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Jenna Folkard  
Cleaneath,  
Unit 2A 2B Bess Park Road,  
Trenant Industrial Estate,  
Wadebridge  
PL27 6HB

Dear Madam,

**Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)  
(England and Wales) Regulations 1999 : Part II Screening Paragraph 5  
Erection of a single wind turbine  
at Land at Ysgubor Goch Farm, St. Andrews Major**

The Council has considered the details of the proposed scheme as detailed in the information submitted with the request for a screening opinion as to the requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment received 17 July 2014.

The Local Planning Authority would advise that in their opinion an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required for the following reason(s):

1. Having regard to the key issues identified in Schedule 3 of the Regulations and WO Circular 11/99, the Local Planning Authority is of the view that the characteristics, location and any potential impact of the development as outlined in the supporting documentation is not likely to be significant upon the environment for the reasons identified in the screening opinion attached.

Accordingly, there is not considered to be a requirement for a formal Environmental Impact Assessment to be submitted under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended).

**NOTE:**

1. Please note that the Council's Screening Opinion comprises this decision letter and the accompanying Screening Report.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Thomas', written over a horizontal line.

Director of Development Services

Jenna Folkard Cleaneath, Unit 2A 2B Bess Park Road, Trenant Industrial Estate, Wadebridge, PL27 6HB  
Jenna Folkard Cleaneath, Unit 2A 2B Bess Park Road, Trenant Industrial Estate, Wadebridge, PL27 6HB

**Land at Ysgubor Goch Farm, St. Andrews Major**

Erection of a single wind turbine

**BACKGROUND**

A formal request for a screening opinion under the above regulations has been received from consultants David Lock Associates on behalf of g2 Energy Renewable Developments Limited, for the construction of a single 500kW turbine and associated infrastructure on land forming part of The Grange.

It is considered that the proposal falls to be considered for EIA under Section 3 (i) of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended), which relates to "*Installations for harnessing of wind power for energy productions (wind farms)*".

The applicable thresholds are "*(i) The development involves the installation of more than 2 turbines; or (ii) the hub height of any turbine or height of any other structure exceeds 15 metres.*" The proposal exceeds the second threshold in that it would result in a development that is over 15m in height.

In undertaking this assessment as to whether the proposed works amount to an EIA development it is noted that WO Circular 11/99 advises that the basic question to be asked is "*Would this particular development be likely to have significant effects on the environment?*" (para.32). This assessment has therefore to examine the characteristics of the development (including its size, use of natural resources, quantities of pollution and waste generally), the environmental sensitivity of the site and the characteristics of the potential impact (including its magnitude and duration) (para. 33).

**SITE AND CONTEXT**

The area as defined by the red spot on the accompanying plans comprises agricultural land associated with Ysgubor Goch Farm to the south east, and is located to the east of Wenvoe and to the north of St Andrews.

The site lies in open countryside outside of any residential settlement boundary as defined in the Vale of Glamorgan Adopted Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011. The site also lies close to Wrinstone Brook and is within the flood zone associated with this brook. There is an area of woodland to the south of the site.

## DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The description of the development as outlined in the accompanying information is for the erection of a single 500kW turbine with a maximum tip height of 77m, with a 3 blade rotor design. Also included are an associated switch gear housing unit (approx. 5 x 3m), a temporary access track, underground cabling and a temporary crane hard standing area (approx. 35m x 15m) for the duration of construction (2-3 days).

The indicative siting of the proposed turbine is shown on Drwg. No. OP1107\_SC\_TL\_01, and identifies a position approximately 0.5km from the associated buildings at Ysgabor Goch Farm and also similar distances to the nearest neighbouring properties at Wrinstone Farm and St Andrews House. The nearest highway is approximately 320m to the south.

The proposed development is expected to have an operational life of 25 years.

## PLANNING HISTORY

None

## CONSULTATIONS

Natural Resources Wales – “There may be environmental risks from the proposed development, however we consider these are likely to be managed, and are not deemed significant in the context of the above regulations”. Does not require an EIA.

Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust – Highlighted some ‘findspots’ in the area, including Roman finds. Required an archaeological desk-top study to be submitted, though this could be with either a planning application or EIA.

## REPRESENTATIONS

None

## REPORT

### Issues

In reaching a screening opinion, the Council must have regard to the matters listed in Schedule 3 of the Regulations, which sets out the 'selection criteria' which must be taken into account in determining whether a development is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

It identifies three broad criteria which should be considered: the characteristics of the development (e.g. its size, use of natural resources, quantities of pollution and waste generated); the environmental sensitivity of the location; and the characteristics of the potential impact (e.g. its magnitude and duration).

From a consideration of the proposal in the context of the site, and on the basis of the information provided by the agents, which itself addresses the Schedule 3 criteria, the following conclusions are reached in relation to the Schedule 3 issues.

### Characteristics of Development

Schedule 3 - Selection Criteria for Screening Schedule 2 Development of the regulations advises that the characteristics of development must be considered having regard, in particular, to:

- (a) the size of the development;
- (b) the cumulation with other development;
- (c) the use of natural resources;
- (d) the production of waste;
- (e) pollution and nuisances;
- (f) the risk of accidents, having regard in particular to substances or technologies used.

The proposed development is for a turbine of a relatively large height of 77m, however it is for a single turbine, and the indication is that the associated works will also be limited, with the substation building being described as 5m x 3m.

As regards the question of cumulation the supporting documentation indicates that there are no other similar developments proposed or operating in the vicinity. As such there is a limited likelihood of significant cumulative adverse landscape and visual impact.

In respect of points (c) and (d) it is considered that the development would not have significant impacts in respect of natural resource usage or waste production. However, in respect of point (e) there is the potential for problems in relation to noise and shadow flicker. It is noted on this point that the supporting information highlights the intention to submit assessments for noise and shadow flicker.

Finally, on the issue of risk of accidents, the submitted information notes that turbine developments do not use any hazardous substances and are safety checked. In addition, it is noted that the issue of the potential impact on aviation in the area has not been included in detail, other than reference in the supporting documentation to a proposed 'Civil Aviation and MoD' document. Also, the applicant has started pre-application discussions with the MoD about the proposals. The Vale of Glamorgan has two aerodromes at MoD St Athan and Cardiff Airport, and geographic information from the RESTATS website (Department of Energy and Climate Change) shows a 30km aviation consultation zone which covers the whole of the authority area. Furthermore, Civil Aviation Authority VFR Charts show that the whole of the Vale of Glamorgan lies within controlled airspace associated with these aerodromes. The Council's "Renewable Energy Assessment Background Paper 2013" to the Local Development Plan (LDP) has identified areas less likely to be constrained by aviation safeguarding which may be suitable for individual and/or smaller scaled wind turbine development. Whilst the site appears to be within such an area, nevertheless, it is recommended that developers should consult with the CAA and airport operators on a case-by-case basis.

Overall, it is considered that the characteristics of the development do not indicate at this stage that there is the potential for significant impacts as a result of the proposed development.

#### Location of development

It is necessary to assess the area for its environmental sensitivity, and whether any part of the development would be carried out in a sensitive area. Paragraph 36 of WO Circular 11/99 provides a definition of 'sensitive areas' and includes:- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); National Parks; Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); World Heritage Sites; Scheduled Ancient Monuments; and Internationally designated sites.

Notwithstanding this paragraph 39 of the Circular makes it clear that there can be other circumstances where a site can be considered to be environmentally sensitive. This states:

*"In certain cases other statutory and non-statutory designations which are not included within the definition of 'sensitive areas', but which are nonetheless environmentally sensitive, may also be relevant in determining whether EIA is required. Where relevant Local Biodiversity Action Plans will be of assistance in determining the sensitivity of a location. Urban locations may also be considered sensitive as a result of their heavier concentrations of population."*

Thus when considering the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development, regard must be had, in particular, to –

- (a) the existing land use;
- (b) the relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area;
- (c) the absorption capacity of the natural environment paying particular attention to the following areas -
  - (i) wetlands;
  - (ii) coastal zones;
  - (iii) mountain and forest areas;
  - (iv) nature reserves and parks;
  - (v) areas classified or protected under Member States' legislation; areas designated by Member States pursuant to Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora;

(vi) areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in Community legislation have already been exceeded;

(vii) densely populated areas;

(viii) landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.

It is noted that the submitted documentation indicates that there are no environmental designations at or in the general vicinity of the proposed wind turbine. However whilst it is correct that there are no statutory designations relating to the site, this is a rural location near a watercourse and designated 'Ancient Woodland' with the nearest SSSI being 'Barry Woodland', approximately 800m to the south. As such, the Council's Ecology team require that any application should be accompanied by an Ecology Survey, relating primarily to bats.

The supporting documentation identifies a number of listed buildings in the area, such as the Grade 2\* Church of St Andrew, but this is approximately 1.2km from the site of the proposed turbine and is stated to be partially screened by the rolling topography between. The site has no recognised landscape value and is not subject to any landscape designation. This historical and cultural interest in the area is reflected in the Council's "Designation of Landscape Character Areas Background Paper 2013". The site is included within the area termed as 'Cwry Yr Ala Lowland' and describes it as the following:

*'An area of rolling, undulating hills and valleys underlain by Triassic mudstones and Jurassic limestone and characterised by low tabular hills centred on the Cwrt yr Ala valley. A mosaic of fields, hedgerows and woodlands, the latter being set on the steeper valley sides and ridgelines, providing a green backcloth to Cardiff.'*

Further to the above, the site is approximately 1km to the east of Cwrt Yr Alla Parkland, which is on the Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales. As such, given this setting, even though the site has no Special Landscape Designation it does have a landscape value that would justify a form of landscape evaluation.

The Council's archaeological advisors Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust have indicated that the proposal could have some impact to local archaeology and has stated that an assessment should be submitted with a formal planning application, though have not stated that an EIA would be required on this basis.

Thus although the location of the site is not a particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable one, where the proposal has the potential to have a significant environmental impact, nevertheless, it does have some importance within the local context. It is noted that the supporting documentation does outline a number of technical assessments that will accompany any formal application, including a Landscape and Visual Impact and an Ecology assessment. These should ensure that they include the above requirements i.e. a Bat Survey and a Landscape Appraisal that considers the Council's own appraisal.

### Characteristics of the potential impact

An assessment of the potential significant effects of development must have particular regard to:

- (a) the extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population);
- (b) the transfrontier nature of the impact;
- (c) the magnitude and complexity of the impact;
- (d) the probability of the impact;
- (e) the duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.

In considering the potential impacts, the Council would agree that the scale of the proposed development is likely to be of no more than local importance. It is not envisaged that there would be any significant transfrontier impacts. It is also accepted that the magnitude and complexity of the development is likely to be limited, as will the probability of the impact. Although it is not accepted that the duration and frequency of the impact of the development over a 25 year period can be described as limited, nevertheless, it is reversible.

As such the scheme is not considered to have the potential for significant environmental effects, and, in this instance an Environmental Impact Assessment is not a requirement.

### CONCLUSION

Welsh Office Circular 11/99 states that EIA will usually only be needed for Schedule 2 developments in three main types of case: a) for major developments which are of more than local importance; b) for developments which are proposed for particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable locations; and c) for developments with unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects. It also states at A15 -Wind farms, that the likelihood of significant effects will generally depend upon the scale of the development, and its visual impact, as well as potential noise impacts. EIA is more likely to be required for commercial developments of five or more turbines, or more than 5 MW of new generating capacity.

In this respect, and taking into account the above circular advice and each of the stated criteria in Schedule 3, it is concluded from the information submitted that the project is not a major development of more than local importance, is not proposed for a particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable location, nor does it have unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects. As such, whilst information regarding certain environmental issues will undoubtedly be required for any planning application, it is considered that there is no requirement for a formal Environmental Impact Assessment to be submitted under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended).



## RECOMMENDATION – OFFICER DELEGATED

An Environmental Impact Assessment is not required for the following reason(s):

1. Having regard to the key issues identified in Schedule 3 of the Regulations and WO Circular 11/99, the Local Planning Authority is of the view that the characteristics, location and any potential impact of the development as outlined in the supporting documentation is not likely to be significant upon the environment for the reasons identified in the screening opinion attached.

Accordingly, there is not considered to be a requirement for a formal Environmental Impact Assessment to be submitted under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended).

### NOTE:

1. **Please note that the Council's Screening Opinion comprises this decision letter and the accompanying Screening Report.**

**Please note that this consent is specific to the plans and particulars approved as part of the application. Any departure from the approved plans will constitute unauthorised development and may be liable to enforcement action. You (or any subsequent developer) should advise the Council of any actual or proposed variations from the approved plans immediately so that you can be advised how to best resolve the matter.**

**In addition, any conditions that the Council has imposed on this consent will be listed above and should be read carefully. It is your (or any subsequent developers) responsibility to ensure that the terms of all conditions are met in full at the appropriate time (as outlined in the specific condition).**

**The commencement of development without firstly meeting in full the terms of any conditions that require the submission of details prior to the commencement of development will constitute unauthorised development. This will necessitate the submission of a further application to retain the unauthorised development and may render you liable to formal enforcement action.**

**Failure on the part of the developer to observe the requirements of any other conditions could result in the Council pursuing formal enforcement action in the form of a Breach of Condition Notice.**