

Inception Meeting: DNS CAS-03721-J2H3Y3
Morgannwg Solar and Energy Storage
Monday 7 October 2024 at 14.00
Via Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

RPS

Emily Avery
Emily Jones

Lightsource BP

Aidan Collins
Edwin Mawdsley

**Planning and Environment Decisions
Wales (PEDW)**

Marloes Holtkamp – Planning Officer
Hannah Roberts – Infrastructure Consenting Team Leader
Robert Sparey – Planning & Environment Manager

Meeting note:

Representatives from PEDW met with the above-named project team regarding the Morgannwg Solar and Energy Storage project located mainly within the Vale of Glamorgan Council area, with one of the solar PV areas extending into the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council area.

Project overview

The project team provided an overview of the proposed project, which consists of 9 solar PV areas (250 MW), a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) area (240 MW), and associated infrastructure, covering a wide area of 526 ha in total.

The point of connection will be at the Aberthaw 275 kV substation. The connection date is 31 October 2028. Options for connection are currently under consideration, including options for Easements as well as a licence under S50 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 to lay cable in the highway. Two cable route options, with buffers, will be included at Scoping stage, to ensure the worst-case scenario is considered. The BESS area will be in the south of the site, closest to the point of connection.

The project team outlined the key site constraints. For the site in general this includes:

- Designated Mineral Safeguarding Areas
- Wider local landscape designations (Dyffryn Basin and Ridge Slopes Special Landscape Areas / Vale of Glamorgan Heritage Coast)

- Cumulative development
- Cardiff Airport and MOD St Athan within 3 km of the BESS.

Specific constraints in relation to the BESS include an area of surface water flood risk in the eastern parcel, as well as East Aberthaw Conservation Area. Constraints for the nine PV areas include areas of flood risk, areas of ancient woodland, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within and adjacent to the areas, Scheduled Ancient Monument, Grade I listed Church, and Historic Parks and Gardens. Furthermore, PV area 8 falls within a quarry buffer zone and PV area 9 contains ALC Grade 3a.

Timescales

The project team outlined the project's timescales:

- LPA pre-application advice request: October / November 2024
- EIA scoping direction request: late November 2024
- Non-statutory consultation launch: January / February 2025
- Statutory pre-application consultation: August to October 2025
- Submission: February 2026

Survey work is currently underway and the methodology for ALC surveys has been agreed with LQAS.

PEDW advised that there are currently delays from submission to formal acceptance of DNS applications and advised the applicant monitors [PEDW's Service Update for DNS](#) for updates on this.

PEDW asked to be given advance notice of anticipated timescales, including the timings for the intended scoping request. PEDW confirmed files exceeding 30 MB cannot be received by email and advised that the project team should get in touch prior to submission for a file sharing workspace to be set up if required. In addition, any documents over 50 MB should be split to ensure they are able to be published on PEDW's casework portal.

Consenting regime

The project team queried the transitional arrangements for the Infrastructure (Wales) Act 2024 (the 2024 Act). PEDW advised that, if the notification on the applicant's official submission of the DNS scheme is still valid (i.e. within one year of acceptance), the applicant can choose to either continue with the DNS system or opt in to the new regime. The transitional arrangements for the 2024 Act are found in Section 146: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asc/2024/3/section/146/enacted>

Regarding secondary consents, currently only PRoW diversions have been identified with no other secondary consents anticipated. PEDW advised that the project team liaise with the Welsh Government Transport Directorate on the draft Order that will need to be published as part of their statutory pre-application consultation. Further detail in relation to Relevant Persons for DNS secondary consents will be provided with the note of the meeting.

Any Other Business

PEDW explained that whether the project could benefit from PEDW's Pre-Application Advice Service is likely best considered after feedback has been received at Scoping stage from statutory consultees, and after seeking pre-application advice from the LPAs who have the relevant local knowledge. The project team stated they will likely also attempt to seek discretionary pre-application advice from NRW.

The project team confirmed they are aware of the latest PPW updates.

PEDW is currently working on updating the DNS Procedural Guidance and the latest working draft will be provided alongside the meeting note.