

PAC Report, Awel Aman Tawe Gwrhyd Solar Project

1. Background

Awel Aman Tawe (AAT), a community energy charity which has been operating for 21 years. Our prime drivers are tackling climate change, job creation, retaining wealth in the Welsh economy and engaging people in energy. We have a strong reputation for delivery of education, arts and engagement.

We have been working on the Gwrhyd Solar project for the past two years and have been engaging the public in the process at all stages. We have followed the process required by the PAC for the 28 day period as noted below in Section 2, but have also undertaken considerable non-statutory consultation – this includes hosting a range of visits to the proposed site by over 1000 people during this two year period. These were primarily to see the community wind farm and/or undertake educational activities. But the proposed solar project was discussed with all visitors. Some photos (Annex 3) and summary of the visits are included in Section 5.2

In terms of other similar projects which relate to the Gwrhyd Solar project, we have set up two coops which directly engage local people. The Gwrhyd Solar project would also be taken forward by a not for profit coop structure, supported by the charity:

- Awel Co-op, is a 4.7MW community wind farm which was commissioned in Jan 2017 on the Gwrhyd, north of Pontardawe. The proposed Gwrhyd Solar project would be co-located with the wind farm and share the grid connection www.awel.coop
- Egni Coop develops rooftop solar on community centres, schools businesses and public sector buildings. It has installed over 2.6 MW on 80 sites in Wales www.egni.coop

We have over 1,500 direct members and over 50,000 indirect members (via local community organisations and schools) of our two renewable energy co-ops. In 2019, Awel Aman Tawe was recognised as [Environmental Organisation of the Year](#) in the Social Enterprise UK Awards and Egni won [Outstanding Renewable Energy Project](#) in an award sponsored by Welsh Government

Over 60 local community organisations and schools are members of Awel and Egni Coops, and gain a sustainable income stream from the projects. This includes a range of groups such as Merched y Wawr, Friends of Pontardawe Arts Centre, two Food Banks, sports clubs and community centres. This has been achieved through donating over £100k of coops shares to those groups, thereby increasing local benefits, outreach potential and asset ownership of the wind farm

2. The formal consultation process ran from 7/11/2019 – 19/12/2019

Awel Aman Tawe declares that as per point 3 below:

- a. the site notice was displayed in accordance with the statutory requirements, i.e. in at least one place on or near the development site for no less than 28 days;

b. copies of all notices provided to councillors, town and community councils, and specialist consultees;

c. a summary of all issues raised in response to the statutory publicity (i.e. site notice and letters to owners, occupiers) has been undertaken below. Awel Aman Tawe confirms that no issues raised have been raised other than in correspondence with NRW who suggested we speak to the Council ecologist regarding bats. This was addressed by our ecologist speaking to the local Council ecologist regarding bats which dealt with the issue.

A copy of the site notice is enclosed as Annex 1

3. Awel Aman Tawe confirms that Site Notices were displayed in Cwmllynfell, Gwaun cae Gurwen and on the Pontardawe Road adjacent to the turnoff to the proposed site in accordance with the statutory requirements.

Photos of site notices are in Annex 2 (no photo for Gwaun Cae Gurwen)

Copies of the notices were given to owners and occupiers, councillors, town and community councils, and specialist consultees as per below. Sample covering letter enclosed in Annex 5.

Site Notice sent to	Status	Response	Follow up
Owner Penwaun Uchaf	Owner	No Response received	
Owner Penwaun Isaf	Neighbour	No Response received	
Highway Authority	Consultee	No Response received	
Coal Authority	Consultee	No Response received	
Natural Resources Wales	Consultee	Response received, Annex 2 Acknowledgement	Amber Ecology had discussion with the local Council ecologist
NPT Council Planning Authority	Consultee	received	
Pontardawe Town Council	Consultee	No Response received	
Gwaun Cae Gurwen Community Council	Consultee	No Response received	
Cwmllynfell Community Council	Consultee	No Response received	

4. A full copy of the application and all associated documents was deposited at Gwaun Cae Gurwen Library (Y Lolfa) for the duration of the consultation and have been there since January 2019 to date. They were also available on our website www.awel.coop for the full period of the consultation, and in fact, have been there since January 2019 and remain there now.

No formal responses were received but our staff and volunteers received a number of favourable comments.

5. Non-statutory consultation.
Onsite meeting with the planning officer, 7/8/2018
We have hosted visits by over 1000 people to the wind farm during the development of this project. This has included:

19/6/2018:	Annual General Meeting with over 100 people in attendance at Pontardawe Arts Centre followed by a site visit
10/8/2019:	Site visit by Tiddlywink Nursery
10/9/2018:	Site visit by Ysgol y Betws
16/9/2018:	Site visit by Tairgwaith Primary
10/10/2018:	Site visit by Ysgol Pontardawe
29/10/2018:	Site visit by Ysgol Pontardulais
10/6/2019:	Annual General Meeting incl presentation on project with over 100 people in attendance at Pontardawe Arts Centre followed by a site visit
20/6/2019:	Visit by Cwmgors Pony Club
26/6/2019:	Visit by Ysgol y Bedol
13/9/2019:	Site visit by Gwent is Coed
15/9/2019:	Site visit by Newport High
18/9/2019:	Site visit by Ringland Primary
9/10/2019:	Site visit by Tairgwaith Primary

We did not seek to gain written support from site visits due to the administrative work involved for our charity staff in addition to hosting the site visits. Many people welcomed the educational value of combining solar and wind power on site, the contribution it would make to tackling climate change, and the more efficient use of the grid network.

Proposed Ground-Mounted Solar Farm adjacent to existing wind farm on Mynydd y Gwrhyd

SCHEDULE 1B: PUBLICITY AND CONSULTATION BEFORE APPLYING FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

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

Notice is given that Awel Aman Tawe is intending to apply for planning permission for a solar farm, including battery storage, electrical and associated civil infrastructure up to 2.23 Mw in capacity.

This notice provides the opportunity to comment directly to the developer on a proposed development prior to the submission of a planning application to Neath Port Talbot Council (the Local Planning Authority). Any subsequent planning application will be publicised by Neath Port Talbot Council; any comments provided in response to this notice will not prejudice your ability to make representations to Neath Port Talbot Council on any related planning application. You should note that any comments submitted may be placed on the public file.

The proposed development is on land known as Mynydd y Gwrhyd, a moorland area situated between the villages of Taigrwaith/Gwaun Cae-Gurwen and Cwm-twrch Uchaf, as illustrated on the map below:



You may inspect copies of the proposed application, plans, and other supporting documents online at:

<http://awel.coop/consultation>

Computer facilities to view this information on-line are available at Y Lolfa, New Community Hall, New Road, Gwaun Cae Gurwen during the hours of:

Opening times	
Tuesday	10:00 - 13:00
Wednesday	15:00 - 17:30
Thursday	14:00 - 16:30
Friday	10:00 - 12:00
Saturday	10:00 - 12:00

Anyone who wishes to make representations to us regarding this proposed development must write to us at:

@ admin@awel.coop

Awel Aman Tawe, 76-78 Heol Gwilym
Cwmllynfell, Swansea SA9 2GN

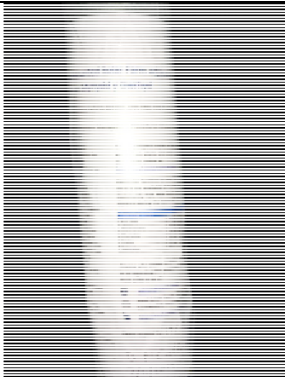
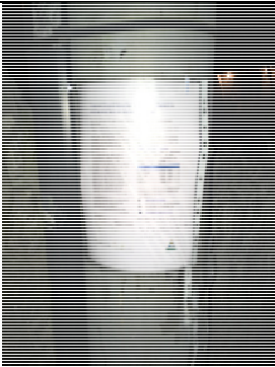
<http://awel.coop/contact-us>

Please respond by 19/12/2019

D.M. Call 7/11/2019



Annex 2

	
Pontardawe Road	Cwmllynfell

Annex 3

 Tiddlewinks Nursery, Ystalyfera	 Ysgol y Waun
 Tairgwaith Primary	 Ysgol y Bedol
 Coop members on site visit	 Coop members on site visit

Annex 4



Ein cyf/Our ref: CAS-104252-R18Z
Eich cyf/Your ref: Mynydd Y Gwrhyd

Maes Newydd
Llandarcy
Neath Port Talbot
SA10 6JQ

David McCallum
Awel Aman Tawe
76-78 Gwilym Road
Cwmllynfell
Swansea
SA9 2GN

ebost/email:
swplanning@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

16 December 2019

Annwyl/ Dear Mr McCallum

STATUTORY PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION - TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (WALES) ORDER 2012 AS AMENDED.

BWRIAD / PROPOSAL: Solar farm, including battery storage, electrical and associated civil infrastructure up to 2.23Mw in capacity.

LLEOLIAD / LOCATION: Mynydd y Gwrhyd, Neath Port Talbot

Thank you for providing a requisite notice to us under Article 2D of the above Order. We received a copy of your proposed application on 07 November 2019.

Based on the information provided, we would have no objection to the proposed development and provide the following advice.

We recommend you seek the advice of the Local Authority ecologist to determine if there is a reasonable likelihood of bats, a European Protected Species, being present within the application site. If so, in accordance with Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (paragraph 6.2.2) a bat survey may be required.

The survey should be carried out in accordance with 'Bat Surveys; Good Practice Guidelines 2nd Edition' published by the Bat Conservation Trust 2012.

Please consult us again if any survey undertaken finds that bats are present at the site and you require further advice from us.

Other Matters

Please note, if further information is prepared to support an application, it may be necessary for us to change our advice in line with the new information.

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg
Correspondence welcomed in Welsh and English

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.

In addition to planning permission, you are advised to ensure all other permits/consents/licences relevant to the development are secured. Please refer to our [website](#) for further details.

Further advice on the above matters could be provided prior to your planning application being submitted, however there would be a charge for this service. Additional details are available on our [website](#).

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

Yn gywir / Yours faithfully

Louise Edwards

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

Annex 5



Pontardawe –

Mrs. Debbie Phillips, Clerk
Pontardawe Town Council
PO Box 556,
Swansea,
SA8 4WL

2nd November 2018

Dear Debbie,

Please find enclosed information regarding our Solar and Battery Project. If you require more information please visit awel.coop/gwrhyd-solar-and-battery-storage/ for more information.

Kind Regards,|

Daniel McCallum

Dan McCallum, Project Manager

Awel Aman Tawe



Awel Aman Tawe ~~cyf~~
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~~Ffôn~~/Tel: 01639 ~~830870~~ ~~Ffacs~~/Fax: 01639 830241
~~e-bost~~/e-mail: info@awelamantawe.co.uk
www.awelamantawe.org.uk
