

The Planning Inspectorate
Crown Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Sent by email to: dns.wales@pins.gsi.gov.uk

26 November 2018

Dear Sir / Madam,

PROPOSED TEMPORARY INSTALLATION OF A GAS POWERED ENERGY PLANT AT LAND TO THE NORTH OF FELINDRE ROAD, PENCOED, CF35 5HU (E 296847, N 181403)

REQUEST FOR A SCREENING OPINION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TOWN & COUNTRY (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (WALES) REGULATIONS 2017

I write in accordance with the Town & Country (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017, for the above mentioned site, to request a screening opinion to determine whether the proposed temporary installation of a circa 40MW Gas powered energy plant on approximately .96ha of land (1.10ha inclusive of vehicular access) within the area identified on the enclosed plan ref. constitutes EIA development.

This Letter and the accompanying Site Location Plan at 1:2500 and Block Plan at scale 1:1000 represent the formal screening request for an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Opinion.

The Screening Opinion is requested in order to confirm whether or not an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required and thus an Environmental Statement to accompany a planning application submission.

In accordance with the Regulations the following information is submitted as part of the EIA Screening Request:

- A Site Location Plan identifying the land; and
- A brief description of the nature and purpose of the development and its possible effects on the environment (this letter)
- Also included is a block plan drawing illustrating a proposed layout of the development

In accordance with the EIA Regulations, we have addressed the following within this letter: characteristics of the development; location of the development; and characteristics of potential impact.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development is an installation of a Short Term Operation Reserve (STOR) Development with a design capacity of approximately 40MW together with associated infrastructure, access and perimeter fencing.

The proposal principally comprises 18 x mains gas fuelled generators measuring approximately 6(l) x 2(w) x 2.4m(h) with associated equipment to include a substation, control room, silencers and switchgear enclosed within a purpose designed building.

A customer compound building would also house associated equipment serving the development.

A compacted hardcore access track would be created to access the development post installation for the purposes of general maintenance.

LOCATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The site lies approximately 1km from the centre of Pencoed to the west and is accessed from Felindre Road to the south, itself accessed from the A473 to the west and the A473 accessed from the M4 to the south.

The site is not within an environmentally sensitive area as defined by EIA Regulations 2017 and it also falls outside of the area at risk of flooding. The site has been chosen based on it being the closest available land to the substation which sits on land to the west of the site.

BACKGROUND TO PEAKING GAS GENERATION PROJECTS

The UK and Welsh Governments are increasingly aware of the continual falling power generating capacity in the United Kingdom.

The two primary sources of renewable power generation in Wales are on-shore solar and on-shore and off-shore wind. Typically solar will not generate energy when there is no daylight and wind when there is no wind, yet local community services, local residents and businesses all continue to require power during the periods when there is neither wind or daylight.

Peaking gas projects provide an important back-up resource for the Local District Network of the and are an essential component of a national strategy to avoid shortfalls of power on the network thus ensuring local people and businesses can continue to benefit from a continued supply until such time as a more sustainable longer term strategy is implemented.

It is a temporary proposal and part of a wider strategy to ensure continued supply of energy during this transitional period. Planning permission would be required for a 25 year period.

No major engineering works will be required. All equipment sits on the top of the ground and an underground gas supply will be provided to the development. A temporary hard stand will need to be provided in place of the existing soft topsoil and grass.

All infrastructure can be removed at the end of the 25 year life of the development with the land then being restored to its original form. In effect, visual impacts arising from this development are entirely reversible.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Landscape Impact

The site is very well screened by surrounding vegetation.

The proposed equipment is entirely contained within a purpose building. The equipment enclosed within this building is totally screened with the only visual part of the equipment being any flues associated with the dispersion of emissions.

Landscape impacts should be predominantly contained to the site itself as a result of the site being substantially lower level of ground to the surrounding land to the south east, south west and north west with an existing adjacent industrial building (within the same ownership) being adjacent the north east elevation.

Noise and Air Quality

The closest residential properties are approximately 160m to the north east, 200m to the south east and 480m to the west.

Detailed Noise Impact and Air Quality Impact Assessments would be submitted as part of a DNS application; prepared in accordance with prevailing guidance to confirm the relationship of the proposal in relation to impact on sensitive receptors.

There is unlikely to be any significant noise or air quality impacts arising from this proposal. If there are any identified impacts arising from the baseline assessment, it is possible to mitigate these through acoustic solutions and the detailed technical design solution to filter emissions.

Flood Risk & Hydrology

The application site is within Flood Zone 1 and has been carefully chosen to ensure it does not intrude into nearby areas considered at risk of flooding. A Flood Risk Assessment should not be necessary for this type of development.

Ecology

There is no likelihood the development would have a significant ecological impact.

This site does not lie within, or form part of any known nature conservation sites. However, as an undeveloped parcel of land, there is likely to be some on-site ecological interests which will need to be surveyed and documented in a preliminary Phase 1 Ecological Appraisal.

The air quality assessment would also establish the potential for emissions to impact on local wildlife.

Cultural Heritage Impacts & Archaeology

There would be very minor cultural heritage impacts given the scale and siting of the proposed development in relation to the nearest heritage assets.

A detailed Heritage Impact Appraisal is not considered necessary for the proposed development.

Traffic and Transport

The construction phase of the development would involve few journeys other than those required to facilitate the hardstand and those required to deliver the proposed equipment.

Post installation, the development would be fuelled by the nearby mains gas supply and therefore only infrequent trips by a small van would be required for maintenance.

No alterations to existing access arrangements are going to be necessary. Further information would be provided in a supporting Design and Access Statement to accompany the planning application.

Lighting

No external lighting is proposed. Security cameras are likely to operate infra-red lighting with these installed along the perimeter fencing and facing in to the site only.

Fuel

This proposal represents a peaking gas scheme that would be fuelled by 'mains gas' piped underground directly to the site from the local underground gas pipe network. No on-site fuel storage is required.

EIA REGULATIONS (SCREENING)

The proposals the subject of this planning application are not considered by the applicant to constitute EIA development.

For the avoidance of doubt, the site is not situated within, or near to any environmentally sensitive or vulnerable area. Furthermore, it will not give rise to any unusually complex or hazardous environmental effects.

Selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development (as contained in Schedule 3) states that the likelihood of significant effects will generally depend on the scale of development, and its visual impact, as well as other potential impacts.

The scale of the proposed development and the potential environmental and cumulative impacts are considered to be neither complex nor significant enough to warrant an EIA and the proposed scope of planning application work (as outlined in this letter) is both necessary and proportionate to the characteristics and potential effects of the development. As such, we respectfully request a screening direction to confirm that the proposal is not considered to comprise EIA development.

I trust you have sufficient information to determine this request under the 2017 EIA Regulations. We look forward to receiving a screening direction.

Please note a hard copy of this letter has not been sent in the post although a hard copy may be provided should you require one.

I have enclosed a copy of screening direction ref. 315550 for the same proposal albeit on a slightly different area of land. The change in the red line of the site is to avoid the area at risk of flooding to the south. The capacity and the potential environmental impacts arising from this proposal are expected to be very much similar to the previously screened proposal.

Yours faithfully



Ben Lewis MRTPI
Director
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Enc.