

1 Environmental Statement

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Upper Ogmore Wind Farm (planning ref: DNS/3213662_DNS) obtained planning permission on 28th September 2022 (see Appendix 1 for the Decision Letter).
- 1.1.2 Upper Ogmore Wind Farm is located on agricultural land to the south of the A4107 in Bridgend County between Blaengwynfi, Nant-y-moel and Blaengarw. A small portion of the application boundary, relating to off-site access upgrades on a Natural Resources Wales forestry track, is located in Neath Port Talbot County.
- 1.1.3 Planning permission was obtained for a wind farm development comprising:
- up to seven three-bladed wind turbines, four up to a maximum tip height of 149.9m and three up to a maximum tip height of 130m;
 - an improved site entrance;
 - new access tracks;
 - crane hardstandings;
 - a control building and substation compound;
 - electricity transformers;
 - underground cabling;
 - energy storage containers; and
 - drainage works and upgrades to an existing forestry track and associated tree felling.
- 1.1.4 In addition to the permanent works, during construction there would be a number of temporary works including a construction compound with car parking, temporary crane hardstandings and welfare facilities. This consented planning application was accompanied by an Environmental Statement dated November 2020.
- 1.1.5 The Applicant, RES Ltd, is seeking permission to increase the rotor diameter on the consented Upper Ogmore Wind Farm of the turbines from 105m to 117m but retain the overall blade tip heights. These changes equate to an overall increase in rotor diameter up to 12m. No other amendments are proposed to the already consented wind farm.

1.2 Purpose of the Development

- 1.2.1 The purpose of Upper Ogmores Wind Farm is to generate renewable energy. The proposed amendment will allow consideration of a wider range of wind turbine models for installation at Upper Ogmores Wind Farm. It will also facilitate the installation of more efficient wind turbines making the wind farm more productive in terms of electrical generation.

1.3 Consultation

- 1.3.1 Following consultation with Bridgend County Borough Council, the Applicant considers that the proposed rotor diameter amendment at the Upper Ogmores Wind Farm would not be of regional significance nor would involve a substantial departure from the local development plan.
- 1.3.2 It was confirmed that a planning application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is the most appropriate route to vary the rotor diameter, by amending approved Figure 3.2. It was agreed that the following topics would be reviewed with respect to an increase in the proposed rotor diameter:
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal
 - Abnormal Load Route Assessment
 - Acoustic Assessment
 - Shadow Flicker Assessment
- 1.3.3 The proposed planning application shall be made to both Bridgend County Borough Council and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

1.4 Planning Application

- 1.4.1 By virtue of Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the Applicant seeks to vary the planning permission relating to Upper Ogmores Wind Farm (planning ref: DNS/3213662_DNS).
- 1.4.2 Specifically, the Applicant seeks to vary planning condition 2 and its reference to Figure 3.2. Planning condition 2 is copied below for reference:

“The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following list of approved plans and in accordance with the recommendations and measures contained within the following approved supporting documents:

- Figure 1.2 Planning Application Boundary, Drawing No: 02959D2405-03;

- Figure 2.2 Turbine Layout, Drawing No: 02959D2227-04;
- Figure 3.1 Infrastructure Layout, Drawing No: 02959D1001-03;
- Figure 3.2 Wind Turbine Elevation, Drawing No: 02959D2903-01;
- Figure 3.3 Wind Turbine Foundation, Drawing No: 02959D2303-01;
- Figure 3.4 Crane Hardstanding General Arrangement, Drawing No: 02959D2302-01;
- Figure 3.5 Access Track Typical Details, Drawing No: 02959D2301-01;
- Figure 3.6 Substation Building and Compound, Drawing No: 02959D2230-01;
- Figure 3.7 Energy Storage Layout Plan, Drawing No: 02959D2217-02;
- Figure 3.8 Energy Storage Elevations, Drawing No: 02959D2218-02;
- Figure 3.9 Site Entrance, Drawing No: 02959D2407-01;
- Figure 3.10 Temporary Construction Compound Layout Plan, Drawing No: 02959D2237-02;
- Figure 3.11 Indicative Borrow Pit Details, Drawing No: 02959D2235-01;
- Figure 3.12 Cable Trench Details, Drawing No: 02959D2241-01;
- Figure 9.3 Forestry Track Widening Details 1-12, Drawing No: 02959D2404-04;
- Figure 9.4 Typical Forestry Track Widening Detail, Drawing No: 02959D2304-01;
- Figure 12.2b Common Land Swap Plan, Drawing No: 02959D2223 – Revision 6.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved documents, plans and drawings submitted with the application.”

1.4.3 The variation of planning condition would instead see the reference to Figure 3.2 change to:

- Figure 3.2 Wind Turbine Elevation, Drawing No: 02959-RES-WTG-DR-PT-001

1.4.4 Figure 3.2 has been included in Appendix 2.

1.4.5 This planning application seeks to amend the rotor diameter of the consented wind turbines to a diameter of 117m, there are no other amendments proposed to the already consented wind farm. No amendments are proposed to the footprint of the consented wind farm. It is considered that the original Environmental Statement is deemed adequate with the exception of the additional technical assessments described below in Section 1.5.

1.4.6 Given that this application seeks only to amend the rotor diameter the following technical assessments were carried out:

- Landscape and Visual Appraisal
- Abnormal Load Route Assessment
- Acoustic Assessment
- Shadow Flicker Assessment

1.5 Accompanying Information

1.5.1 Individual technical assessments have been undertaken in accordance with a variety of legislation, guidance and best practice.

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

1.5.2 An updated landscape and visual impact assessment has been provided in Appendix 3.

Abnormal Load Route Assessment

1.5.3 An updated abnormal load route assessment has been provided in Appendix 4.

Acoustic Assessment

1.5.4 An updated acoustic assessment has been provided in Appendix 5.

Shadow Flicker & Reflected Light Assessment

1.5.5 An updated shadow flicker and reflected light assessment has been provided in Appendix 6.

Ecology

1.5.6 It is the opinion of the Applicant that an additional ecological assessment is not necessary as a result of the rotor diameter increase.

Cultural Heritage

1.5.7 It is the opinion of the Applicant that an additional cultural heritage assessment is not necessary as a result of the rotor diameter increase.

Hydrology and Hydrogeology

1.5.8 It is the opinion of the Applicant that an additional hydrological and hydrogeological assessments are not necessary as a result of the rotor diameter increase.

Socio-economics, Land Use and Public Access

- 1.5.9 It is the opinion of the Applicant that an additional socio-economic, land use and public access assessments are not necessary as a result of the rotor diameter increase.

1.6 Conclusions

- 1.6.1 To summarise the assessments noted above, the following conclusions can be made:

- Landscape and Visual – “This appraisal has not identified any material changes to the landscape and visual baseline against which the proposed development would need to be assessed. The landscape and visual effects of the proposed development, featuring larger rotor diameters, would therefore be the same as those of the consented development, as described in the 2020 ES.”
- Abnormal Load Route – “A swept path analysis of the critical turbine component delivery vehicles has been undertaken. Due to the increase in blade length there are only very minor changes from the previous planning submission. Works to the public highway will be limited to the temporary removal of street furniture.”
- Acoustic – “an assessment based on the consented site layout and relevant acoustic emission data for the Nordex 117 3.6MW turbine with a 91m hub height shows that the predicted operational noise levels for Upper Ogmere Wind Farm operating unrestricted are above the planning condition limits at some dwellings located to the southwest of the development and for certain wind directions. As a result, a mitigation/curtailment strategy has been determined that allows the noise limits to be met whilst maximizing the potential generating capacity of the site. The curtailment strategy provided is not exhaustive and amendments can be expected depending on various site and turbine/matrix specific limitations.”
- Shadow Flicker – After applying a buffer of ten rotor diameters and allowing for the consented micro-siting allowance of 50m (as per planning condition 10 of the planning permission DNS/3213662_DNS), nine properties were identified up to 1,220m from any wind turbine. All nine properties are predicted to experience 0.0 hours of shadow flicker per year under worse-case assumptions. It is therefore concluded that larger rotor diameters would not cause any material impact.