consultees agree on the adequacy of the measures proposed.

6.6 Transboundary Effects

[Schedule 4 Part 5](#) of the 2017 Regulations requires a description of the likely significant transboundary effects to be provided in an ES. The ES should address this matter as appropriate.

6.7 Population and Human Health

The Applicant should ensure that the ES addresses any significant effects on population and human health, in light of the EIA Regulations 2017. This could be addressed under the separate topic chapters or within its own specific chapter.

7. Environmental Impact Assessment Topics

This section contains the Inspectorate's specific comments on the scope and level of detail of information to be provided in the Applicant's ES, as it relates to the grid connection. Environmental topics or features are not scoped out unless specifically addressed and justified by the Applicant and confirmed as being scoped out by the Inspectorate. In accordance with Regulation 17(4)(c) the ES should be based on this Scoping Direction in so far as the Proposed Development remains materially the same as the Proposed Development described in the Applicant's Scoping Report.

The Inspectorate has set out in this Direction where it has / has not agreed to scope out matters on the basis of the information available at this time. The Inspectorate is content that the receipt of a Scoping Direction should not prevent the Applicant from subsequently agreeing with the relevant consultees to scope such matters out of the ES, where further evidence has been provided to justify this approach. However, in order to demonstrate that the matters have been appropriately addressed, the ES should explain the reasoning for scoping them out and justify the approach taken.

7.1 Ecology – Scoped In

The approach to ecological assessment set out in the SR is considered largely appropriate. However, NRW note that there is potential for effects on the Mynydd Hiraethog SSSI arising from the works that may border the site as well as those that would cross it. The SR acknowledges at section 12.3 that there is potential for disruption to the SSSI's designated features arising from construction works.

Acknowledging that the potential for effects on the SSSI will ultimately be determined by final design choices and proposed avoidance and mitigation measures, the Inspectorate considers that the applicant should take this advice into consideration when determining the scope of final assessment of the effects on the SSSI. It is recommended that further consultation with NRW should take place as design choices are refined. The final approach to assessment should be fully explained and justified in the ES.

As noted by NRW, the Tir Mostyn and Foel Goch windfarm mitigation area partially overlaps with the proposed grid connection corridors where they meet to the east. The applicant will need to consider the need for avoidance, mitigation or compensation when finalising the grid connection route.

NRW also draw attention to the SINC Clocaenog SH98966 53462 and the Inspectorate agrees that the applicant will need to consider the potential for effects on that site and any need for avoidance, mitigation or compensation.

7.2 Ornithology – Scoped In

The approach to ornithology set out in the SR is considered appropriate. Conwy CBC's Ecologist has suggested that consideration be given to effects arising from improvement in habitat for species such as nightjar and black grouse. The applicant is encouraged to consider this advice and incorporate it into assessment where appropriate following final design choices. Ongoing consultation with NRW is encouraged.

7.3 Landscape and Visual Impact – Scoped In

The approach set out in the SR is considered appropriate and the use of a 4km radius study area for OHL is agreed. It is also agreed that the effects of the grid connection do not need to be considered in relation to the Hiraethog SLA.

The proposed viewpoints and presentation of visualisations are considered appropriate, with the addition of the following viewpoints as suggested by DCC, which the Inspectorate agrees should be included:

- Ffridd Brynhelen Enclosures & fields, a registered scheduled ancient monument (grid ref: 296626:352078).
- Cae Ddundod Camp scheduled ancient monument (grid ref: 298482:352049).
- Public right of way near cumulus to south of Foel Gasnach (grid ref: 303278:354538).
- Public right of way near Bryn Ocyn / Diffwys (grid ref: 301966:357796).

The applicant is encouraged to engage with DCC if changes to these viewpoints are proposed as assessment progresses.

DCC also suggests that, as the proposed connection would connect to the SPEN collector substation at Saron in the north of the Clocaenog Forest and a twin pole overhead line connects this substation to the main SPEN distribution network substation at St Asaph (North Wales Wind Farms Connection Project), there is the potential for inter-visibility with that existing overhead line. DCC also consider the SPEN collector substation itself and the adjoining Clocaenog Forest windfarm substation should be included in the cumulative assessment. The Inspectorate agrees with this view; the applicant should consider these factors and include these additional aspects in the cumulative assessment of the proposed grid connection where appropriate.

It is agreed that a fully separate cumulative assessment is not required and that a single overall cumulative assessment incorporating both the wind farm and the grid connection is appropriate.

7.4 Hydrology, Geology and Hydrogeology – Scoped In

The approach to Hydrology, Geology and Hydrogeology set out in the SR is considered appropriate. It is agreed that Geology can be scoped out.

The applicant should give full consideration to the response provided by NRW on these issues when refining design choices and preparing the ES.

7.5 Cultural Heritage – Scoped In

The approach to the assessment of cultural heritage set out in the SR is considered appropriate, including the proposed matrices for levels of significance, magnitude of effect and significance of effect; and the approach to cumulative assessment.

The extent of the Registered Landscape as identified by CPAT in its study and shown at figure 13.2 of the SR should be used for the purposes of this assessment.

It is agreed that a combined ASIDOHL2 assessment should be produced which takes account of both the wind farm and the proposed grid connection. Historic Landscape Character Areas to be included in the assessment should be agreed with Cadw at the outset.

As noted by Cadw, a stage 1 assessment (following the guidance given in the Welsh Government document the Setting of Historic Assets in Wales) will identify the designated heritage assets that can be scoped out of further study. The ES should fully explain and provide justification for those assets that are scoped out.

It is agreed that decommissioning can be scoped out of the assessment and that operational phase effects can be scoped out *if underground cabling is the approach taken forward*.

7.6 Traffic and Transport – Scoped In

The approach to Traffic and Transport, including the preparation of a separate Traffic Management Plan, set out in the SR is considered appropriate. It is agreed that effects arising during operation and decommissioning can be scoped out of the ES. It is also recommended that the Applicant engage with the relevant highway authorities when preparing the TMP.

7.7 Noise – Provisionally Scoped Out

The approach to both construction and operational phase noise set out in the SR is considered appropriate. It is agreed that construction noise effects can be scoped out of the ES *unless Horizontal Directional Drilling or similar activities that would have comparable effects are required for undergrounding cables*.

It is also agreed that, due to the limited likelihood of adverse effects arising from either overhead lines or underground cables once in place, operational noise can be scoped out of the ES.

7.8 Forestry – Scoped In

The approach to Forestry set out in the SR is considered appropriate.

7.9 Socio-Economics & Tourism – Partially Scoped In

The approach to socio-economic assessment set out in the SR is considered appropriate. This topic is scoped in, insofar as it relates to socio-economic assessment. It is agreed that Tourism, as a subset of this topic, can be scoped out.

7.10 Health and Public Safety – Scoped Out

The approach set out in the SR is considered appropriate. It is agreed that Health and Public Safety, where it relates to the grid connection, can be scoped out of the ES.

7.11 Aviation and Existing Infrastructure – Scoped Out

The approach to Aviation and Existing Infrastructure set out in the SR is considered appropriate. It is agreed that Aviation and TV and Microwave Fixed Links can be scoped out of the ES.

8. Other Matters

This section does not constitute part of the Scoping Direction, but addresses other issues related to the proposal.

8.1 Habitats Regulations Assessment

As noted in the Scoping Direction relating to the wider wind farm scheme, [the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) require competent authorities, before granting consent for a plan or project, to carry out an appropriate assessment (AA) in circumstances where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects). The competent authority in respect of a DNS application is the relevant Welsh Minister who makes the final decision. It is the Applicant's responsibility to provide sufficient information to the competent authority to enable them to carry out an AA or determine whether an AA is required.

When considering whether or not significant effects are likely, applicants should ensure that their rationale is consistent with the [CJEU finding](#) that mitigation measures (referred to in the judgment as measures which are intended to avoid or reduce effects) should be assessed within the framework of an AA and that it is not permissible to take account of measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan or project on a European site when determining whether an AA is required ('screening'). The screening stage must be undertaken on a precautionary basis without regard to any proposed integrated or additional avoidance or reduction measures. Where the likelihood of significant effects cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information the competent authority must proceed to carry out an AA to establish whether the plan or project will affect the integrity of the European site, which can include at that stage consideration of the effectiveness of the proposed avoidance or reduction measures.

Where it is effective to cross refer to sections of the ES in the HRA, a clear and consistent approach should be adopted.

The Planning Inspectorate's guidance for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects – [Advice Note 10: Habitat Regulations Assessment relevant to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects](#) may prove useful when considering what information to provide to allow the Welsh Ministers to undertake AA.

8.2 Sustainable Drainage System Consent

Whilst a separate legislative requirement from planning permission, the Applicant's attention is drawn to the statutory SuDS regime that came into force in Wales in January 2019. The requirement to obtain SuDS consent prior to construction may require iterative design changes that influence the scheme that is to be assessed within the ES and taken through to application. As such, it is recommended that the applicant contact the local SuDS Approval Body early on.

8.3 Other Matters

The Applicant's attention is drawn to CCBC's observation that part of Corridor 2 may lie within a Minerals Safeguarding Area and the potential need to address this in separate submissions.

Appendix: Consultation Responses

Consultee	Role	PDF Page Number
Conwy County Borough Council	Statutory Consultee: Relevant Local Planning Authority	
Denbighshire County Council	Statutory Consultee: Relevant Local Planning Authority	
Natural Resources Wales	Statutory Consultee	
The Welsh Ministers (Cadw)	Statutory Consultee: Historic Environment	

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Natural Resources Wales	Statutory Consultee	
The Welsh Ministers (Cadw)	Statutory Consultee: Historic Environment	

The Planning Inspectorate

By email:
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Gofynnwch am / Please ask for: Ceri Thomas

 01492575391



 ceri.thomas@conwy.gov.uk

Ein Cyf / Our Ref DC/ENQ/29186

Eich Cyf / Your Ref

Dyddiad / Date. 19/12/2019

Site / Location: Alwen Forest
4KM North West of
Cerrigydrudion
Conwy / Denbighshire
LL21 9TT

Proposal: EIA Scoping Consultation -
Wind Farm (up to 9 turbines, up
to 200 m to tip) substation,
battery storage and associated
infrastructure, including grid
connection

Dear Planning Inspectorate

Re: EIA Scoping Consultation

I refer to your consultation dated 22nd November 2019 relating to the request for an updated Scoping Direction.

Conwy County Borough Council responded to the initial Scoping Consultation in 2008. This response relates specifically to the additional proposals outlined in the Alwen Forest Wind Farm Grid Connection Scoping Report dated 19th November 2019.

The Council would like to comment on the following specific matters:

Section 9 – Ecology

The Council's Ecologist is happy with the scope of the ecological work but would ask that the following is specifically considered:

*an assessment of whether the felling corridor required for the OHL may make the habitat **more** suitable for species such as nightjar and black grouse, thereby **increasing** the likelihood of collisions with the lines within that habitat subsequently.*

The scoping report did not indicate that this aspect of possible impacts would be considered, and the Ecologist feels that it is merited.

Section 12 – Hydrology, Geology and Hydrogeology

The Council's Principal Environment Officer states.

Having reviewed the relevant sections relating to potential hydrogeological impacts this Department has identified the location of private water supply catchments within both the proposed Corridors 1 and 2. The EIA will need to focus on these in detail to ensure that the potential impacts on the individual

catchments areas are adequately considered. This is a matter which this Department will be reviewing in detail on receipt of the EIA.

Section 14 – Traffic and Transport

The local highway authority states:

The applicant should produce a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) that should be agreed with CCBC and the applicant is advised to engage with CCBC with respect to proposed traffic management routes for all traffic associated with development. It is our understanding that it is proposed to scope out operational and maintenance impacts from the assessment. The TMP should be prepared to ensure that the management and mitigation measures contained within the document minimise the impact of the construction of the development on existing users of the public highway network.

It is also understood that "Mitigation will be identified for any potentially significant construction impacts. Mitigation will be primarily in the form of a draft Traffic Management Plan (TMP) which will set out the agreed routing, timing, signing, access locations and access routes relating to the grid connection and wind farm" On this basis there are no objections to the Scoping Report subject to the submission of a satisfactory Traffic Management Plan.

Section 17 – Socio Economics

The North Wales Minerals and Waste Planning Service states:

It appears from figure 2.2: Preliminary Site Layout that the site is outside the area safeguarding hard rock and Sand & Gravel designation as identified within the Conwy Adopted Local Development Plan proposals map. However, it does appear that figure 9.1. Survey Areas Overview shows part of corridor 2 within an area safeguarded for Sand & Gravel. As such the proposed development should be justified in accordance with requirements specified within policy MWS/1 and MWS/3 of the Conwy Local Development Plan.

We would therefore be grateful if these comments could be incorporated into the revised Scoping Direction

Yn ddiffuant / Yours sincerely



Paula Jones

Rheolwr Rheoli Datblygu ac Adeiladu / Development and Building Control Manager



Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg / We welcome correspondence in Welsh
Byddwn yn ymateb i unrhyw ohebiaeth yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd hyn yn arwain at unrhyw oedi /
We will respond to any correspondence in Welsh which will not lead to a delay

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Eich cyf / Your ref

Ein cyf / Our ref : 00/2018/0778

Dyddiad / Date : 10 January 2020

Rhif union / Direct dial : 01824 706727



Dear Sir / Madam

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012**

CAIS / 00/2018/0778
APPLICATION:

CYNNIG / EIA Scoping Direction
PROPOSAL:
LLEOLIAD / Alwen Forest , Bylchau, Denbigh
LOCATION:

I write on behalf of Denbighshire County Council as local planning authority in relation to your letter dated 22/11/2019 inviting comments from the Council on a request for an updated Scoping Direction in relation to the above development, which now incorporates the proposed grid connection in the proposal.

The Council's previous comments set out in the letter dated 23 August 2018, which is attached as an Appendix to the original Scoping Direction issued 27/09/2018 are still applicable, and the comments made in this response relate to the grid connection element of the proposal only.

Our comments are based on the information set out in the Alwen Forest Wind Farm Grid Connection Scoping Report (Doc Ref: 1204855 Issue E), having regard to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (the 2017 Regulations).

Please note, due to time and resource constraints, technical specialists within the Council have not provided an input into this response, and the comments on the relevant chapters in the Grid Connection Scoping Report set out below are limited to the views of planning officers only:

COMMENTS ON SCOPING REPORT:

1. Introduction

No observations.

2. Purpose of the Scoping Report

No observations.

3. The Applicant

No observations.

4. The Proposed Alwen Forest Grid Connection

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Planning and Public Protection Services, Caledfryn, Smithfield Road, Denbigh, Denbighshire, LL16 3RJ

Phone: 01824 706727

e-mail: planning@denbighshire.gov.uk Website: www.denbighshire.gov.uk



Note the windfarm would connect to the new SPEN collector substation at Saron to the north of Clocaenog Forest and the preferred connection corridors lies within DCC and CCBC local authority areas.

Two preferred route corridors are identified, and until such time as a precise route is identified, the ES should assess the impacts associated with both corridor options.

It is noted that the grid connection would be either overhead lines, underground cables or a combination of the both. The report states that the overhead line is likely to be on single 10m high wooden poles with cross arms, however twin poles may be needed at points of sharp deviation and at terminal ends, and cable stays would be necessary where the line deviates.

As the connection infrastructure is yet to be confirmed, the assessments should be based on the worst case scenario for each topic area – e.g. landscape and visual amenity assessment should be based on the assumption that the whole grid connection would be overhead lines, with twin poles at all points of sharp deviation and terminal ends, with cable stays at points of deviation.

It also is noted at 4.4.5 that for the purposes of scoping it has been assumed that a maximum span length between poles of 100m to 110m could be achieved, which represents a best case scenario, however the actual span would be influenced by topography etc. and could be reduced in length.

As the actual span between poles is unlikely to be the maximum 100m to 110m along the whole line, this should be factored in to the assessment, as a shorter span distance between poles would require more poles to be installed, which could have a greater impact than an assumed line with 110m span length, and again a worse-case span length scenario should be assumed for the purposes of the assessments.

5. Approach to EIA

As stated in 4 above, as the exact grid connection route and infrastructure has not be defined, for the purposes of the EIA, a worse-case scenario relevant to each topic area should be assessed.

Section 5.5 - agree that other grid routes and windfarms should be included in the cumulative assessment. Other electricity infrastructure such as substations should also be included into the assessment.

No observations in respect to the approach to EIA and to mitigation and monitoring.

6. Legal and Policy Context

No observations.

7. Environmental Statement

No observations on the proposed structure of the ES.

8. Embedded Mitigation and Further Layout Iterations

As stated above, until exact route and infrastructure is confirmed, the assessments should be based on a worse-case scenario.

9. Ecology

The Council's Ecology Officer has reviewed the scoping report, and has raised no objection to the species and habitats that have scoped in/out with respect to the grid connection proposal.

10 Ornithology

The Council's Ecology Officer has reviewed the scoping report, and has raised no objection to the bird species that have been scoped in/out with respect to the grid connection proposal.

11. Landscape and Visual

Having regard to the limited height and form of the proposed overhead line, the Council would agree a 4km radius is an appropriate Study Area for the LVIA.

Gwasanaethau Cynllunio a Gwarchod y Cyhoedd, Caledfryn, Ffordd Y Ffair, Dinbych, Sir Ddinbych LL16 3RJ

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Phone: 01824 706727

e-mail: planning@denbighshire.gov.uk Website: www.denbighshire.gov.uk



Agree the LVIA should be based upon assumption the whole line would be overhead line. As per comments in Section 4 above, the LVIA should be based upon a worse-case scenario, including the likely use of twin poles and poles stays at relevant points along the route, and it should factor in a sub-optimal span length between poles where terrain would prevent 100m-110m span to be achieved.

The Council would suggest additional viewpoints to include the following sensitive receptors within the 4km zone from which both windfarm and grid connection proposals are theoretically visible:

Ffridd Brynhelen Enclosures & fields, a registered scheduled ancient monument (grid ref: 296626:352078)

Cae Ddundod Camp scheduled ancient monument (grid ref: 298482:352049)

Public right of way near cumulus to south of Foel Gasnach (grid ref: 303278:354538)

Public right of way near Bryn Ocyn / Diffwys (grid ref: 301966:357796)

11.5 Cumulative Assessment

Disagree that no other grid connection projects have the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects.

The proposed Alwen Forest windfarm grid connection would connect to the SPEN collector substation at Saron in the north of the Clocaenog Forest. A twin pole overhead line connects this substation to the main SPEN distribution network substation at St Asaph (North Wales Wind Farms Connection Project), and there could be inter-visibility with this existing overhead line.

The Council also consider the SPEN collector substation itself and the adjoining Clocaenog Forest windfarm substation should be included in the cumulative assessment for the proposed cumulative assessment.

The Council would agree the wind turbines to be included in the cumulative assessment for the grid connection set out in Table 11.3.

12. Hydrology, Geology and Hydrogeology

No observations.

13. Cultural Heritage

The Council agrees cultural heritage issues should be included within the scope of the EIA.

The Annex to the Cadw guidance 'Setting of Historic Assets' advises that for projects more than 1 hectare in size, an assessment of the impact on setting of all scheduled monuments within 5km is required to be carried out.

As the grid connection will form part of the windfarm application and therefore total area will exceed 1 hectare, the Council consider the outer study area should be extended to include all historic assets within 5km of the grid route option corridors in accordance with the Cadw guidance.

14. Traffic and Transport

The Council's Highways Officer has not been able to input into this scoping opinion consultation within the time constraints, and therefore it is advisable for the developer to engage with the local highway authority with respect to proposed traffic management routes for construction traffic and location of construction compounds and laydown areas along construction routes.

In accordance with current Welsh Government advice, a Transport Management Plan should be agreed with relevant highway authorities and submitted with the DNS application for approval rather than dealt with by condition.

15. Noise

Agree that construction noise effects should be scoped in if HDD activities are proposed, and mitigation to limit adverse impacts from HDD activities during construction phase should be specified.

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16. Forestry

No observations.

17. Socio-Economic

No observations.

18. Heath and Public Safety

No observations.

19. Aviation and Existing Infrastructure

No observations.

20. Summary, Residual and Synergistic Effects and Mitigation

No observations.

21. ES Accompanying documentation

Support the bilingual publication of the NTS.

Please note, this response is made at officer level and is given without prejudice; it is not to be held as binding on the Local Planning Authority or any of its elected members.

Yours sincerely

Denise Shaw MRTPI

Planning Officer

(On behalf of Denbighshire County Council)

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19/12/2019

Annwyl Syr/Madam / Dear Sir/Madam,

BWRIAD / PROPOSAL: SCOPING OPINION, GRID CONNECTION FOR WIND FARM (UP TO 9 TURBINES, UP TO 200 M TO TIP), SUBSTATION, BATTERY STORAGE AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE

LLEOLIAD / LOCATION: ALWEN FOREST, 4 KM NORTH WEST OF CERRIGYDRUDION, CONWY / DENBIGHSHIRE, LL21 9TT

Thank you for consulting Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru / Natural Resources Wales about the above, which we received on 22/11/2019. NRW has provided comments regarding the project already in our letter dated: 06/09/2018 (ref: CAS-66918-H8P2). The comments below are in addition to our previous comments and relate solely to the potential grid connection.

Protected Sites:

Mynydd Hiraethog Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

As noted in section 9 Ecology, Corridor 1 includes part of the Mynydd Hiraethog SSSI. The area in question includes the main feature of the site (dry heath). Route 1 borders the site for some distance, which may result in effects due to the clearance distances required from the lines / working corridors for vehicles and pole installation. As noted section 12 of the scoping report (Hydrology, geology and hydrogeology) scopes potential hydrological effects on the site.

As such, we consider the site should be screened in for detailed assessment. All potential direct and indirect effects should be assessed and a realistic worst case for the route should inform the assessment. Avoidance must be considered in the first instance with mitigation and compensation measures proposed if avoidance is not possible.

Where corridor 1 and 2 meet to the east is the Tir Mostyn and Foel Goch windfarm mitigation area where the dry heath and woodland is managed for black grouse under a S106 agreement. The grid connection should have avoided this area which has been set aside as

mitigation for the Tir Mostyn wind farm (through S106 agreement). If avoidance is not possible appropriate measures must be proposed in order to maintain the functionality of this area and the objectives of the original mitigation. The central point of this area is SJ00372 55053 and we have included a map below for ease.



Within corridor 2, there is a SINC (clocaenog SH98966 53462) to the south of Ty Hen where the interest is the roadside verge. This should be avoided in the first instance. If avoidance is not possible, the LPA should advise on any appropriate mitigation and compensation required.

Protected Species:

NRW advise that the ES should clearly set out any effects on protected species and, where adverse effects are identified, should propose and deliver appropriate mitigation and/or compensation schemes to ensure the Favourable Conservation Status of the affected species is maintained.

Red squirrel

We agree with the scope of works proposed and that this receptor requires detailed assessment.

Hazel dormouse

We agree with the scope of works proposed and that this receptor requires detailed assessment. The developer should ensure appropriate reference is made to Current Conservation Status (CCS) and Favourable Conservation Status (FCS).

Bats

We agree that this receptor is unlikely to be significantly adversely affected by the proposals. The information submitted for this receptor must adequately evidence:

- CCS and FCS of each local population of each species
- evidence of no loss of breeding sites and resting places
- evidence of no impact on foraging or dispersal
- propose reasonable avoidance measures (RAMS)

Otters

We agree with the scope of works proposed and that this receptor requires detailed assessment. The developer should ensure appropriate reference is made to CCS and FCS.

Pine Marten

NRW agree with that the project is unlikely to have significant effects on pine marten. The ES will have to provide appropriate justification.

Water Vole

We agree with the scope of works proposed for this receptor. We agree that avoidance and mitigation are likely to avoid any significant effect on this receptor. This will need to be evidenced appropriately in the ES.

Fisheries

We note section 9 scopes this receptor out, whereas it is scoped in in section 12. Providing appropriate methodologies are adhered to and detailed with any Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) we consider the impact on fisheries is unlikely to be significant.

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

The ES should include appropriate assessment and control measures for INNS found/likely to be onsite as well as appropriate measures to prevent the spread of and INNS.

Ornithology:

NRW agree with the scope of works proposed for ornithology receptors and as directed in the Scoping report, have held a number of discussions with the developer regarding these matters to date.

Environmental Management:

NRW welcome the guidance and good practices to be adhered to and the legislation which will be considered moving forward. Consideration must be given as to whether the proposed works could prevent any mitigation measures or actions intended to achieve Good

Ecological Status (GES) / Good Ecological Potential (GEP) from being implemented, which could result in the water body failing to meet its objectives. Where a scheme is considered to cause deterioration, or where it could contribute to a failure of the water body to meet GES or GEP, then an Article 4.7 assessment would be required.

The Alwen, above Afon Brenig catchment is currently achieving a moderate status under the water framework directive due to PH failure. NRW's concern would be that the works and tracks leading to the works could further increase the input of PH and possibly deteriorate this water body further and possibly the downstream water body Alwen - Ceirw to Brenig.

The waterbodies that also fall within this consultation are the Brenig - reservoir and east catchment and the Brenig - trib from llyn bran. Both of these catchments are achieving a moderate status due to mitigation measures.

We welcome the provision of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) with the application covering all of the measures that will be put in place to ensure the works do not impact on the above-mentioned waterbodies.

Flood Risk:

With regards to flood risk, we are satisfied that both corridors are unlikely to significantly impact on any designated main rivers. The only main river within the corridors is that of the Afon Brenig which ends its main river designation at NGR SH9749353954. All other watercourses are classed as those of ordinary watercourses. Thus any culverting or obstructing the flow in these watercourses would require a consent from the Lead Local Flood Authority under Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

We note the contents of paragraphs 12.3.7 to 12.3.15 under Flood Risk and are generally satisfied with the approach. We would also advise that the LLFA would also need to advise on the surface water drainage arrangements in their capacity as Suds Approving bodies under the Floods and Water management Act 2010.

Geoscience:

We note as part of the full Environmental Impact Assessment that further studies of the private water supplies and groundwater dependant terrestrial ecosystems would be undertaken for these reports and therefore have been scoped in. We also note that geology has been scoped out – it is unlikely to change during the lifetime of the developed, and we accept this outcome.

As stated in previous response we would require further details on specific aspects of the larger development including (but not exhaustive):

- disposal of foul water from welfare facilities during construction and operation if not taken off site
- storage of fuels, oils and chemical during construction and operation
- borrow pits and whether these will be sub water table
- proximity of (domestic) private water supplies to windfarm infrastructure

Underground cables: Groundwater Position Statement C5 should be referred to if underground cables will be fluid filled.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/692989/Environment-Agency-approach-to-groundwater-protection.pdf

Protected Landscapes:

The location of the corridor 1 and 2, and the scale and visibility of development associated with 33 kV powerlines and timber pole supports, is very unlikely to have an impact on the setting of The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB and Snowdonia National Park. We therefore have no comments to make in the scoping report and subsequent EIA stages for the grid connection. We strongly recommend the Local Planning Authority are consulted on the local landscape and visual interests and adequacy of the scoping report.

Other Matters

Our comments above only relate specifically to matters included on our checklist, *Development Planning Advisory Service: Consultation Topics* (September 2018), which is published on our [website](#). We have not considered potential effects on other matters and do not rule out the potential for the proposed development to affect other interests, including environmental interests of local importance.

We advise the applicant that, in addition to planning permission, it is their responsibility to ensure they secure all other permits/consents/licences relevant to their development. Please refer to our [website](#) for further details.

If you have any queries on the above, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yn gywir / Yours faithfully

Tomos Hughes

Uwch Cynghorydd - Cynllunio Datblygu / Senior Advisor - Development Planning
Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru / Natural Resources Wales



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Eich cyfeirnod Your reference	3214855
Ein cyfeirnod Our reference	
Dyddiad Date	16 December 2019
Llinell uniongyrchol Direct line	0300 025 6007
Ebost Email:	Cadwplanning@gov.wales

Dear Sir / Madam,

Potential DNS Application

Site Address: Alwen Forest, 4 km North West of Cerrigydrudion, Conwy / Denbighshire, LL21 9TT

Proposed Development: Wind farm (up to 9 turbines, up to 200 m to tip), substation, battery storage and associated infrastructure, including grid connection.

Thank you for your letter of 22 November 2019 inviting our comments on the above.

This advice is given in response to a scoping opinion in regard to the contents of an environmental impact assessment that will accompany an application for a Development Consent Order for a windfarm consisting of 9 turbines and the associated substation, battery storage and associated infrastructure, including grid connection at Alwen Forest, 4 km North West of Cerrigydrudion, Conwy / Denbighshire.

A scoping report for the environmental impact assessment has been prepared by Natural Power Ltd including a section on Cultural Heritage. The document also includes a number of questions in regard to the proposed methodologies for the assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the Cultural Heritage. Our advice on the response to these questions is given below.

Question 15: Are consultees happy with this approach to the assessment of the Registered Landscape?

Yes, the extent of the registered landscape as identified in the study by CPAT should be used in this assessment.

Mae'r Gwasanaeth Amgylchedd Hanesyddol Llywodraeth Cymru (Cadw) yn hyrwyddo gwaith cadwraeth ar gyfer amgylchedd hanesyddol Cymru a gwerthfawrogiad ohono.

The Welsh Government Historic Environment Service (Cadw) promotes the conservation and appreciation of Wales's historic environment.

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in both English and Welsh.



BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Question 16: Do consultees have any comments regarding the approach noted above for the methodology, and relevant legislation, policy and guidance?

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as amended by The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 is the primary statutory tool for protecting historic assets and sustainable management of the historic environment.

Question 17: Are consultees in agreement with combining the wind farm and grid connection for a single AIDOHL2 assessment?

Yes, this approach will determine the impact of the whole project on the registered historic landscape. Cadw will be the curator for the ASIDOHL and should be consulted at the start of the assessment in order to agree which Historic Landscape Character Areas should be included in the study.

Question 18: Are consultees in agreement with the proposed levels of significance, magnitude of effect and significance of effect matrices?

Yes

Question 19: Are consultees in agreement with the proposed identification of schemes for cumulative assessment?

Yes

Question 20: Are consultees in agreement with the approach to scope out certain cultural heritage aspects?

A stage 1 assessment (following the guidance given in the Welsh Government document the [Setting of Historic Assets in Wales](#)) will identify the designated heritage assets that can be scoped out of further study.

Decommissioning should not result in further damage as the ground disturbance would already have occurred during the construction phase, and therefore can be scoped out of the assessment

Operational phase effects can be scoped out if the proposal taken forward is for an underground cable.

Yours sincerely,

Nichola Davies
Diogelu a Pholisi/ Protection and Policy

Designated assets:

Scheduled Monuments

DE042 Capel Hiraethog Round Barrow
DE076 Cae Ddunod Camp
DE085 Bwlch-Du Round Barrow
DE086 Hen Ddinbych Circular Platforms
DE087 Circular Platforms North West of Hen Ddinbych
DE088 Twr yr Hill Round Barrow
DE095 Hafod-y-Dre Stone Rows and Cairn
DE100 Rhiwiau round barrow cemetery
DE168 Gorsedd Bran Round Barrows
DE228 Ffridd Brynhelen Enclosures & Fields
DE253 Tyddyn Tudur Enclosure
DE283 Hafotty Wen Ring Cairn
DE284 Nant Heilyn Stone Setting

Registered Historic Landscape

HLW (C) 5 Denbigh Moors

Listed Buildings

19340	Milestone	II
19341	Pont Ty'n-y-rhyd	II
19342	Pont-yr-Alwen	II
19343	Cerrigydrudion War Memorial	II
19344	Morris Monument in the churchyard of the Church of St Mary Magdalene	II
19345	Pair of Williams Chest Tombs in the churchyard of the Church of St Mary Magdalene	II
19346	Table Tomb in the churchyard of the Church of St Mary Magdalene	II
19347	Magdalone	II
19348	Cowhouse, Yards and Stable at Hafod y Maidd	II
19348	Llechwedd-llyfn	II
19351	Alwen Dam	II
19352	Pont-y-rhuddfa	II
19353	Hafod y Maidd Farmhouse including attached farm building at the W end	II
19354	Barn and Carhouse opposite Hafod y Maidd including attached pigsties	II
19355	Carhouse at Hafod y Maidd	II
19577	The Old Rectory also known as Pennant	II
20583	Pont Tllaran	II
20584	Tyrpeg Mynydd	II
20597	Chapel at Hafod	II
20598	Telephone Call-box at Hafod	II
20602	Stable building at Cernioge	II
20603	Glanrafon	II
20604	Bryn-heilyn	II
20612	Stable Building at Bryn-heilyn	II
20665	Pont Traws-afon	II
20993	U-shaped Agricultural Range at Tan-y-graig	II
20994	Bwlch-du	II
63	Hafan Prys Almshouses	II
67	Cernioge Farmhouse (Cerniogau-mawr)	II
70	Church of St Mary Magdalene	II