

1 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council: Local Impact Report

NPT Reference: P2020/1002 Planning Inspectorate Reference: DNS/3213662

- 1.1** The following relevant sections from the Cultural Heritage response are taken from the NPTCBC LIR using the same paragraph numbers as in the original text followed by the conclusion paragraph 9.2.

Cultural Heritage

Scheduled Monuments

8.34 There are two scheduled monuments within NPT near to the access track, namely GM330 Pebyll Ring Cairn and GM234 Bachgen Carreg Round Cairn.

8.39 Views to both monuments GM234 and GM330 from within the application area are not possible due to topography and the present extent of forestry planting. However a concern from assessing this document is that it states that the access track will be diverted to the east of the monument which will ensure there will be no physical disturbance to the monument. However all other submissions in support of this application show the existing track is to be widened and not diverted.

8.40 The extract below, of (figure 9.3 – Not illustrated in this document) shows the access track widening around GM234, the plan indicates that both track are existing, however our records would show there is only one track that currently exists as this would be the one shown below the Scheduled Monument (as shown on Detail 2 below). Chapter 5.77 of the Archaeological Desk based Study (appendix 7.01) states "The proposed diversion of the access track to the east of the monument will not result in any physical disturbance to the monument and could have a beneficial effect of moving the existing track further away from the scheduled cairn." If the track to the east of the Scheduled Monument is the proposed diversion then the LPA would considered that this would have more of an impact than the existing track would as it would appear to be much closer (approximately 2m) to the Monument.

*8.41 As such there is a conflict of information between submissions, clarification should be sought as to whether the track is being widened or diverted, and whether there are two existing tracks that surround the SAM. If the track to the east is a new diversion, then the impact upon the SAM should be re assessed having regard to the position of the diverted track as it would appear to be closer than the existing. As it currently stands the LPA have a significant concern and consider the impact upon the SAM to be **Negative**.*

*8.43 To conclude it is considered that due to the conflict of information, it is not currently clear what impact would be had upon the Scheduled Ancient Monuments within NPT that are near the access track as the mitigation suggests the track be diverted yet no scope for this has been provided in other submission supporting this application. It should also be noted that the Archaeological Desk study has no regard or makes no reference to Local Development Plan Policy within NPT. The LPA therefore would conclude that there would be an overall **negative impact** in terms of cultural heritage.*

Conclusions

9.2 *However it should be reiterated of the serious failing the applicant has made in assessing the access track widening in terms of biodiversity, land contamination and **Archaeology**. In this respect additional information is required before the LPA can provide an assessment of how these works would impact these subject areas. Confirmation should also be sought as to whether the existing track is to be widened or diverted as the submissions detailing the widening does not indicate any diversions. These issues should be considered prior to determining of this application.*

Response to the NPTCBC LIR

- 1.2** The above sections taken from the NPT LIR only raise issues with the proposed diversion of the access track that was considered as a possibility at one point during the scheme design process. Two main concerns are raised. The first is that the desk-based assessment is one of the only elements of the submitted documents that refers to the diversion and all others discuss widening of the existing track. The second issue is that the proposed diversion could move the track closer to the scheduled monument of GM234 Bachgen Carreg Round Cairn.
- 1.3** The diversionary route of the access road was highlighted as a possibility in the archaeology report as it could have had an effect specifically on the scheduled monument. It should be noted that this diversionary route was only ever a slim possibility which may have been necessitated due to land ownership issues.
- 1.4** The second point relating to the diversion bringing the route closer to the eastern side of the monument and thereby causing a negative impact rather than a neutral (or even slight beneficial one) is not disputed following further analysis of the site of the mapped scheduled area and the potential route of the diversion. On-site the location of the scheduled round cairn was noted as being closer to the existing trackway than perhaps shown on the maps and thus the diversion would have moved the track further to the east away from the monument. The feature is not a clearly visible monument and on-site assessment does lead to a discrepancy with the mapped data.
- 1.5** The site visit undertaken for the desk-based assessment noted a former cut trench running through the monument. This was thought to represent an earlier trackway as it could be followed to the north and south beyond the monument leading to the existing track. This alignment also follows the county boundary and so it is actually unclear if it was a track or physical demarcation of the boundary. Either way it had led to physical harm of the monument.
- 1.6** In the event, the proposed diversion of the access track route will no longer be required and the existing access track will be utilised. Mitigation will be put in place to demarcate the monument and protect it from damage during construction works. The conclusion would be that there will be no physical impact to the monument or change to its setting leading to harm of its significance from the proposals.

- 1.7** In February 2021 a response was sent after receiving the NPTCBC LIR and following a slight change in the development area boundary which addressed many of the questions asked by NPTCBC. That response and resulting amendments to the reports from the boundary change is included in Appendix 1 for completeness.
- 1.8** In relation to paragraph 8.43, it notes that the desk-based assessment makes no reference and has no regard for Local Development Plan Policy within NPT. This was an omission as the desk-based assessment focussed on the main site area. Its omission does not detract from the conclusions and the main policy accords very closely with that of the Bridgend Local Development Plan – but the following should have been added to the report:

The Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan 2011-2026

2.30 The Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan is the spatial development strategy for the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council area and was formally adopted by the Council in January 2016. The Local Development Plan contains a policy to protect and enhance the contribution of listed buildings, historic landscapes, archaeology and World Heritage sites as part of managing change in the Council area.

2.31 The following policy is relevant to this assessment:

Relevant Section	Details
Strategic Policy SP21 Built Environment and Historic Heritage Policy	Built Environment and Historic Heritage The built environment and historic heritage will, where appropriate, be conserved and enhanced through the following measures: 1. Encouraging high quality design standards in all development proposals; 2. Protecting arterial gateways from intrusive and inappropriate development; 3. Safeguarding features of historic and cultural importance; 4. The identification of the following designated sites to enable their protection and where appropriate enhancement: a) Landscapes of Historic Interest; b) Historic Parks and Gardens; c) Conservation Areas; d) Scheduled Ancient Monuments; and e) Listed Buildings and their curtilage. LDP Objectives: OB 2, OB 23 and OB 24

- 1.9** The Upper Ogmere wind farm is following Strategic Policy SP21 through the assessments that have been undertaken for the project to date, namely in the production of the desk-based assessment and ASIDOHL, both of which identify designated sites (section 4 of the policy) and assess potential impacts upon them. Mitigation is being proposed, by way of a condition on planning for archaeological impacts (through evaluation and subsequent mitigation as needed) and the implementation of a monument management plan to offset/compensate any potential harm to monuments(addressing section 3 of the policy).

2 Bridgend County Borough Council / Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

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2.1 Page 29 of the BCBC LIR summarises the results of the various studies submitted in relation to Heritage and does not raise any questions or objections to the heritage reports. The LIR concludes with suggested conditions that could be attached to planning approval of the scheme, should it be permitted.

2.2 The planning conditions suggested in the LIR read as follows:

Bridgend proposed draft conditions relating to Archaeology and Heritage:

27. No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To identify and record any features of archaeological interest discovered during the works, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource and to ensure the development complies with Policies SP2, SP5, and ENV18 of the Bridgend Local Development Plan (2013)

28. No development shall take place until a Monument Management Plan covering the Designated Historic Assets within the application site has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The MMA shall include measures to protect and manage historic assets on site, proposals to improve access to the historic assets including details of interpretation/information panels and a programme of works. The site shall be developed in accordance with the agreed Monument Management Plan.

Reason: To mitigate the impact of the works on the Designated Historic Assets on site and to ensure the development complies with Policies SP2, SP5, and ENV18 of the Bridgend Local Development Plan (2013)

2.3 Both of the above seem reasonable conditions. The first will include the preparation of an initial written scheme of investigation to comprise evaluation and any subsequent mitigation, including the need for assessment of results, reporting (possibly to publication) and creation and deposition of an archive. The scheme of work will need to be discussed and agreed with Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust.

2.4 The second condition highlights the need for a Monument Management Plan, *to protect and manage historic assets on site, proposals to improve access to the historic assets including details of interpretation/information panels and a programme of works*. Such a plan would also be implemented within the area of NPT to ensure that no disturbance occurs to the scheduled monuments along the proposed access road.

2.5 It should be noted that the BCBC LIR response, at paragraph 13.6, also states that *'Subject to conditions, the impacts of the construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed Upper Ogmere wind farm on cultural heritage are **neutral**'*.

3 Review of the February 2021 policy documents 'FUTURE WALES' and Planning Policy Wales version 11 and any changes these necessitate to the documents submitted

- 3.1** In March 2021 Welsh Government published 'Future Wales The National Plan 2040', which states that the plan '*is our national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities.* The document highlights the heritage of Wales as important in a number of places in the first sections prior to the policies element.
- 3.2** Of specific relevance to Upper Ogmore wind farm are Policies 17 and 18. The following sections are highlighted from the overall policies where they relate to the Historic Environment:

Policy 17 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure

The Welsh Government strongly supports the principle of developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies and at all scales to meet our future energy needs.

In determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy development, decision-makers must give significant weight to the need to meet Wales' international commitments and our target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030 in order to combat the climate emergency.

In Pre-Assessed Areas for Wind Energy the Welsh Government has already modelled the likely impact on the landscape and has found them to be capable of accommodating development in an acceptable way. There is a presumption in favour of large-scale wind energy development (including repowering) in these areas, subject to the criteria in policy 18.

*Applications for large-scale wind and solar will not be permitted in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and **all proposals should demonstrate that they will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment.***

Proposals should describe the net benefits the scheme will bring in terms of social, economic, environmental and cultural improvements to local communities.

New strategic grid infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of energy should be designed to minimise visual impact on nearby communities. The Welsh Government will work with stakeholders, including National Grid and Distribution Network Operators, to transition to a multi-vector grid network and reduce the barriers to the implementation of new grid infrastructure.

Policy 18 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments of National Significance

Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy projects (including repowering) qualifying as Developments of National Significance will be permitted subject to Policy 17 and the following criteria:

- 1. outside of the Pre-Assessed Areas for wind developments and everywhere for all other technologies, the proposal does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding landscape (particularly on the setting of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty);*
- 2. there are no unacceptable adverse visual impacts on nearby communities and individual dwellings;*
- 3. there are no adverse effects on the integrity of Internationally designated sites (including National Site Network sites and Ramsar sites) and the features for which they have been designated (unless there are no alternative solutions, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) and appropriate compensatory measures have been secured);*
- 4. there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on national statutory designated sites for nature conservation (and the features for which they have been designated), protected habitats and species;*
- 5. the proposal includes biodiversity enhancement measures to provide a net benefit for biodiversity;*
- 6. *there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on statutorily protected built heritage assets;***
- 7. there are no unacceptable adverse impacts by way of shadow flicker, noise, reflected light, air quality or electromagnetic disturbance;*
- 8. there are no unacceptable impacts on the operations of defence facilities and operations (including aviation and radar) or the Mid Wales Low Flying Tactical Training Area (TTA-7T);*
- 9. there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the transport network through the transportation of components or source fuels during its construction and/or ongoing operation;*
- 10. the proposal includes consideration of the materials needed or generated by the development to ensure the sustainable use and management of resources;*
- 11. there are acceptable provisions relating to the decommissioning of the development at the end of its lifetime, including the removal of infrastructure and effective restoration.*

The cumulative impacts of existing and consented renewable energy schemes should also be considered.

- 3.3** It is noted within the document that it specifically refers to developments not being permitted if they will have an **unacceptable** adverse impact on heritage assets (or historic assets as called within Planning Policy Wales documentation). These above policies are such that a specific reference to Future Wales is not considered necessary within the previously submitted historic environment reports.
- 3.4** Policy 18, section 6 refers specifically only to statutorily protected built heritage assets, which makes it unclear if this also covers upstanding archaeological remains. In either case the development proposals do not lead to unacceptable adverse impacts on any built heritage or archaeological assets.
- 3.5** A review of the new Planning Policy Wales v11 discusses the historic environment in Section 6.1 (p125 – 131). It covers the same strategies as included within the Historic Environment (Wales) Act of 2016 and refers to the details within the 'Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (Cadw, May 2017). This information is covered in the desk-based assessment and needs no alteration or amendment.

James Meek (Director, Archaeology) HCUK Group; 12/03/2021

APPENDIX 1:

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AMENDMENTS DUE TO PLANNING APPLICATION BOUNDARY CHANGE February 2021 and supplemental changes based on NPTCBC LIR

Following the slight amendment to the proposed alignment of the access track leading from the north into the area of the proposed Upper Ogmere Wind Farm, a number of slight amendments are required to both the Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment and the Cultural Heritage Chapter of the Environmental Statement.

The application for the main wind farm area remains unchanged. The proposed boundary for the access track from the north has been altered to avoid crossing into the adjacent local authority area of Rhondda Cynnon Taf. In the original application a possible diversion to the east of the scheduled monument of Bachgen Carreg Round Cairn (GM234, a Bronze Age burial mound) was considered. This potential alteration has now been removed from the scheme and the access track will follow the existing one on its western side. Figures 4 and 5 have also been amended to show the new access track alignment.

Within the Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment paragraph 4.9 highlighted that the Bachgen Carreg Round Cairn (GM234) had been added to the list of scheduled monuments being considered in more detail in terms of possible changes to their settings. Due to the track now being retained in its current location any changes will now be minimal. This is discussed in paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8 which included mention of the possible track alteration which can now be removed as laid out below:

5.7 The proposed development also includes works to approximately 3.6km of the existing track through the Mynydd Ty-isaf forest to the north west of the Site to enable it to be used for turbine delivery.

5.8 The majority of this track will require only minor improvement to the existing surface and will not result in any disturbance to the existing ground surface, ~~excluding one area where a slight diversion to the forest track is potentially proposed to curve around the eastern side of the scheduled Bachgen Carreg Round Cairn (GM234).~~

Within paragraphs 5.73 to 5.77 an assessment of impacts to the setting of the Bachgen Carreg Round Cairn (GM234) from the development proposals was laid out. These paragraphs can remain unchanged except for the following two laid out below:

5.75 The scheduling map records the county boundary running through the centre of the mound. ~~The track recorded as running through the centre of the monument (as indicated on the scheduling maps) has been relocated in recent years away from the monument to run along a lower patch of ground on its western side, but it~~ Within the mound is a roughly 0.30m deep is still possible to see the line of the former track way that went through the round cairn. This is evident as a c.0.30m deep vertical sided channel projecting to the north and south beyond the monument. This was originally thought to have been a former trackway, but may indicate a physical boundary that had been created for the county boundary at some point in time. Vegetation has grown back within the channel to a similar degree as the regrowth in the deforested area to the east of the monument such that they may have occurred at a similar time.

5.77 Views to the monument from within the application area are not possible due to topography and the present extent of forestry planting as confirmed by the ZTV. It will not be visible as a distinct entity in conjunction with site. ~~The proposed diversion of the access track to the east of the monument will not result in any physical disturbance to the monument and could have a beneficial effect of moving the existing track further away from the scheduled cairn. The track lying on the eastern side of the monument may be considered to have a slight impact on its setting, purely as the trackway will be located within its eastern view, although this view has only returned recently with forest clearance.~~

In terms of the Cultural Heritage Chapter of the Environmental Statement, there are only two sections that need any amendment due to the change in the application boundary. The first is section 7.72 which can be amended as follows:

7.72 There are 57 designated historic assets of archaeological interest within 10km of the proposed Development of which 29 are within the bare earth zone of theoretical visibility. The bare earth zone of theoretical visibility is shown at Figure 5.2a. These are listed in the Desk Based Assessment at Appendix 7.1. Following the site visits, the initial list of 57 was filtered to six which it was considered possible could experience a loss of significance through a change to their setting should the proposed Development receive consent. ~~One of these scheduled monuments would only be affected during the construction phase, lying on the proposed access track to the site (GM234 Bachgen Carreg Round Cairn).~~

Finally Table 7.7: Summary of Residual Effects will require the following section removed:

Small temporary adverse effect on GM234 Bachgen Carreg Round Cairn through a change to its setting with diversion of access road	None proposed, on the basis that effect is not significant in EIA terms, and no mitigation measures considered necessary due to the nature of the proposed Development (possible diversion of the access road further away from the monument)	N/A	Small adverse, reverting to Neutral upon decommissioning
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In conclusion the amendments to the application boundary only affect the line of the access track and not the main wind farm area which is the main subject of the Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment and Cultural Heritage Chapter. The amendments merely reduce the size of the access track boundary to keep it within the jurisdiction of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. The amendments to the access track boundary also remove the need for any potential diversion of its existing alignment on the western side of the Bachgen Carreg Round Cairn, scheduled monument GM234, to a route curving further to the east. A cultural heritage management plan is proposed within the ES chapter, this will ensure that the boundaries of the scheduled monuments are clearly marked during construction to prevent any accidental

damage. This will remain relevant for all monuments within or bordering the application area, including the Bachgen Carreg Round Cairn.