

			14. A suggestion to undertake a survey of all relevant estate roads (Goytre Rd) will be required pre commencement of construction traffic and post construction traffic where any damage occurred resulting in these additional delivery movements shall rectified and made good by the applicant. It is also important to engage with residents before construction deliveries occur and specify timings agreed as part of the Traffic Management Plan, with the intention to review periodically when necessary and further mitigation required if needed. 15. Any gates required on private land fronting onto the highway shall be of a type which open inwards only, can be seen thorough and maintained as such thereafter. 16. Additional works required on the existing publically maintained highway will require an adoption agreement. 17. No development shall take place to construct any infrastructure or buildings until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The statement shall provide for: a. the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors b. loading and unloading of plant and materials c. storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development d. the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate e. wheel washing facilities f. measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction g. a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works h. scheme for the erection of temporary/semi temporary signage warning drivers of the presence of children and speed restrictions. i. The Construction Method Statement shall be signed by a competent person(s).
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			j. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. 18. Detailed signage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA, the approved sign shall erected at the entrance of the access road on private land not publically maintained highway stating the following in English and Welsh '<i>PRIVATE ROAD with no intention to dedicate under S37 of the Highways Act 1980</i>' the signange as approved shall be constructed on site prior to the occupation of the first dwelling. 19. No Road Safety Audit required for access road off the M4 (Abnormal Indivisible Loads) because the access road is purley for opertional traffic not public use. <u>HIGHWAY NOTE TO APPLICANT</u> 1.In order to ensure the road works you are required to undertake are carried out to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and subsequently adopted if you so wish you are advised prior to commencing any work on these works to contact the Head of Engineering and Transport Services at The Quays, Brunel Way, Baglan Energy Park, Neath, SA11 2GG (FAO Mr Justin Griffiths, telephone number (01639) 686397 or e-mail j.griffiths4@npt.gov.uk) to agree the specification, enter an adoption agreement and arrange onsite inspection of your works. Any agreement to adopt the roads relating to this development should be entered into with the Council prior to the commencement of development. Such an agreement will be under Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980 relating to the specification, timescale and subsequent adoption of the roads and a Bond to ensure that the Authority can complete the works if the Developer defaults on the roadworks. 2.Prior to commencing any works on site the applicant will be required to enter into an agreement with the Authority under Section 278 of the Highway Act 1980 to carry
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			out the works upon the existing public highway. You are advised prior to commencing any work on these works to contact the Head of Engineering and Transport Services at The Quays, Brunel Way, Baglan Energy Park, Neath, SA11 2GG (FAO Mr Justin Griffiths, telephone number (01639) 686397 or e-mail j.griffiths4@npt.gov.uk) to agree the specification, enter the agreement and arrange on-site inspection of your works. 3. Developers' attention is drawn to the provisions of Section 278 of the Highways Act, 1980 in cases where a development would require access or other works to be carried out within the existing highway. Where highway works to benefit a development require land adjacent to an existing highway to be constructed upon together with works on the existing public maintained highway, a hybrid S38/278 shall be used. Works that are to be undertaken within the existing public maintained highway <u>only</u> will require a S278 agreement. <u>No</u> Work shall be undertaken on the existing public maintained highway until the appropriate legal agreement has been entered into. Any works undertaken on the public highway without the appropriate legal agreement with the Highway Authority, the Highway Authority has the right to request the developer to remove and/or reinstate that part of the highway back to its original condition to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority. A plan detailing the differences between the existing and proposed highway shall be submitted to form part of the legal agreement, this should be made up of two colours, green for the proposed area to be adopted and brown for the existing highway. Developers are reminded that consent under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990/91, conveys no approval for works to be undertaken
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			affecting any part of the public highway, including verges and footways. The Developer must:- (i) Obtain the approval of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council as Highway Authority for the details of any works to be undertaken in the Public Highway. (ii) Indemnify the Authority against all claims arising from such works, including claims under the Land Compensation Act. (iii) Give not less than 1 calendar months' notice in writing of the date of commencement of the works. As part of this process you are advised that any principle contractors and/or subcontractors that are on the Local Authority's framework approved list are permitted to undertake the works on the public highway, a list of these contractors are available from the Highway Authority's Highway Development Control Section on request. <u>DRAINAGE</u> 1. Details of any surface water drainage mitigation/alterations resulting in the access of the new purpose built diverge slip road off the M4 for AIL deliveries. How this ties-in to the existing drainage network and possibility of implementing SuDS components where practicable. 2. Should any springs or ground water seepage be encountered the on site works in that area shall cease until a scheme for collection and disposal of the water has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No ground water shall ever be discharged into the proposed drainage scheme.
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			3. There must be no interference, alteration or diversion of any ditch, watercourse, stream or culvert crossing or bordering the site, without prior consultation and agreement with the Authority. 4. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, foul water and surface water discharges shall be drained separately from the site. 5. No surface water or Land drainage run-off shall be allowed to connect, either directly or indirectly, to the public sewerage system unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. 6. Adequate provision shall be made for the drainage of the site, to ensure that the drainage of any adjoining land is not interrupted or otherwise adversely effected by the development during the lifetime of construction. 7. Prior to any works commencing on site SAB approval will be required. To commence work is a breach of SAB approval required under Paragraph 7 (1) Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 whereby legal action will be taken by the Authority under The Sustainable Drainage (Enforcement) (Wales) Order 2018. Guidance and applications can be found on https://www.npt.gov.uk/sab <u>DRAINAGE NOTE TO APPLICANT</u> Please note that from 7th January 2019, all new developments of more than 1 house, or where a construction area is of 100m² or more, plus if the SAB authority believe that any redevelopment of land has significant surface water drainage implications. This will require sustainable drainage - built in accordance with mandatory standards for sustainable drainage published by Welsh Ministers - to manage on-site surface water. More information is available in Schedule 3 of the Flood & Water Management Act 2010. These systems must be approved by the Council's Highway Development Control service acting in its SuDS Approving Body (SAB) role <u>before construction work begins</u>. In this respect it is essential that a developer of any such project gain SAB approval of its surface
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			water drainage alongside any relevant planning permission. <u>You will not be allowed to start construction until both permissions have been approved.</u> If you have not done so already, and your development would not fall into any of the relevant exceptions, you are therefore strongly encouraged to request further advice from the SAB. Involving the SAB Officers in pre-application discussions will allow for SuDS drainage matters (to ensure suitability of proposed SuDs design in line with national standards and adequate site layout) to be considered alongside the assessment of planning merits. There is an additional charge of £250 for this service. This can be as part of any agreed further pre-application submissions with the Planning Authority (recommended) or independently/ direct with the SAB. You are advised, however, that failing to engage in joint pre-application discussions has the potential to lead to delays and, most notably, the potential need to obtain further planning permission should any agreed SuDS design not be compliant with any relevant planning permission. Further details are available at www.npt.gov.uk/sab. Prior to commencement of any works within a watercourse, hereby approved permanent and temporary under Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 must be obtained from the Authority. You are therefore advised to contact the Development Management Engineer, Mr Justin Griffiths at The Quays, Brunel Way, Baglan Energy Park, Neath, SA11 2GG (Tel.No.01639 686397 e-mail j.griffiths4@npt.gov.uk). Please note such consents can take up to 8 weeks to be processed after registration and early application is advised. Notwithstanding the necessary consent required under section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991. The applicant must note that any culverts/ditches/open watercourses that conveys water through their land are to remain free from obstruction at all times. All tributary watercourses (culverted or not) located within the applicants land would be riparian responsibilities whereby the responsibility to sustain the flow of watercourse would remain with the land owner and subsequently passed on to the respective landowners thereafter should the land be sold. For further information on riparian responsibilities please contact Mr Justin W. Griffiths SAB & Highway Development Control Manager (Tel: 01639 686397 or email j.griffiths4@npt.gov.uk), alternatively you could access the riparian booklet online using the following web-link https://www.npt.gov.uk/2867
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			<u>NOTES TO APPLICANT</u> Development proposals must seek to maximise walking and cycling accessibility by prioritising the provision of appropriate on-site infrastructure and where necessary off-site infrastructure. Walking and cycling infrastructure and services should be prioritised and put in place from the outset, before people have moved in and travel patterns have been established, as per Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11 and Future Wales – the National Plan 2040. All new walking and cycling infrastructure should be built to standards set out in Welsh Government’s Active Travel Guidance and off-site infrastructure should link to (where possible) routes on Neath Port Talbot Council’s Active Travel Network Map. This shows where walking and cycling routes already exist (Existing Routes) and where upgrades or brand new routes are anticipated for the next 15 years (Future Routes) in built up areas. Further information on the Active Travel Guidance and Neath Port Talbot’s Active Travel Network Map can be found here: www.npt.gov.uk/activetravel. <i>These above observations are provided without prejudice and are based upon the information submitted at the preliminary stage. However, should further amendments or any additional information be submitted thereafter, our observations may change to reflect these amendments and/or additional details.</i>
Applicant response			
All relevant highways points raised have been addressed in revision to Chapter 11 of the ES. A new real-time traffic survey has been undertaken as requested. All relevant drainage points raised have been addressed in revisions to Chapter 10 of the ES.			
Consultee	Type	Overview	Consultee Issues Raised

Bridgend County Borough Council (Highways)	Specialist consultee	Concerns raised over Traffic and Transport assessment	It is noted the proposed construction/abnormal route access is now through the Borough of Neath and Port Talbot. And whilst there is likely to be significant impacts in respect of the access route this is more a matter that is likely to be raised within the observations of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Planning Authority. Bridgend County Borough Councils Highway Authority have initially however, provided the following observations: It is noted that the intention is now to not route the abnormal loads through Maesteg. Instead, the proposal is to construct a bespoke access from junction 40 of the M4. However, the volume of 'normal' construction traffic projected to use the site – over a 24 month period – is significant. This traffic will likely increase the rate of deterioration along the A4063 / B4282 and result in the need for more urgent intervention works to repair localised defects and bring forward the need to undertake larger resurfacing works. As such, a request should be made asking for a detailed route survey (pre-construction), a monitoring regime, routine maintenance regime and commuted sum, as part of an extraordinary traffic agreement. Particular concerns are raised over the raised crossing points on A4063 Commercial Street and the general condition of the street. The assessment of the A4063 and B4282, contained in the 'Traffic and Transport assessment' appears very simplistic.
Applicant response			
All points raised will be addressed as part of discharging the Construction Traffic Management Plan planning condition.			
Consultee	Type	Overview	Consultee Issues Raised

The Coal Authority	Specialist consultee	More information would be useful at formal submission would be useful.	Our records indicate that within, or within 20m of, the site there are 293 mine entries, we do not hold treatment details for most of these features. Shallow coal workings are also present, along with reported surface hazards and monitoring and discharge points, which the Coal Authority may need access to. These features may pose a potential risk to surface stability and public safety. The Coal Authority is of the opinion that building over the top of, or in close proximity to, mine entries should be avoided wherever possible, even after they have been capped, in line with our adopted policy: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-on-or-within-the-influencing-distance-of-mine-entries We note that Chapter 10 of the Environmental Statement, dated June 2023 and prepared by Natural Power, covers ground conditions. Section 10.5.35 specifically relates to Coal Mining Risk Assessment and identifies the potential risks posed by coal mining features and recommends that further assessment and investigations on site will be necessary. The authors of the report note that any remedial works necessary will be carried out on site. We would expect the siting of the turbines and any built structures ancillary to their operation should avoid being located close to, or over, the recorded mine entries on site. It should be noted that the actual positions of these features may be subject to significant departure from their recorded locations. It would be prudent to carry out a positional review from available source data for those mine entries in areas where development is proposed in order to ensure that the siting of the turbines, and any investigations carried out, are informed by the best plot positions of these features. It would be helpful if the formal submission was supported by a plan showing the relationship of the turbine positions to the recorded mine entries within their vicinity to accompany the Coal Mining Assessment in the ES.
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Applicant response

A plan showing the relationship of the turbine positions to coal mining records is included as an appendix to the Coal Mining Assessment.

Consultee	Type	Overview	Consultee Issues Raised
Natural Resources Wales	Specialist consultee	Concerns raised.	We have concerns with the application as proposed because inadequate information has been provided. To overcome these concerns, you should provide further information in your planning application regarding Ecology, Landscape, Hydrology, Geology and Hydrogeology. If this information is not provided, we may object to the planning application when formally consulted by the planning authority. Further details are provided below. We also advise that based on the information submitted to date, we would ask the planning authority to include conditions regarding Ecology on any planning permission granted. Without the inclusion of these conditions by the planning authority we would be likely to object to the planning application. Chapter 6 – Ecology We have reviewed the following documents: • Drawing entitled 'Y Bryn Onshore Wind Farm. Currently proposed turbine locations' (no author, date, or version control); • Drawing entitled 'Y Bryn Onshore Wind Farm. Site Location Map' (no author, date, or version control); • Y Bryn Wind Farm Environmental Statement by Natural Power (undated) incorporating:

			• Figures 5.1a and b Drawing 13836_DET-3000 (Rev D) '<i>Y Bryn Wind Farm. Turbine Specification. Indicative Largest Rotor</i>' by Natural Power dated 27/7/22; • Figure 5.2 Drawing 13836_DET-3001 (Rev C) '<i>Y Bryn Wind Farm. Indicative Wind Turbine Foundation</i>' by Natural Power dated 12/5/22; • Figure 5.3 Drawing 13836_DET-3002 (Rev C) '<i>Y Bryn Wind Farm. Indicative Turbine Cranepad</i>' by Natural Power dated 12/5/22; • Figure 5.4a and b Drawing 13836_DET-3003 (Rev C) '<i>Y Bryn Wind Farm. Indicative Substation and Control Building</i>' by Natural Power dated 12/5/22; • Figure 5.5b Drawing 13836_DET-3004 (Rev D) '<i>Y Bryn Wind Farm. Indicative Wind Access Track</i>' by Natural Power dated 27/7/22; • Figure 5.6 Drawing 13836_DET-3005 (Rev D) '<i>Y Bryn Wind Farm. Indicative Underground Cabling</i>' by Natural Power dated 27/7/22; • Figure 5.7a and b Drawing 13836_DET-3006 (Rev C) '<i>Y Bryn Wind Farm. Indicative Wind Monitoring Equipment</i>' by Natural Power dated 12/5/22; • Figure 5.8 and b Drawing 13836_DET-3007 (Rev E) '<i>Y Bryn Wind Farm. Indicative Directional Signage</i>' by Natural Power dated 30/5/23; • Figure 5.9 Drawing 13836_DET-3008 (Rev A) '<i>Y Bryn Wind Farm. Indicative Temporary Construction Compound</i>' by Natural Power dated 26/1/22; • Figure 5.10 Drawing 13836_DET-3009 (Rev A) '<i>Y Bryn Wind Farm. Indicative Concrete Batching Plan</i>' by Natural Power dated 26/1/22; • Figure 5.11 '<i>Y Bryn Wind Farm. Indicative Grid Connection Route Options</i>' by Coriolis Energy dated 1/8/22. • Figure 6.1 '<i>Y Bryn Wind Farm. Site and Ecological Survey Areas</i>' by Natural Power dated 24/2/23; • Figure 6.2 '<i>Y Bryn Wind Farm. Static Bat Detector and Bat Transect Locations</i>' by Natural Power dated 24/2/23; • Figure 6.3 '<i>Y Bryn Wind Farm. Dormouse Tube Locations</i>' by Natural Power dated 24/2/23; • Figure 6.5 '<i>Y Bryn Wind Farm. Statutory Sites and Designated Sites for Ecology within 10km</i>' by Natural Power dated 24/2/23;
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			• Figure 6.6 'Y Bryn Wind Farm. Phase 1 Survey Results' by Natural Power dated 24/2/23; • Figure 6.6 'Y Bryn Wind Farm. NVC Habitat Survey Results' by Natural Power dated 24/2/23; • Figure 6.8 'Y Bryn Wind Farm. Bat Transect Survey Results' by Natural Power dated 24/2/23; • Figure 6.9 'Y Bryn Wind Farm. Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Results' by Natural Power dated 24/2/23; • Figure 6.10 'Y Bryn Wind Farm. Protected Mammal Survey Results' by Natural Power dated 24/2/23; • Appendix 6.1 Ecology; and • Appendix 6.3 Outline Habitat Management Plan. Bats The Environmental Statement (ES) confirms that the site has been the subject of: • Automated static detector surveys for bat activity during spring, summer and autumn of 2021; • Walked bat activity transects in August, September and October 2021; • A bat roost preliminary assessment of key features with potential for holding maternity roosts or significant hibernation/swarming sites was undertaken in April and May 2021 (wind farm areas) and June 2021 (All areas); and • Weather monitoring. For schemes of >10 turbines published survey guidance (Bats and onshore wind turbines - survey, assessment and mitigation NatureScot) advises that detectors should be placed within the developable area at ten potential turbine locations plus a third of additional potential turbine sites up to a maximum of 40 detectors for the largest developments. We note that paragraph 6.4.20 and Table 6.3, advise that 17 static detectors were deployed across the site but with evolving scheme design and limitations to placing the detectors at
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			some turbine locations (e.g. dense plantation), only turbines 2, 10 and 11 had detectors placed within 100m of their proposed location. Detectors for the remaining turbine locations were more distant and there are no detector locations representing proposed turbine locations 6, 9, 13, 14 or 16. Of these, we note that turbines 6, 9, 13 and 14 shall be keyholed into mature plantation woodland and turbine 16 is proposed to be located in an area of dry heath/acid grassland between plantation blocks. Sampling locations appear to have reflected the habitats that are present at the turbines, or that shall be created by keyholing the turbines. Impacts on bat species at high risk of collision with wind turbines We welcome that the online Ecobat tool has been used to analyse the bat activity data obtained to categorise the levels of activity recorded at the site. We note that the majority of bat activity (>90% bat passes) in each season (spring, summer and autumn) was from species at high risk of collision with wind turbines (mostly pipistrelle bat species but also noctule bats). Whilst the level of bat activity by these species appears to average out as low, we note that maximum levels of activity up to moderate or moderate-high were exhibited in each of the survey seasons. Turbine siting Published guidance advises that a minimum 50m buffer is maintained between turbine blade tips and the nearest bat habitat features (e.g. woodland edge, hedgerow, watercourses where bat activity or other key habitat features such as wetlands). Paragraph 6.6.9 confirms that turbines of 206m, 230m and 250m (to blade tip) are to be used and note that the relevant habitat buffers are stated depending on the turbine size. However it's not clear which height turbine is to be used at which turbine location, and the relevant height of the nearest habitat feature which has been used in the calculation. We advise that confirmation is provided to clarify the following: - Further information to clarify which height turbine is to be used at which turbine location;
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			- The height of the nearest bat habitat feature, the buffer distance required and the relevant calculations of buffer distance for each turbine location; - We assume that planning consent is applied for with associated infrastructure micro-siting allowances, usually 50m for wind turbines, but seek further clarification on this. Determination of the final position of the turbines utilising any micro-siting allowance must ensure that turbines continue to be sited to accord with the joint agency guidance '<i>Bats and Onshore Wind Turbines – Survey Assessment and Mitigation</i>', specifically paragraph 7.1.2. We advise that this aspect could be secured through the following condition being attached to any planning permission granted. Condition 1: Micro-siting No development, including vegetation clearance, shall commence until a micro-siting protocol has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, in consultation with NRW. The protocol shall also accord with the joint agency guidance on '<i>Bats and Onshore Wind Turbines – Survey, Assessment and Mitigation</i>' (Nature Scot <i>et al</i>, August 2021) and in particular paragraph 7.1.2 thereof. The protocol shall set out a methodology for deciding on micro-siting of all elements of the development hereby approved to minimise the impact of the development. The protocol shall provide for the detailed layout of the turbines to be submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority subject to all turbines, crane pads, access tracks and battery storage being located within the agreed micro-siting allowance of the locations shown. Feathering turbine blades We welcome that wind speed data was collected for the site and note that the cut-in speed for the proposed turbines shall be 3ms-1. We note that wind speeds at the time of the bat surveys varied from 0.2ms-1 to 8.6 ms-1 across the seasons. Given the surveys recorded peaks in activity of high risk bat species, we advise that the turbine blades are also feathered
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			to reduce rotation speeds to below 2 rpm while idling; this is an easy way to reduce impacts on bats without compromising energy generation. i. ensure that the appropriate habitat buffer is maintained around each turbine; and ii. assess the effectiveness of blade feathering and whether further measures are needed to mitigate the impacts of the operational wind farm on bats. We note that turbine blade feathering is not mentioned in the ES. However, we consider that this aspect could also be secured through the following condition attached to any planning permission granted. Condition: 2 - Feathering The turbine blades on all turbines shall at all times be feathered to reduce rotation speeds to below 2 rpm while idling, in accordance with paragraph 7.1.3(a) of the joint agency guidance 'Bats and Onshore Wind Turbines – Survey, Assessment and Mitigation' (Nature Scot <i>et al</i>, August 2021). Post-construction/operational monitoring We advise that the site is subject to post-construction monitoring to: With regards to (i) above, we consider this aspect could be secured through agreeing a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) for the site. We note that an outline HMP has been drafted; we shall look to agree a final version through the use of an appropriately worded planning condition attached to any planning application issued. With regards to (ii) above, we note that no bat monitoring during the operational phase of the wind farm is proposed. Again, we consider this aspect could be secured through planning condition (as set out below), which is tied to another condition for turbine curtailment in the event that operational monitoring revealed that ecological circumstances at the site had
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			changed and blade feathering alone was no longer sufficiently effective to mitigate the impacts on bats. Condition: 3 - Habitat Management Plan (HMP) Prior to works commencing on site, a final version of the HMP shall be submitted for Local Planning Authority (LPA) approval, in consultation with NRW. The HMP shall include the bat buffer required for each turbine and shall make provision for the long-term maintenance of bat buffer at each turbine for the duration of the operational phase of the wind farm. The Habitat Management Plan shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, with a written report of the effectiveness of the plan provided to the LPA every 5 years from commencement of the operation of the development, and any arising revisions of the plan to be agreed in writing with the LPA, in consultation with NRW, prior to implementation. Condition 4: - Post-construction bat monitoring No development shall commence until a scheme for the post-construction monitoring of bat injuries, fatalities and activity at the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, in consultation with NRW. The scheme shall accord with the joint agency guidance 'Bats and Onshore Wind Turbines – Survey, Assessment and Mitigation' (Nature Scot <i>et al</i>, August 2021) and shall include: - i Methods for data gathering and analysis; - ii Location of monitoring; - iii Timing and duration of monitoring; - iv Appropriate persons and equipment to carry out monitoring; - v Timing and format for presenting and dissemination of monitoring results including submission to all relevant databases; - vi Remedial measures to reduce any impacts identified through monitoring including in respect of turbine curtailment; - vii Contingency prescriptions that will be carried out in the event of failure to undertake required surveillance; and
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			viii Other information which the local planning authority deem necessary. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details upon commencement of operation of one or more of the turbines. Condition: 5 - Curtailment In the event that monitoring carried out pursuant to condition 4 shows activity levels at any turbine to be moderate or above, using the Ecobat methodology, a turbine curtailment protocol shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, in consultation with NRW, no later than 31 December in the year that those observations/assessment of bat activity are made. The protocol shall be informed by the joint agency guidance 'Bats and Onshore Wind Turbines – Survey, Assessment and Mitigation' (Nature Scot <i>et al</i>, August 2021) and shall provide for the operation of any turbine to cease immediately in circumstances prescribed by the protocol in any event whenever the monitoring carried out pursuant to condition 4 shows activity levels at any turbine to be moderate or above, using the Ecobat methodology. The provisions of the curtailment protocol shall include prescriptions that evidence implementation of the curtailment protocol. When operation is re-commenced it shall accord with the approved turbine curtailment protocol. The protocol shall provide for turbine curtailment programmes which include provision for on-going monitoring of the effects of the curtailment programmes on bat injuries, fatalities and activity at the site, and shall provide for the preparation of an adjusted curtailment protocol where monitoring shows that the impact on bats is unacceptable in the reasonable opinion of the local planning authority. In such circumstances operation will cease immediately until the adjusted curtailment protocol has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, in consultation with NRW. Upon recommencement of operation, the turbine operation shall comply with the adjusted curtailment programme as approved.
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			Otters We note that <i>'there were no signs of otter recorded within the wind farm areas, although some watercourses/water bodies considered suitable for otter were recorded within this area. Further, the only evidence of otter presence was a probable slide recorded on a watercourse that will not be crossed by any tracks associated with the proposed development. The slide is 290m to the east of the northern AIL route (which links the two forestry sections).'</i> Whilst it appears that otters are unlikely to be affected by the proposed development, we welcome the proposals in ES paragraph 6.6.22 to include measures for otters in the Construction Environmental Management Plan. Dormice, Great Crested Newts, Water Voles We note that no evidence of these species was found on site; accordingly we have no further comment to make regarding them. European Protected Species – Legislation and Policy Bats, dormice, great crested newts and otters, and their breeding sites and resting places are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Where bats are present and a development proposal is likely to contravene the legal protection they are afforded, the development may only proceed under licence issued by Natural Resources Wales, having satisfied the three requirements set out in the legislation. A licence may only be authorised if: - i The development works to be authorised are for the purpose of preserving public health or safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment; - ii There is no satisfactory alternative; and
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			iii The action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range. Paragraph 6.3.7 of Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (TAN5) states that your Authority should not grant planning permission without having satisfied itself that the proposed development either would not impact adversely on any bats on the site or that, in its opinion, all three conditions for the eventual grant of a licence are likely to be satisfied. Chapter 7: Ornithology We have reviewed Chapter 7 - Ornithology of the Environmental Statement. - Appendix 7: Ornithology. We agree with both the scope of the surveys and the level of effort. We agree with the interpretation of the survey results, the species scoped in/out for assessment. We broadly agree with the principals laid out in the habitat monitoring plan in relation to benefits to ornithological receptors. While we acknowledge the relatively low predicted collision risk, we advise the applicant bring forward a scheme of post-construction monitoring for collision risk and potential contingency should this show greater levels of impact than modelled. Chapter 8: Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (SLVIA) The site boundary includes two main parcels of land: • 5 turbines are proposed on Mynydd Penhydd (the northern parcel); and • 13 turbines are proposed on Mynydd Margam (the southern parcel). The northern parcel is located within a Pre-Assessed Area (PAA) for Wind Energy (PAA 9) in Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (Future Wales). In these areas there is a presumption in favour of large-scale wind energy development (Future Wales Policy 17).
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			The southern parcel is located outside of a PAA where proposals for wind turbine development should not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the setting of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (Future Wales Policy 18). Notwithstanding the presumption in favour of large-scale wind energy development within the northern parcel, our advice considers the potential landscape and visual effects of the entire development on the Gower AONB and Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (BBNP), within the context of Future Wales and Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (PPW). Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (BBNP). Baseline information on the BBNP is contained in ES Appendix 8.3, A8-26 to A8-27. This information consists of a summary of the designation and a list of its Special Qualities. The list omits the first Special Quality described in the Management Plan for the Brecon Beacons National Park 2015-2020, which is '<i>A National Park offering peace and tranquillity with opportunities for quiet enjoyment, inspiration, relaxation and spiritual renewal</i>'. The impact of the proposed development on this Special Quality should be considered within the SLVIA, not least because perceptual aspects such as tranquillity are susceptible to changes within the setting of the national park. BBNP Visual Assessment SLVIA assessment viewpoints (Vp) within the BBNP are: • Vp 9 Ogof-Ffynnon-Ddu; • Vp 18 Pen-Y-Fan; and • Vp 31 Esgair Hir, Brecon Beacons Way National Trail. This viewpoint was included in response to our comments on the scoping request (Our ref: CAS-35151-H4R5 dated 17 February 2021), which related to the original proposals for 26 turbines. The SLVIA assesses the effect at Vp 9 Ogof-Ffynnon-Ddu to be slight to negligible and not significant. The same conclusion is reached with regards to cumulative effects scenarios for
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			consented wind farms and application wind farms. The cumulative effect with wind farms at the scoping stage is assessed as slight-moderate and not significant. We agree the effects at this location, both individually and cumulatively are unlikely to be significant. The SLVIA assesses the effect at Vp 18 Pen-Y-Fan to be slight to negligible and not significant. In relation to cumulative effects scenarios for consented wind farms and application wind farms the SLVIA concludes the effect would be slight and not significant. The cumulative effect with wind farms at the scoping stage is assessed as slight-moderate and not significant. We agree the effects at this location, both individually and cumulatively are unlikely to be significant. The SLVIA assesses the effect at Vp 31 Esgair Hir to be slight and not significant. In relation to cumulative effects scenarios for consented wind farms and application wind farms the SLVIA concludes the effect would be slight and negligible respectively and both not significant. The cumulative effect with wind farms at the scoping stage is assessed as slight-moderate and not significant. We advise we cannot yet agree with the conclusions reached in relation to Vp 31. As illustrated in the submitted baseline photography and wirelines (ES Figures 8.75a – 8.75f), the development would extend the influence of wind turbine development across the field of view, exacerbating the impact of existing turbines on the scenic quality of views. This impact would be compounded by turbines within Fforch Dwm if permitted (currently at scoping). No photomontage has been prepared from Vp 31. We advise that a photomontage should be prepared to illustrate the impact of the proposals on this receptor and the landscape character of Y Mynydd Du more generally, as discussed below. A hard copy of the updated visualisation pack should be provided for use on our on-site assessment. This will inform our position on whether we agree with the SLVIA conclusions in relation to Vp 31. BBNP Landscape Assessment
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			The SLVIA assesses the impacts on two landscape character areas within the BBNP: • LCA 112: Mynydd Du; and • LCA 113: Forest Fawr. These LCAs are similar to LCAs 2: Y Mynydd Du and LCA 3: Fforest Fawr described in the assessment for Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, 2012 (BBNP Assessment, 2012). The SLVIA considers both LCAs have a very high sensitivity to the proposed development, but it assesses the magnitude of change to be negligible. The overall effect on both LCAs is assessed to be moderate adverse and not significant, both individually and in relation to all cumulative impact scenarios assessed. The assessment of effects on LCAs 112 and 113 (Page A8-36) concludes these areas have a high susceptibility to change as a result of the proposed development. Referring to the landscape attributes within these LCAs, the supporting text explains that <i>'It is predicted that the combination of landscape attributes will be unlikely to withstand change from the type of development proposed without causing a change to overall character'</i>. It is not clear from the assessment why the magnitude of change is then found to be negligible, which is defined in the SLVIA as: <i>'The proposed development would result in such a minor scale loss or alteration to key elements of seascape/landscape character that there would be no perceptible impact.'</i> The two statements are not compatible. We advise that a photomontage from Vp 31 should be provided in order to support the assessment of effects in relation to LCA 112. Based on the wirelines submitted, we consider the proposed development is likely to have a perceptible impact on landscape qualities within LCA 112. For example, it is expected to have a perceptible impact on scenic qualities such as the <i>'panoramic views over the LCA and surrounding lower land'</i>.¹ Further, as evidenced in the ZTV (ES Figure 8.43), impacts similar to those at Vp 31 may be experienced across large parts of LCA 112. The ZTV shows theoretical visibility of all 18 turbines at blade
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			tip height across roughly half of LCA 112. This includes visibility across areas within the BBNP closer to the development site than Vp 31. 1 Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Landscape Character Assessment 2012 The SLVIA methodology states: <i>'Where effects are determined to have moderate significance, whether these effects are significant or not significant will depend on the individual and specific mitigating circumstances and the professional opinion of the landscape specialist will determine this. If any given receptors are subject to a series of moderate effects, such as a long path or road corridor, the combined effects may be considered to be significant'</i>. In our experience, where a national park is the receptor, a moderate effect has the potential to erode landscape integrity, harming public perceptions of special qualities such as natural beauty (scenic quality) and tranquillity. As a result of the combined effects on views from different parts of LCA 112, we advise that the proposed development may result in a moderate but significant effect overall. The combination of visual impacts resulting from the proposed development, particularly in combination with other existing developments, is likely to harm scenic qualities within the National Park. However, to be able to confirm whether moderate effects in this instance are significant, we will need to undertake site visits with the benefit of a visualisation pack. ES Appendix 8.11 includes an overall assessment on the BBNP. It concludes that the effect on the National Park will be slight adverse and not significant. Based on our findings, we cannot yet agree with this conclusion. On receipt of a hard copy of the visualisation pack we will undertake site visits to inform our position on whether reported moderate effects are significant or not, and whether the overall conclusion with regards to the effect on the National Park is acceptable in the context of Future Wales and PPW. Gower AONB Baseline information on the Gower AONB is contained in ES Appendix 8.3, Pages A8-26 to A8-27. This includes a complete list of AONB Special Qualities.
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			Gower AONB Visual Assessment Vps within the Gower AONB assessed in the SLVIA are: • Vp 6 Mumbles Hill; • Vp 7 Gower Way National Trail, Cefn Bryn; and • Vp 29 Oxwich Point. Vp 6 is taken from Mumbles Hill. Photomontages from this Vp are included as ES Figures 8.50a – 8.50h. The corresponding assessment in ES Appendix 8.9 concludes that the effects on visual receptors at Vp 6 will be moderate adverse but not significant. The SLVIA reaches the same conclusion in relation to all cumulative impact scenarios. In our experience, moderate adverse visual effects on visitors to an AONB have the potential to erode public perceptions of natural beauty, conflicting with PPW and part of the purpose of the designation to conserve and enhance natural beauty. We disagree with aspects of the reasoning provided in the SLVIA in relation to its assessment of Vp 6. In particular, we do not agree from this location that <i>'to an extent the turbines will be subsumed within the extensive array of operational wind farm development along the skyline'</i> (Paragraph A8.9.34). With reference to the photomontage in Figure 8.50f, we advise that rather than being subsumed within the context of existing turbines, the proposed turbines will contrast with existing turbines and stand out as distinctly new features because: • The proposed turbines have maximum tip heights of either 206m, 230m or 250m and are therefore significantly larger than existing turbines in the view. • The prominent location of turbines in the southern parcel (T7- T18) on Mynydd Margam overlooking Swansea Bay. • Both towers and rotor blades on the proposed turbines in the southern parcel (T7- T18) will be visible above the horizon as new skyline features.
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			• The scale of the proposed turbines would dwarf those visible nearby at Mynydd Brombil which are understood to have a maximum height to tip of 100m. The prominence of that development is minimised by: • The low number of turbines (4 in total); • Their height to tip of 100m; and • The lower elevation of that site and its reduced prominence compared with Mynydd Margam. We therefore agree with the SLVIA where it states that due to the scale of the proposed turbines and their location at the edge of the plateau they <i>'will contrast [with] the smaller operational Mynydd Brombil development to the fore and many of the operational development further in the distance'</i> (Paragraph A8.9.34). Currently, views from Mumbles Hill (Vp 6) across Swansea Bay are characterised by a relatively balanced mixture of natural and built features. Swansea Bay has outstanding integrity as an intertidal landscape and its scenic qualities are complemented by the range of enclosing hills. While these same views feature substantial urban areas and notable detractors such as the Port Talbot steelworks, the scale of the Bay and the dark backcloth of hills behind has, to a degree, enabled these elements to be absorbed without dominating the natural scenic qualities of the Bay. These qualities provide a positive setting to the AONB and contribute to the visual amenity experienced by its visitors. 2 Gower Landscape Character Assessment, 2013 Due to the scale of the proposed turbines and their visually prominent location the development is likely to dominate views east across the Bay from Mumbles Hill, where it would detract from the scenic quality of views and visual amenity. The turbines would appear out of scale with existing built elements and potentially with the topography of the landscape in which they are located. They would exacerbate the presence of detractors such as <i>'The turbines on Mynydd Brombil and solar farm on Mynydd Emroch'</i>³ and ultimately may tip the balance between built and natural features in the view. To be able to confirm whether
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			moderate effects in this instance are significant, we will need to undertake a site visit with the benefit of a visualisation pack. 3 These issues are noted in relation to SCA-9 described in the Carmarthen Bay, Gower and Swansea Bay Local Seascape Character Assessment, 2017 but are also considered relevant to the impact on views from the AONB. Other Vps within the Gower AONB assessed in the SLVIA are: • Vp 7 (Gower Way National Trail, Cefn Bryn). The effect at this Vp is assessed in the SLVIA as slight - moderate adverse (not significant). • Vp 29 (Oxwich Point). The effect at this Vp is assessed in the SLVIA as slight adverse (not significant). Photomontages have not been prepared for either Vp. Instead, the SLVIA relies on wirelines. Based on NRW Guidance Note 46 we advise that both locations are within the range of potentially significant effects. Given the height of the turbines and the very high sensitivity of the receptors at these locations, we advise it is appropriate to include photomontages from both locations. This will inform our on-site assessment of the effects on different locations and contexts across the AONB. We note that at both locations it is the turbines within the southern parcel (T7- T18) that will be most noticeable. This is because: • At Vp 7, towers, hubs, and rotor blades of all turbines in the southern parcel would be viewed above the horizon as new skyline features. • At Vp 29, only the tips of Turbines T1-4, and T5 (tower, hub and blades) would be visible. In contrast, towers, hubs and rotor blades of all turbines in the southern parcel would be seen above the horizon as new skyline features. Vp 14 Swansea Promenade, Black Pill, is located next to the boundary of the AONB. The effect at this Vp is assessed in the SLVIA as slight - moderate adverse and not significant.
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			As the impact at this location is expected to be similar to that at Vp 6, we advise that the effect on Vp 14 may be an underestimation. Gower AONB Landscape Assessment None of the LCAs within the Gower AONB identified on ES Figure 8.31 have been described or assessed in the SLVIA. It is not clear why LCA 80 (Gower Southern Coastline) was excluded from the SLVIA when LCA 68 (Swansea Bay) was scoped in. These LCAs adjoin each other and views towards the development from the eastern edge of LCA 80 will be similar to those within LCA 68. This is evidenced in the photomontages prepared from Vp 6 within LCA 80 and Vp 14 within LCA 68. Based on the level of impact shown in these photomontages, and the sensitivity of the AONB, we advise that LCA 80 should be included in the SLVIA. This LCA includes parts of LCA 33 Limeslade described in the Gower Landscape Character Assessment, 2013 (Gower Assessment, 2013) and Aspect Area SWNSVS004 (Mumbles Hill) which has an outstanding evaluation due in part to the '<i>outstanding views across Swansea Bay</i>'. The impact on the qualities described in these assessments should be considered. ES Appendix 8.11 includes an overall assessment on the Gower AONB. It concludes that the effect on the AONB will be slight adverse and not significant. Based on our findings, we cannot yet agree with this conclusion. On receipt of a hard copy of the visualisation pack we will undertake site visits to inform our position on whether reported moderate effects are significant or not, and whether the overall conclusion with regards to the effect on the AONB is acceptable in the context of Future Wales and PPW. Summary We advise that we cannot yet concur with the conclusions reached in the SLVIA relating to the impact of the proposals on the BBNP and Gower AONB. We require the following in order to undertake site visits to inform our position on whether reported moderate effects are
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			significant or not, and whether the overall effects on the National Park and AONB are acceptable in the context of Future Wales and PPW. We require: • A photomontage from Vp 31 Esgair Hir • A photomontage from Vp 7 Gower Way National Trail, Cefn Bryn • A photomontage from Vp 29 Oxwich Point • Hard copies of the updated visualisation pack relating to Vp 6, Vp 7, Vp 9, Vp 14, Vp 18, Vp 31, Vp 29. In addition to the above, we advise that the SLVIA is updated to include: • An assessment of the impact on the first Special Quality described in the Management Plan for the Brecon Beacons National Park 2015-2020, which is '<i>A National Park offering peace and tranquillity with opportunities for quiet enjoyment, inspiration, relaxation and spiritual renewal</i>'. • An assessment of the impacts on LCA 80 which includes parts of LCA 33 Limeslade described in the Gower Assessment, 2013 and Aspect Area SWNSVS004 (Mumbles Hill) which has an outstanding evaluation due in part to the '<i>outstanding views across Swansea Bay</i>'. The impact on the qualities described in these assessments should be considered. In relation to potential impacts on the Gower AONB, we advise that it is the turbines within the southern parcel (T7-T18) that have the greatest impact on views and visual amenity. This is due to their height and location on a prominent site, Mynydd Margam, overlooking Swansea Bay. Unlike the turbines in the northern parcel, Turbines T7-T18 are not located within a PAA and therefore they should not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the setting of the AONB. In order to avoid such impacts, it may be necessary to reduce the heights of these turbines in particular.
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			Chapter 10 - Hydrology, Geology and Hydrogeology We have reviewed Chapter 10 - Hydrology, Geology and Hydrogeology of the Environmental Statement and note that the applicant proposes to produce a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) in support of the application. The principles of pollution prevention and mitigation proposed within Chapter 10 are appropriate, however we recommend you review industry appropriate guidance and incorporate relevant approaches into the proposed CEMP document. CIRIA guidance on linear construction projects will be of particular relevance in relation to access track works and maintenance during construction of this project. We would advise that the CEMP also include the measures set out in relation to otters in ES paragraph 6.6.22 and the following good practice measures: a) Daytime working hours are adopted for any construction works, to commence no sooner than one hour after sunrise and finish no later than one hour before dusk. At night, a quiet dark corridor will be retained along the watercourse and its bankside vegetation. b) Construction materials will be stored well away from the watercourse in way that prevents otters gaining access or using them to rest in (e.g. pipe ends will be capped or covered). c) Any trenches that are left open overnight will have planks of wood placed at regular intervals to allow otters a way out. d) All tools, food, litter and construction materials and packaging that may constitute a hazard to otters will be removed daily from the site. e) Any areas that may be suitable for use by otters will be checked immediately prior to works commencing by a suitably qualified, experienced and licensed ecologist. Culvert Design
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			Appendix 10.1 details the design of existing culverts on site and the proposed design of the new culvert required for a stream crossing. We welcome the consideration given to utilising existing crossings within the scheme design. Given the location of the proposed new crossing the proposed use of a pipe culvert is considered justified. We would give the following advice to culvert design and placement to minimise the impact on water, sediment, nutrient, fish and invertebrate movements: Any culvert must be as short as possible, and its cross-section must be large enough to both pass the required flow of water and allow for the continuation of the dimensions and level of the natural watercourse, including parts of both banks. The culvert must therefore not constrict the natural stream channel compared to both up- and downstream of the structure, nor in normal conditions accelerate the velocity of the water. The invert of the culvert must be at least 150mm below the natural bed of the watercourse, to allow for the unimpeded movement of substrate through the structure. Furthermore, the long section of the culvert must be parallel to, and have the same gradient as, the natural bed of the watercourse, though buried below it as described above. There must not be a cascade or lip at either end of the structure. The plinth / spillway of any headwall must similarly be at least 150mm below the natural bed of the watercourse. When excavating the trench in which to place the culvert, save the upper layer of bed substrate and place it to one side. On completion of the construction works, put the substrate into the culvert to form the new bed. All watercourses within the site boundary are classified as ordinary watercourses (rather than main rivers) and therefore any culverting/crossings or works to these rivers would be subject to consent from the relevant Lead Local Flood Authority. Borrow pit assessment Appendix 10.3 - As advised in our letter dated 20 October 2022 (Our Reference: CAS-199199-N3P6), the use of this material may not be suitable for use on tracks as under
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			compaction and heavy traffic it is known to degrade and form a source of suspended solids/silt pollution. Borrow pits can result in risks to groundwater and surface water from, for example, pollution / turbidity, risk of mobilising contamination and physically disturbing aquifers. This requires further consideration within the Environmental Statement to understand the risks associated with this specific site and to ensure that any works will not result in contamination or affect water resources. Alternative source of aggregate should be investigated for this use. Water Framework Directive (WFD) Section 10.5.28 states that none of the watercourses within the site boundary or proposed development are classified within the River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) Although some stretches of water are too small to be a formal water body or are too small to show up on a map of the water body such as the ditches and streams within the application site boundary, they are still legally protected from pollution, modification and abstraction. This application should consider measures to protect, and where possible, improve them to the extent needed to achieve the objectives for water bodies to which they are directly or indirectly connected. Other aquatic habitats such as wetlands (e.g. bogs, ponds, reedbeds) play an important role in managing and storing water within the catchment. The proposed wind farm and associated Habitats Management Plan (HMP) and Sustainable Drainage systems (SuDs) scheme provide the opportunity to consider opportunities to contribute towards an improvement in WFD status of the downstream receiving waterbodies. 10.7.15 - We note the intention to install silt traps to help mitigate any sediment run-off issues. However, the use of terram fences and clean stone is not suitable for the colloidal (fine clay particles) that will be encountered during this development. We have provided previous comments regarding the use of terram and clean stone and again advise the developer to use proprietary products and materials specifically designed to trap sediment and prevent it entering watercourses. Any proposed use of flocculants may require an
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			environmental permit to discharge. This will take several months and as such cannot be deployed on an adhoc basis unless the appropriate permits are in place. We advise the developer contact our Neath Port Talbot Environment Team npt.et@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk at the earliest opportunity to discuss in further detail. Groundwater 10.9.8 - Modification of groundwater flows and levels – we note that the report recognises that cut tracks and their drainage as well as the turbine foundations have the potential to alter the water table within the upslope and downslope peat and bedrock groundwater, which may have implications for the long-term functionality of the peatland’s environment. Mitigation, restoration and enhancement isn’t documented in any detail. This should be addressed. Modification of Groundwater Flows and Levels 10.9.8 Cut tracks and their drainage as well as turbine foundations and hardstands will potentially alter the water table within the upslope and downslope peat and bedrock groundwater, which can also have implications for the long-term functionality of peatland environments. Table 10.17 - more detail should be given to the operational phase impacts of the development. For example, making permanent changes to the drainage regime of the site could have significant impacts (both positive and negative) upon groundwater in the medium and long term. It is important that these are monitored. We recommend a baseline groundwater investigation/monitoring exercise is undertaken to understand the groundwater regime associated with the site and how changes to it may impact the environment. 10.10 - Cumulative effects – consideration should be to the potential cumulative effects throughout the construction and operational phases.
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			10.11.3 - Water monitoring control sites - the proposed control sites would need to be areas which are unaffected by pollution. We'd recommend an unaffected upstream watercourse within the vicinity. Groundwater sensitivity - There is limited to no superficial cover. The bedrock geology consists of the Brithdir member (sandstone) and is a Secondary A aquifer. The site has medium groundwater vulnerability. In addition to private water supplies that will need identifying there are some licensed groundwater abstractions within 2-3km of the site that may need consideration. Given the limited superficial cover, the groundwater could be vulnerable to groundwater pollution. Groundwater flows and levels could be at risk from the development of the windfarm. As advised in our Scoping response (Reference CAS-35151-H4R5 dated 17 February 2021). We recommend that a Water Features Survey be undertaken to include the following: • Identification of all water features both surface and groundwater (ponds, springs, ditches, culverts etc.) within a 500-metre radius of the site boundary and access roads. • Use made of any of these water features. This should include the construction details of wells and boreholes and details of the lithology into which they are installed. • An indication of the flow regime in the spring or surface water feature, for example whether the water feature flows throughout the year or dries up during summer months. • Accessibility to the spring/well. • This information should identify on a suitably scaled map (i.e., 1:10,000), tabulated and submitted to NRW. It would be useful for the developer to photograph each of the identified water features during the survey. Based on the results of the survey the likely impacts from the development should be assessed on both quantity and quality of the surface water and groundwater. This should
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			take into consideration both the preferred methods of construction and the assumed hydrogeology in the vicinity of the development. Please note that we may require identified groundwater features to be monitored during the proposed workings. We would therefore recommend that the survey be undertaken as soon as possible to enable suitable baseline monitoring to be undertaken prior to the commencement of workings at the site. It is noted that identification of groundwater features are not included within Figure 10.1 (see above comments regarding water features survey). We strongly recommend that within Section 10.2 The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection (publishing.service.gov.uk) as adopted by NRW is referred to. Reference to this is essential when considering the potential impacts to groundwater. Coal Mining Risk This assessment suggests mitigating the effect of coal mine features on the development of turbines via micro-silting, treatment of workings and or deepening of foundations. Note that such measures could present a risk to the environment and controlled waters. This should be considered within the ES. The ES refers to consideration of subsequent impacts to groundwater flows following grouting, but it does not consider impacts to groundwater and surface water quality. Note that specific permissions are sometimes required to drill within coal mine areas. The Local Authority should be consulted upon risks associated with mine gas. We welcome that this section of the report suggests consideration of impact upon groundwater as a result of foundation design. More detail however should be included within the ES as this could have significant impact upon groundwater quality and quantity depending upon the hydrogeological regime.
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			Other Matters Our comments above only relate specifically to matters included on our checklist, <i>Development Planning Advisory Service: Consultation Topics</i> (September 2018), which is published on our website. We have not considered potential effects on other matters and do not <i>rule out the potential for the proposed development to affect other interests</i>. We advise the applicant that, in addition to planning permission, it is their responsibility to ensure they secure all other permits/consents/licences relevant to their development. Please refer to our website for further details. If you have any queries on the above, please do not hesitate to contact us.
Applicant response			
Additional assessment and measures in relation to ecology and bats are now included within Chapter 6 of the ES. An outline Ecological Management Plan has now been provided. In principle the proposed outline planning conditions are accepted by the Applicant. A scheme for post-construction monitoring for bird collision risk has been incorporated into the outline Ecological Management Plan. The additional photomontage visualisations requested have been produced, and printed copies have been provided to NRW. Additional assessment for BBNP and Gower AONB has been undertaken within Chapter 7 of the ES. The advice of CEMP measures has been incorporated. A wider water features survey has been undertaken, and other points raised have been addressed within Chapter 10 of the ES.			

Consultee	Type	Overview	Consultee Issues Raised
The Health and Safety Executive	Specialist consultee	No objections.	HSE has no further comments to make to previous advice provided on 20th January 2021 (below). Thank you for your email dated 15 January 2021 consulting HSE on the pre-application for the proposed Y Bryn Wind Farm development of National Significance (DNS). Please find HSE's advice below. HSE's land use planning advice <u>Will the proposed development fall within any of HSE's consultation distances?</u> With reference to Plan (DNS-3264571-000042-Y Bryn Forestry 17.1 v3 Land use within the Study Area, Date 13-11-2020, Draft A1 V3), the proposed project/development does not currently fall within the consultation distances of any Major Hazard Installation(s) or Major Accident Hazard Pipeline(s). However, if prior to the granting of a development consent order for this proposed development, Hazardous Substances Consent is granted for a Major Hazard Installation or there is notification of a Major Accident Hazard Pipeline within or in the vicinity of the development, the HSE reserves the right to revise its advice. <u>Would Hazardous Substances Consent be needed?</u> The presence of hazardous substances on, over or under land at or above set threshold quantities (Controlled Quantities) may require Hazardous Substances Consent (HSC) under the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990 as amended. The substances, alone or when aggregated with others, for which HSC is required, and the associated Controlled Quantities, are set out in The Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 2015.

			Hazardous Substances Consent would be required if the site is intending to store or use any of the Named Hazardous Substances or Categories of Substances and Preparations at or above the controlled quantities set out in schedule 1 of these Regulations. Further information on HSC should be sought from the relevant Hazardous Substances Authority. <u>Explosives sites</u> There are no licensed explosive sites in the vicinity so HSE has no comment to make in this regard.
Applicant response			
No response needed.			
Consultee	Type	Overview	Consultee Issues Raised
Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue	Specialist consultee	No objection and no comment.	The site plan/s of the above proposal has been examined and the Fire and Rescue Authority would wish the following comments to be brought to the attention of the planning committee/applicant. It is important that these matters are dealt with early on in any proposed development: • The Fire Authority has no comment to make on access for fire appliances or water

			supplies. the Fire Authority has no objection to the proposed development and refers the Local Planning Authority to any current standing advice by the Fire Authority about the consultation. The developer should consider the need to provide adequate water supplies and vehicle access for firefighting purposes on the site and general guidance on this matter is given in the attached Appendix and the following links: https://www.water.org.uk/guidance/national-guidance-document-on-the-provision-of-water-for-firefighting-3rd-edition-jan-2007/ https://www.ukfrs.com/index.php/promos/16847 Furthermore, the applicant should be advised to contact the Local Authority Building Control Department, which is the responsible authority, when determining issues concerning means of warning and escape, internal fire spread (linings and structure), external fire spread, access and facilities for the Fire and Rescue Service, in accordance with the 2007 version of Approved Document B (Wales). The plan/s has been retained for record purposes.
Applicant response			
No response necessary.			

Consultee	Type	Overview	Consultee Issues Raised
Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water	Specialist consultee	Comments provided.	I refer to your pre-planning enquiry received relating to the above site, seeking our views on the capacity of our network of assets and infrastructure to accommodate your proposed development. Having reviewed the details submitted I can provide the following comments which should be taken into account within any future planning application for the development. We refer to your consultation on a scoping direction in accordance with regulation 13(6) and Schedule 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 which relates to a Development of National Significance (Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016. We note that the consultation relates to a Y Bryn wind Farm. We welcome the opportunity to comment on the proposal and would offer the following standing advice which should be taken into account within any future application: <u>APPRAISAL</u> It appears the application does not propose to connect to the public sewerage or watermain systems, and therefore Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water has no objections in principle. However, should circumstances change and a connection to the public sewerage/watermain system is required we must be re-consulted on this application. As of 7th January 2019, this proposed development is subject to Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The development therefore requires approval of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) features, in accordance with the 'Statutory standards for sustainable drainage systems – designing, constructing, operating and maintaining surface water drainage systems'. It is therefore recommended that the

			developer engage in consultation with the City & County of Swansea, as the determining SuDS Approval Body (SAB), in relation to their proposals for SuDS features. Please note, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water is a statutory consultee to the SAB application process and will provide comments to any SuDS proposals by response to SAB consultation. The applicant is also advised that some public sewers and lateral drains may not be recorded on our maps of public sewers because they were originally privately owned and were transferred into public ownership by nature of the Water Industry (Schemes for Adoption of Private Sewers) Regulations 2011. The presence of such assets may affect the proposal. In order to assist us in dealing with the proposal the applicant may contact Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water on 0800 085 3968 to establish the location and status of the apparatus. Under the Water Industry Act 1991 Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water has rights of access to its apparatus at all times. We trust that you'll find our comments of assistance for the purposes of this EIA scoping opinion, and we respectfully reserve the right to comment further on any matters and issues arising from ongoing and future consultation. We look forward to continuing our engagement on the project prior to and during the submission of an application to the Planning Inspectorate.
Applicant response			
The Applicant is aware of the requirement for SuDS approval, which is mentioned within Chapter 10 of the ES.			

Consultee	Type	Overview	Consultee Issues Raised
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Bridgend County Borough Council	Specialist consultee	Various issues raised	<u>The Proposal</u> The scheme has evolved over recent years following a level of negotiation, discussions, public consultation exercises, scoping opinion/direction (2021) and the undertaking of a PPA (Planning Performance Agreement) into its current form of 18 wind turbines and associated support infrastructure at land at Bryn and Penhydd Forest, located between Port Talbot and Maesteg. The scheme, known as Y Bryn Wind Farm, is a Development of National Significance (DNS), expected to generate up to 129.6 megawatts (MW) comprising 18 turbines measuring between 206m to 250m (to blade tip) each with an installed capacity of 6.6MW. Bridgend Local Planning Authority will eventually, when requested by Planning and Environmental Decisions Wales (PEDW), provide a more formal Local Impact Report on the proposal. This response, and without prejudice to the production of any future Local Impact Report, is provided as an initial response to the PAC process on behalf of Bridgend Local Planning Authority. <u>Policy Setting</u> Future Wales 2040/National Plan published in February 2021 sets out the overarching national planning policy for such large scale wind farm developments. Policy 17 states that in pre-assessed areas the Welsh Government has already modelled the likely impact on the landscape and found them to be capable of accommodating development in an acceptable way and there is a presumption in favour of large-scale development, subject to Policy 18. Policy 18 states that a DNS will be permitted outside pre-assessed areas for wind development providing the proposal: • <i>Does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding landscape (particularly on the setting of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty); and</i>
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			• <i>The proposal is designed to minimise its visual impact on nearby communities and individual dwellings and a cumulative impact of the proposal with other existing or proposed development is acceptable.</i> <i>This replaced TAN 8 as the national spatial strategy for wind farm development within the context of PPW 10, now PPW 11. This policy defines strategically pre-assessed areas. The northern cluster of 5 turbines in the proposed development lies within Pre-Assessed Area 9 for wind energy and the southern cluster of 13 turbines lies outside.</i> <i>The National Plan sets out on page 97 that irrespective of location or scale, the design and micro-siting of proposals must seek to minimise the landscape and visual impact, particularly those in close proximity to homes and tourism receptors. Both within and outside Pre-Assessed Areas, communities should be protected from significant cumulative impacts to avoid unacceptable situations whereby, for example, smaller settlements could be potentially surrounded by large wind farm schemes.</i> <i>The site straddles the border between Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend with one turbine (T11) in Bridgend (outside the pre assessed area of Future Wales 2024).</i> The Bridgend Local Development Plan, 2013 is the adopted development plan for the Borough of Bridgend and relevant to this proposal as highlighted within Chapter 2 of the submitted ES. The ES highlights however that the Bridgend LDP has not been updated since the adoption of Future Wales (emerging LDP currently at examination) and does not reflect the extant national policy situation, including reference to Pre-Assessed Areas. Regard however must be given to the adopted LDP particularly policies PLA4 Climate Change and Peak Oil, SP8 Renewable Energy, ENV18 Renewable Energy Developments, Policy ENV1 Development in the Countryside, Policy SP5(5) Historic Landscapes, Parks, and Gardens, and Policy SP2 Design and Sustainable Place Making, that whilst generally advocating development proposals that meet national renewable energy and efficiency
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			targets, highlights schemes must demonstrate there will be no significant adverse impacts on the environment, local visual and residential amenities and local communities. SPG 20: Renewables in the Landscape' which considers the impact of different scales of wind and solar developments in the landscape of the County Borough is also of relevance in this case. <u>Landscape and Visual Impact</u> The focus of this response aims to consider and highlight the main issues with the scheme in particular reference to Chapter 8 of the Environmental Statement in regard to visual and landscape impacts with it being acknowledged that other specialist consultees would have been requested to initially comment on the pre-application request with regard to their particular areas of specialist advice i.e Natural Resources Wales and Cadw for example. One of the identified key impacts, if not the key effect of the scheme is the likely impact on local landscape character and visual impact and the visibility impact at shorter and longer distances with the scheme. As you are aware a consultant working on behalf of both NPTCBC and Bridgend CBC has been involved and previously commented on the scheme at the scoping stage and has now commented on and reviewed the Environmental Statement. These comments and thoughts on the ES are generally highlighted below, and it is also understanding the full review has now been forwarded to yourself by NPTCBC. This is a major development in terms of scale, with the proposed 206m to 250m height of the turbines being far greater than anything consented or operational in Wales. This results in concerns that the scale of the turbines proposed has the potential to be out of scale with the land form on which they sit; also being exacerbated by the proximity of densely populated valleys, the coast and other sensitive receptors. The initial scoping report review undertaken for this development highlighted several key landscape and visual impact assessment issues. The SLVIA (Seascape, Landscape &
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			Visual Impact Assessment) now presented contains a large volume of data that has been collected and it is considered generally sufficient. However, there are some points of omission, notably the impacts of such a large scale proposal on: • Groups of visual receptors • Individual receptors such as dwellings and long distances walking routes • How the landscape is currently experienced. It is therefore considered there is insufficient evaluation information provided in the SLVIA, in an appropriate form, for the effects of the proposed scheme to be fully understood and assessed in relation to the overarching policy. There is a large volume of information provided but there is no narrative describing how receptors experience the landscape and how the proposed change would alter perception. <i>For example, only 17 of the 120 dwellings likely to experience significant changes in view have been physically visited. This is an omission, all of these receptors should have been visited individually. The routes of the long distance paths have also not been sufficiently analysed in terms of how the proposed development would change the experience of a path user.</i> <i>The original scoping consultation report suggested a study area out to 45km. And an inner study area of 15km, supported by mapping information at a more detailed scale, is necessary. It is noted that in the figures file there is insufficient detail provided on the 15km study area figures. Additional figures are required for the 15km study area. For example, Figure 8.39: LANDMAP Aspect Areas Identified with Potential for Significant Effects: Visual and Sensory Evaluation, is only included at 45km and it is very hard to read the detail within the 15km area when viewed at A3.</i> <i>The amount of forestry needing to be felled is recorded in the ES. The total felling required for constructing the proposed development is set out as being 119.24ha. However, being told that it is equivalent to only 4.7% of the study area does not describe the effect sufficiently, and analysis in relation to a long-distance walker</i>
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			<i>experience and the resultant patterns as observed from public rights of way including long distance named paths, for example is essential for the full evaluation of effects to be at a standard required for an ES for such a large-scale development.</i> There is no mention in the landscape and visual impact assessment of the changing patterns that the forestry felling would create, there is only raw data presentation of the area of forestry to be removed. The experience of the landscape through the loss of this forestry in terms of the patterns created is a direct effect as well as an effect on character and needs to be fully evaluated. The summing up of effects in terms of how the landscape is experienced is absent. The development is split over two clusters, the larger of which is to the south and outside of the Pre-Assessed Area on land rising to 342 m AOD. In this regard, starting from such a large-scale proposed turbine development, the reduction in height from 250m with some of the turbines to 206m is not considered as minimising affects in this particular landscape. The consideration of turbines only at a range of over 200m height may not be realistic and there is no consideration of alternatives that covers considerably lower turbines. It is considered this exploration needs to form part of the environmental assessment. Section 4.5 of Chapter 4: Site Selection and Design Evolution talks about the evolution of turbine sizes based on technology but makes no assessment of scale of turbine in relation to landscape scale and form. Therefore, the consideration of alternatives is flawed, and more information in relation to the exploration of other forms of turbine configurations numbers and heights is missing from the report alongside analysis that goes with that. Therefore, the report does not read as being landscape led but led by technology. The output from each of the 18 turbines is assessed as being 6.6 megawatts. However, shorter turbines, whilst having less output, could be more readily accommodated in this landscape and a higher number of much smaller turbines may be more easily accommodated in this landscape and visual terms. This is an omission that potentially needs to be expanded upon in the full submission.
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			The proposed development is larger proportionately than the scale of the landscape, and one turbine T6 in the north-east of the southern cluster, particularly adds to the magnitude of effects on residential receptors and should be considered for removal from the proposals. The reason behind this is that: • <i>This is one of the turbines that is likely to be most visible from the views afforded by the large population in Maesteg and closest to the north-eastern plateau edge. There is a front row of five turbines with T6 in front of these when viewed from Maesteg, and the view would be more harmonious without this turbine.</i> • <i>This turbine sits on higher ground than T7 and T8 and the flow of turbines across landform would be smoother in the absence of this turbine.</i> The scale and form of the proposals are such that local residents and communities are likely to undergo significant visual effects with dominant or prominent turbines, and in some cases, residents may suffer unacceptable effect on residential visual amenity. There are some concerns raised about the quality of data and impact of the turbines on the settlements within Bridgend notably Caerau, Llangynwyd and Maesteg towards the east of the site, particularly in relation to the experience of being in and around and living in these settlements including cumulative effects and the effects of two clusters on these areas with the impacts not clearly articulated in the SLVIA (although it is noted Chapter 8 of the ES specifically highlights and concludes there will be significant individual effects and cumulative effects on numerous Landscape Character Areas including Llangynwyd Rolling Uplands and Forestry (42), and Maesteg(57)). There is a considerable amount of wind farm development in the landscape around the site, and particularly within 15km. The cumulative effects in combination with existing and consented windfarms, especially those nearby, including Foel Trawsnant, Llynfi Afan, Mynydd Brombil and Penny Cymoedd, has been included in the ES. The assessment methodology and conclusions drawn out of this assessment have also been reviewed.
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			With regard to cumulative impact assessment, the developments that are most important to be fully considered are those with existing or consented turbines at closer distances and juxtapositions, where there is a large sweep of turbines visible, and where receptors, especially residential, have developments on two or more sides. The additional viewpoints recommended by the original scoping report (2021) were selected to better reflect the potential for cumulative impacts and have been included in the ES. The format however of the reporting of the cumulative assessment and quality of data analysis does not enable a reader to fully understand how the addition of the proposed development would alter the perception of the landscape or views from visual receptors sufficiently well. There is an over reliance on the analysis of individual viewpoints and of the assessor drawing conclusions on the basis of 37 individual points in the landscape rather than looking at groups of receptors and routes more thoroughly. There is generally a limited assessment of impacts on users of outdoor recreation space. In summary, it is considered that there are a few parts of the ES that require attention on terms of outputs, notably: • The construction stage effects appear to be underplayed, with it being anticipated significant effects from a development of this form and scale and extent. The detail of the 15 km study area needs to be more carefully considered in the SLVIA, in particular figures need to be included but cover this study area in addition to the figures included for the 45km study area. • <i>There is a large volume of information provided but there is no narrative describing how receptors experience the landscape and how the proposed change would alter perception.</i> • <i>A more thorough assessment needs to be undertaken of the changing experience for a walker using the long distance paths in both directions around the site, including cumulative changes, with descriptions of how the view would change along the routes, including cumulative changes.</i>
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			• <i>All of the 120 residential receptors likely to be afforded significant effects should be visited to make the assessment more robust.</i> • <i>Whilst the turbine numbers have been reduced, consideration should be given to the removal of turbine 6 from the scheme and an alternative smaller turbine being used throughout the scheme.</i> <u>Ongoing Noise Discussion (chapter 12 of the ES).</u> It is understood meetings remain ongoing with the noise consultants on the scheme (both those acting on the developers behalf and the Local Planning Authorities) and whilst it is generally considered that appropriate cumulative noise limits can potentially be met, a more robust and ideally simplified analysis of the cumulative impacts needs to be done so that the cumulative levels, cumulative limits and the resulting levels from the proposed application wind farm alone are clearly set out. <u>Cultural Heritage, Biodiversity, Health and Public Safety, Hydrology and socio-economic impact</u> The ES concludes and highlights that there will be varying impacts and effects on the above considerations that will need to be further considered by specialist consultees accordingly – although it is noted there is a level of positive local socio-economic impact as a result of such a scheme. <u>Highways.</u> It is noted the proposed construction/abnormal route access is now through the Borough of Neath and Port Talbot. And whilst there is likely to be significant impacts in respect of the access route this is more a matter that is likely to be raised within the observations of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Planning Authority.
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			Bridgend County Borough Councils Highway Authority have initially however, provided the following observations: It is noted that the intention is now to not route the abnormal loads through Maesteg. Instead, the proposal is to construct a bespoke access from junction 40 of the M4. However, the volume of 'normal' construction traffic projected to use the site – over a 24 month period – is significant. This traffic will likely increase the rate of deterioration along the A4063 / B4282 and result in the need for more urgent intervention works to repair localised defects and bring forward the need to undertake larger resurfacing works. As such, a request should be made asking for a detailed route survey (pre-construction), a monitoring regime, routine maintenance regime and commuted sum, as part of an extraordinary traffic agreement. Particular concerns are raised over the raised crossing points on A4063 Commercial Street and the general condition of the street. The assessment of the A4063 and B4282, contained in the 'Traffic and Transport assessment' appears very simplistic. Conclusion The proposal has the potential to have significant visual and landscape impacts on the County Borough of Bridgend, and an initial response to the ES in particular reference to this regard has been provided through consultation with our appointed, specialist consultant, that hopefully will be duly considered.
Applicant response			
All points arising in relation to landscape and visual impacts are addressed within Chapter 8 of the ES (Appendix 8.6). Noise planning conditions have now been agreed between the Applicant and the Council's noise consultant, as detailed in Chapter 12 of the ES.			

Consultee	Type	Overview	Consultee Issues Raised
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council	Specialist consultee	Concerns stated.	I write further to the above application which is a Development of National Significance (DNS), being considered by Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW). We have previously written to PEDW with comments at the scoping stage of the preparation of the Environmental Statement (ES), supporting the application. The application has now moved to the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) phase of the DNS process. Where an application is made for this proposal we are required by legislation to produce a Local Impact Report (LIR). We may also, separately make a representation on the balancing exercise undertaken to determine a future application, in effect to P2023/0444 object or support the application. The Authority considers that we need to respond to the PAC with reference to the likely content of the LIR. The letter considers the impacts of the development and without prejudice (particularly as further consultation will be undertaken) prior to the production of a future LIR. Our comments are largely based on the content of the ES and we have sought to advise whether we consider impacts identified to be positive, negative or neutral. The LIR is required to identify if impacts are positive, negative or neutral. In our view it is helpful if this term is to an extent quantified, where an impact is negative but there is mitigation that reduces the impact to a low level then we will seek to make this view clear. The main local impacts that we are likely to address in our LIR are considered in turn: <i>Seascape, Landscape and Visual</i> The ES at chapter 8 provides an extensive discussion of significant seascape, landscape and visual effects. The chapter is supported by appendices including a Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Residential Visual Amenity Assessment and an Aviation Lighting Assessment. A consultant working for the Authority has previously commented on the EIA scoping. We have instructed a consultant to review the ES and enclosed with this letter is a report from our consultant on this element of the information presented within the PAC. This letter raises issues regarding the information submitted within the SLVIA and the supporting appendices

			containing the assessments. The matters raised should be addressed in the finally submitted Environmental Statement. Chapter 8 focusses on where the SLVIA identifies landscape and visual effects that are significant (based on the SLVIA at appendix 8.1). This includes the following significant impacts identified in the ES: - 18 significant individual effects on landscape character (LCA 03, 04, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 57) - 6 significant cumulative effects from wind farm developments on landscape character (LCA 07, 12, 13, 18, 42, 57) - 2 significant cumulative effects with non-wind farm development (LCA 13, 42) - 17 significant individual effects (VP 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28) - 11 significant cumulative effects from wind farm developments on visual amenity (VP 1, 2, 4, 8, 10, 11, 16, 20, 24, 26, 36) - 3 significant cumulative effects from non-wind farm developments on visual amenity (VP 8, 19, 24) - Significant effects on statutory designations are predicted within Margam SLA, a Registered Historic Park and Garden. The proposed development may conflict indirectly with some key characteristics, which are key to the designation. - Significant effects on non-statutory designations predicted within: Margam SLA, Western Uplands SLA, Foel Trawsnant SLA, Foel y Dyffryn SLA, Margam Country Park, Margam Mountain LOSHIW. - Significant effects on St. Illtyd's Walk as it passes near to and through the proposed development and Ogwr Ridgeway Walk as it approaches the site. The Chapter of the ES supports the view that the proposal will have a high negative local impact in terms of its landscape and visual effects. At this time we concur with this view, and
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			raise concerns specifically on the impacts identified within Margam SLA, a Registered Historic Park and Garden. The information provided at this time does not in our view override these concerns to an appropriate level. In addition it is considered that the proposed access off the M4 has not been given adequate space within the submitted documents, and the impacts of this not clearly identified within the existing submission. As a fundamental part of the proposals we would request that this intrinsic part of the development is brought to the fore within the submission, and appropriately assessed. There is very limited information within the PAC documentation on this and what is provided is limited and difficult to access. <i>Cultural Heritage</i> The impact of the proposal on archaeology and cultural heritage is considered in chapter 9 of the ES. The assessment has found that there would be adverse effects to four non-designated assets and one designated historic asset as a result of the construction of the proposed wind farm. For the Mynydd Margam Registered Landscape these construction phase effects would be Very Slight (in ASIDOHL terms). For the non-designated assets the construction phase effects would be Minor Adverse and not significant for Heol y Moch and Negligible Adverse and not significant for the two trackways and tip scree. A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during construction will mitigate the impacts on these assets by enhancing our knowledge of them through recording. The assessment found that there would be adverse effects to 46 designated historic assets as a result of the operation of the windfarm. This included minor adverse (and not significant) for four scheduled ancient monuments and to Margam Castle (a Grade I listed building) as well as Margam Park registered park and garden. Five other listed buildings and a conservation area were also identified to have minor adverse effects. Negligible Adverse and not significant effects were identified for 34 other assets. A significant effect is identified on the Mynydd Margam registered landscape which the ASIODHL assessment found would experience adverse impacts of Moderate Significance (in ASIODHL terms). Cumulative effects were also considered with an increase from
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			Negligible Adverse to Minor Adverse for Llangynwyd Castle where the effect was considered to still not be significant. The proposal is considered to have a negative local impact including significant adverse effects and extensive effects on heritage assets that are assessed to be less than significant. At this time we are concerned over the impacts upon Margam Park as a cultural asset of the Authority. Margam Park contains numerous statutory and non-statutory designations. We note that impacts are identified within the ES but we would welcome further assessment and clarification and justification for the conclusion that these are moderate / minor effects and not significant – in our view this should be expanded on and further justified. <i>Biodiversity</i> The residual effect on bats during construction are assessed as negligible / low negative. Operational effects of the proposed development on four bat species due to collision are considered to be moderate negative magnitude but it is assessed that the integrity of the local population is not expected to be affected and, thus, operational effects are considered to be not significant. For four other species of bat operational phase impacts on brown long-eared bats are considered to be of low negative magnitude resulting in an effect that is not significant. The effect on the Margam Park SINC was also considered not significant. In respect to the ornithological interest at the site this is considered in Chapter 7 of the ES. This identifies moderate, low and negligible effects that are not significant. In respect to nightjars a moderate effect is identified which will require additional mitigation which is identified at 7.8.3. Subject to this the effects of disturbance / displacement during construction are predicted to reduce to low negative and not significant. An outline habitat management plan has also been provided, the ES states that this will create an overall biodiversity net benefit from the development. Our ecologist has commented that the proposal and noted that surveys would potentially be out of date at the point of submission of an application. The ES and supporting reports should be updated where necessary.
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			The development will have a not significant, low negative local impact on bats. In respect to ornithology, subject to the proposed mitigation and delivery of the habitat management plan the proposal will have a neutral / positive local impact. <i>Transport and Access</i> The ES chapter 11 considers the highways impact of the development. Much of the impact of the development is proposed to be mitigated by a Traffic/Transport Management Plans (TMPs) and preliminary plans are included in appendices to this chapter. A response has been provided by the Local Highways Authority separately. This identifies a number of areas which should be addressed as part of a future application. Table 11.18 and 11.19 summarises likely effects and their significance. There are numerous effects on traffic and transport that are identified as being moderate / minor or minor and these are all identified as being not significant. The chapter concludes that there would be moderate residual effects to public road network and users and there would be moderate / minor effects on local settlements. As stated previously, we do not think that the nature of the access works from the M4 are clearly shown in the application and the impacts of the proposed access off the M4 should be given more priority within the submission, as an intrinsic part of the development. The ES supports the view that the proposal will have a negative local impact. <i>Noise and Vibration</i> The residual effects of construction activities is identified in the ES as being temporary and minor subject to appropriate management. The Authority has commissioned a noise consultant to review the information supporting the application on operational noise from the wind turbine generators. Their response is enclosed with this letter. They have previously responded on the draft ES noise chapter and it is noted that issues raised have been addressed. The consultant has also noted that they would prefer a discussion with the noise consultant before providing final comments on the supporting information.
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			Within the operational phase the wind farm element of the development is proposed to meet acceptable noise limits set through ETSU-R-97. This would be an adverse effect, but it is considered that the effect would not be significant if within the limits in ETSU-R-97. ETSU-R-97 sets a level where wind farms can operate with appropriate protection to residents. The operational and construction noise from the wind farm are viewed to be a not significant, low negative impact. <i>Health and Public Safety</i> Chapter 14 considers a range of health and public safety matters: historic coal mining; shadow flicker; ice throw; lightning; air quality; battery fire risk; and general health and safety (during construction, operation and decommissioning). For each of these matters mitigation is outlined. Although minimised there would remain a negative health and public safety effect from the development and it is considered that this is a low negative/neutral local impact. <i>Hydrology, Geology and Hydrogeology</i> Chapter 10 of the ES considers these issues and suggests mitigation such as an agreed construction environmental management plan, embedded mitigation and standard good practice mitigation. There will remain a residual risk but the ES considers that this is not a significant effect. This is a low negative/neutral local impact. <i>Socio-economics</i> These effects are considered in Chapter 16 of the ES. The ES chapter concludes that the significance of economic impact during development and construction phases of the proposed development is predicted to be minor (beneficial) and not-significant for NPTCBC and BCBC areas, and negligible (beneficial) for outside these areas (Wales and UK). During the operational phase, the significance of socioeconomic impact is predicted to be negligible (beneficial) with respect to NPTCBC and BCBC economies and negligible (beneficial) and not-significant with reference to the Welsh and UK economies as a whole. Consideration is given to the impact of the proposal on tourism assets. Potential negative impacts upon Margam Park as a historical and cultural asset should in our opinion be further considered and assertions made on the extent of the visibility of the turbines justified through additional supporting information.
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			Based on the evidence in Chapter 14 of the ES there will be a positive local socio-economic impact. <i>Renewable energy</i> The proposal will generate a substantial amount of renewable energy which is a positive impact from the scheme. The planning statement states that it will generate around 317,883 megawatt-hours of renewable electricity per year, equivalent to the annual needs of 85,700 average UK homes, or approximately 68% of households in Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend council areas combined; contribute approximately 7.3%31 of the remaining shortfall against the Welsh Government's 2030 target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means; save approximately 137,325 tonnes of CO2 per year; and pay back its expected carbon debt from manufacture, construction, impact on habitat, and decommissioning within 1.9 years; <i>Other environmental effects</i> Chapter 15 of the ES considers aviation and existing infrastructure (including telecommunications, utilities and public access). The ES has not identified any significant effects on aviation or existing infrastructure. The Authority is aware that the applicant has discussed the impact of the proposal on rights of way and is seeking to discuss proposals to enhance access through the agreement of an access management and enhancement plan. It is considered that subject to appropriate mitigation being agreed that there is likely to be a low negative local impact. Chapter 13 of the ES provides a forestry assessment. This appears to be a matter that has been a matter extensively discussed by the applicant with Natural Resources Wales. There will be a loss of forestry to the development and it appears that this is a negative/ neutral local impact and not significant. <i>Conclusion</i> The Authority will produce a LIR based on the final DNS application and also informed by the responses of other consultees and third parties. The proposal, based on the ES at PAC is assessed to have a significant landscape and visual impact to a range of receptors. We have provided a response to the landscape and visual impact assessment from our consultant and this identifies a number of areas where we think additional information should
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			be provided in the application Environmental Statement and also identifies amendments that could be made to the final scheme. We hope that these points are given full consideration in developing the scheme. There is also a significant adverse effect identified to cultural heritage and also effects that although assessed as not significant, are to highly valued heritage assets such as Margam Castle and its parkland setting. In addition, there appears a lack of clarity at this stage, or sufficient prominence within the PAC documentation on the proposed access off the M4 and track up Mynydd Brombil which is clearly an intrinsic part of the development proposed. This has been highlighted back to you previously, and it appears not originally considered as part of your scoping to PEDW. We consider at this time the information available is unclear and limited in its scope. The physical and visual impacts of this part of the development would not be clear to the general public if attempting to comment on the PAC in this regard, if indeed they are aware of it, due to the lack of information within the current documentation. There are also adverse effects identified in relation to a range of other matters as outlined above. These in our view represent a range of negative local impacts that we are likely to reflect in our Local Impact Report and to which the decision maker will need to balance against the benefits of the development. Based on the finalised proposal we will consider the need to also provide our view on the balancing exercise for the development. <u>Noise report (On behalf of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council)</u> 1 INTRODUCTION 1.1 This report is prepared for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to provide a review of the Noise Assessment included as Chapter 12 of the PAC ES June/July 2023. 1.2 The main relevant documents provided by the applicant are Chapter 12 of the ES and Appendices 12.1 to 12.7(A & B) inclusive. 1.3 There are other wind developments which are close enough that they may need to be taken into account in the assessment of the cumulative impact. These are Pen y Cymoedd (PYC), Ffynnon Oer (FO) and Llynfi Afan (LA) and Foel Trawsant (FT) and Mynydd Brombil (MB). 1.4 In this report “ETSU-R-97” means “<i>ETSU-R-97: The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms</i>”. “IOAGPG” means “<i>A Good Practice Guide to the Application of ETSU-R-97 for the Assessment and Rating of Wind Turbine Noise. Institute of Acoustics (May 2013)</i>”. 1.5 With the exception of turbine sound power levels, unless otherwise stated “dB” in this report means sound pressure level in A-Weighted decibels measured as L90.
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			1.6 References to section or paragraph numbers refer to those in the ES. 1.7 I have asked for a meeting with the applicant's consultant to discuss some detailed aspects of the ES and my comments here are subject to anything that may emerge from that meeting. However, I do not expect that there will be any major changes to my review. The meeting is largely to discuss matters that will affect noise conditions, for example: • Allocation of background noise levels and limits to properties – for example NML04 and R8 have different limits but they are the same property. • Noise limits for properties affected by Mynydd Brombil • Rules adopted for assessing cumulative impact – see 5.2 and 5.3 below. • Difficulties in monitoring Y Bryn in the presence of Foel Trawsant. 2 GENERAL 2.1 I have the following comments on sections 12.1 to 12.7 of the ES inclusive: • The conclusions in 12.1.8 will be discussed further in this review; • With regard to the allocation of background noise levels I note and agree in principle that, at properties where there are measured background noise levels (made for this application or for other developments) the noise limits should be based on measured results or, if there are no measured results, the limits should be based on the average levels set out in Tables 12.1 and 12.2 The limits themselves will be discussed elsewhere in this review. • I would like to discuss further, the limits to be assigned to properties around Goytre. When these are downwind of the application site they will be upwind of the M4 and the industrial noise to the south. The high underlying background noise level might not apply in that case. • Limits and the interpretation of ETSU guidance as discussed in 12.7.10 and the following paragraphs will be dealt with later in this review. 2.2 I have no comments on the additional explanatory material required by IOAGPG that has been supplied in the appendices. 3 TURBINE NOISE LEVELS 3.1 The candidate turbines for the development are Nordex 163/5.7MW with different hub heights ranging from 120m to 164m. The sound power level at 8m/s is given as 109.2 including uncertainty. This level and the more detailed figures in Tables 12.10, 12.11 and 12.12 seem realistic but no manufacturers data is provided.
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			3.2 I have not checked all the noise levels in Table 12.15 but those I have checked appear to be correct taking account of the topography and other methodology set out in 12.8. 4 NOISE LIMITS AND ASSESSMENT 4.1 As referred to in 12.2.17 of the ES, ETSU-R-97 has a procedure for setting the day time lower limit. Taking an overall view of these tests, suggests a limit somewhere in the middle of the range, say 38dB. The night time limit in ETSU-R-97 is 43dB. To be clear, these limits apply to all wind farms, not to Y Bryn on its own. 4.2 Both Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend County Borough Councils were of the view, in their scoping responses, that just because a wind farm is large does not mean that it is entitled to a lower limit of 40dB. Only if all three tests suggested the highest limit of 40dB would it be justified. On page 65 ETSU-R-97 says of the third test - “duration and level of exposure that <i>“The proportion of the time at which background noise levels are low and how low the background noise level gets are both recognised as factors which could affect the setting of an appropriate lower limit”</i>. This is an area with low background noise levels and so 40dB is not justified. 4.3 However, there is significant concern that with these limits the impact on some residents at night will be very high. The margin of turbine noise over background noise could be almost 20dB at some locations and wind speeds. I have recommended, and it has been accepted by both Councils that they would accept an increase in the lower fixed limit during day time to 40dB in return for a reduction in the night time limit also to 40dB. 4.4 So in summary, the Councils’ view is that the fixed limits should be 38dB during the day and 43dB at night or 40dB both day and night. Whichever option the applicant adopts should be applied to all properties. This view was put to the applicant but it has not adopted either alternative and instead taken 40dB day and 43dB night. 4.5 In the draft ES of 2022, I pointed out that some properties to the north-west of the proposed development were already exposed to the noise limits from Foel Trawsnant and there was “no room” for Y Bryn. The applicant has dealt with this by ensuring that noise from Y Bryn is at least 10dB below that from other wind farms and so considered to be negligible. 4.6 For the avoidance of doubt, this problem with limits to the north-west of the site is quite separate from the day and night lower limits discussed above. 5 CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT 5.1 The cumulative noise limits are shown in 12.8 to be generally met with some minor mitigation. I have not checked every location in detail but I am satisfied that
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			compliance with ETSU-R97 limits (whichever limits are adopted) is achievable broadly using the methodology used by the applicant. 5.2 However, I would like to discuss the exact method of calculation of cumulative noise levels with the applicant's consultant, particularly with regard to Foel Trawsant where the actual turbines to be used are not yet established as it may not comply with the IOAGPG procedure which is to use consented limits for wind farms. 5.3 The problem is made complex because the guidance in the IOAGPG, while being clear where there is only one additional wind farm, is not clear where there are, as here, five other wind farms to be considered. Among the points that need to be resolved are: • What are the criteria for deciding whether a neighbouring wind farm should be included in an assessment? • What are the criteria for calculating the cumulative noise levels at a property? 5.4 However, it seems to me that appropriate cumulative noise limits can be met but that a more robust and, ideally, simplified analysis of the cumulative impact needs to be done so that the cumulative levels, cumulative limits and the resulting levels from the application wind farm alone are clearly set out. This is necessary in order to establish a robust set of planning conditions. 6 SIGNIFICANCE OF IMPACT 6.1 The Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), published "Guidelines for Environmental Noise Impact Assessment" in 2014. It says that even though ETSU-R-97 is endorsed by government <i>"this does not mean, however, that there would be no effect (consequences) and it is important to acknowledge any impact (change in noise level) that is identified even if the government limit or guideline value is not exceeded."</i> As with other disciplines there should be a clear explanation of the impact. 6.2 The recent report by the consultancy WSP for the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy entitled <i>A review of noise guidance for onshore wind turbines</i> supports this view. In the conclusions in the Executive Summary it says <i>"The research also indicates that the common application of the ETSU-R-97 noise limits as a binary test of acceptability is considered to be potentially inconsistent with the wider policy frameworks in England and Northern Ireland (which require noise impacts to be addressed in a more nuanced way, with reference to expected effects and in view of guiding principles on sustainable development)"</i>. 6.3 There are various ways of assessing the significance of the impact. One is that 10% or people are shown to be highly annoyed by turbines with a downwind level at a wind speed of 8m/s of 37dB₁. Another is with reference to background noise as in BS4142.
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			6.4 As things stand at present, while ETSU-R-97 remains the guidance for decision makers it is important that the impact is clearly set out transparently. SLVIA Review, Landscape Siting Considerations and Landscape Policy Review 1. My name is Anne Priscott, I am a chartered landscape architect with over 25 years' experience. I have reviewed the SLVIA and proposals for this site at the request of Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend County Boroughs (NPTCBC and BCBC) to provide the authorities with an independent assessment of the draft SLVIA and to report back on any landscape and visual impact issues relating to the proposed wind farm development. Through my review I consider the content and format of the SLVIA and separately consider the effects of the proposed development upon the landscape and visual receptors and landscape related policy. 2. The proposal is a Development of National Significance (DNS). The developers are Coriolis Energy and ESB. The LVIA related information has been prepared by Soltys Brewster Consulting Ltd and peer reviewed by Optimised Environments Ltd. 3. The proposed development is expected to generate up to 129.6 megawatts (MW) and comprises the following main elements: 18 Wind turbines (206m to 250m to tip) each with an installed capacity of 6.6 MW and upgraded existing and new access tracks. 4. Future Wales 2040/National Plan published in February 2021 sets out the overarching policies. Policy 17 states that in pre-assessed areas the Welsh Government has already modelled the likely impact on the landscape and found them to be capable of accommodating development in an acceptable way and there is a presumption in favour of large-scale development, subject to draft Policy 18. 5. Policy 18 states that a DNS will be permitted outside pre-assessed areas for wind development providing 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); and
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			□ The proposal is designed to minimise its visual impact on nearby communities and individual dwellings and a cumulative impact of the proposal with other existing or proposed development is acceptable. 6. This replaced TAN 8 as the national spatial strategy for wind farm development within the context of PPW 10, now PPW 11. This policy defines strategically pre-assessed areas. The northern cluster of 5 turbines in the proposed development lies within Pre-Assessed Area 9 for wind energy and the southern cluster of 13 turbines lies outside. 7. The National Plan sets out on page 97 that irrespective of location or scale, the design and micro-siting of proposals must seek to minimise the landscape and visual impact, particularly those in close proximity to homes and tourism receptors. Both within and outside Pre-Assessed Areas, communities should be protected from significant cumulative impacts to avoid unacceptable situations whereby, for example, smaller settlements could be potentially surrounded by large wind schemes. 8. The pre-assessed areas are modelled on the basis of likely impact on the landscape at a regional level and found that the areas identified are potentially capable of accommodating development in an acceptable way. Therefore, within these areas there is a presumption in favour of large-scale development. This is subject to Policy 18, which sets out the development should not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding landscape, particularly the settings of National Parks (NP) and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), that the design minimises its visual impact on nearby communities and individual dwellings and a cumulative impact of opposing with other existing a proposed development is acceptable. 9. A number of studies have been undertaken that underpin the Local Plan and the development policies set out within it. These evidence-base studies include SPG on Special Landscape Areas that cover the landscape locations of 12 of the 13 southern cluster of turbines. They form a key part of the landscape analysis. The site straddles the border between Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend with one turbine (T11) in Bridgend. SLVIA Review 10. Simon White produced a scoping consultation response and set out a number of points in relation to issues with the methodology proposed, including the number of viewpoints and their locations, and issues relating to the actual ability of the landscape to accommodate the
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			development as proposed. Since scoping the number of turbines has been reduced from 26 to 18. The height of some of these turbines has also been reduced, although the rotor diameters remain the same and all 18 would be the same. 11. The observations Simon White made in his scoping consultation review (February 2021) form the starting points for my review of the landscape and visual impact assessment. The Draft Application LVIA, June 2023, has been updated from the Scoping Consultation Report 2021 to provide further information, particularly with regard to effects on residential properties, and photography of the additional viewpoints, as requested by Simon White. Major development in terms of scale and impacts 12. The first point to record is that this is a major development in terms of scale, and in this regard offers many challenges. The challenges include that the proposed 206-250m height of the turbines is far larger than any other wind farm that is either consented or operational in Wales. Currently the tallest operational turbines are located offshore or in landscapes that are larger in scale and with far fewer settlements and apparently fewer sensitive receptors. 13. This leads to concerns that the scale of the turbines proposed in terms of height has the potential for turbines on this site to be out of scale with the landform on which they sit. This is exacerbated by the proximity of populated valleys, the coast and other sensitive receptors that are explored in more detail below. 14. An important point that I have given due consideration is whether the range of heights of the different turbines between 206m to 250m to tip, as well as the positioning of individual turbines and the two clusters overall, would produce an appropriate overall scheme in terms of how they are viewed in the landscape. I consider that whilst generally the proposed development is larger proportionately than the scale of the landscape, there is just one turbine T6 in the north east of the southern cluster that particularly adds to the magnitude of effects on residential receptors and should be considered for removal from the proposals. 15. The reasons I have particular concerns over this turbine are that it is:
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			a. the closest turbine to Bryn. With the removal of this turbine the proximity of development would be closer to 2km (e.g. T6 is 1.46 from Viewpoint 3), and by removing this turbine the horizontal angle of view taken up by turbines closest to the settlement would be narrowed. b. This is one of the turbines that is likely to be most visible from the views afforded by the large population in Maesteg and closest to the north-eastern plateau edge. There is a front row of five turbines with T6 in front of these when viewed from Maesteg, and my observation is that the view would be more harmonious without this turbine. c. This turbine sits on higher ground than T7 and T8 and the flow of turbines across landform would be smoother in the absence of this turbine. Seascape, landscape and visual impact assessment issues 16. Firstly, there is insufficient information on the access route, including an absence of engineering drawings, for an assessment to be made of the impacts the access route will have on the landscape and views. This is a notable shortcoming and needs to be resolved prior to submission of the final document in December. 17. There is no mention of the two 113m tall met masts in the SLVIA. 18. Linked to this point, I disagree with the assessor's conclusion that there would be no significant effects on the fabric or character of the landscape, or visual receptors, during the construction stage despite what I would class as, using the assessor's own methodology, a high magnitude of change (<i>The proposed development would result in a large-scale loss or alteration to key elements of seascape/landscape character. The extent of the impact will result in a considerable change. Impacts may occur over a wide area and would likely be permanent or long-term</i>). In particular, there is no assessment of the access route and the impact this will have on views looking northeast from the environs of Margam. 19. I therefore conclude that the construction stage effects have been underplayed, particularly on the users of the St Illtyd's Walk that will need to be physically diverted. 20. Section 4 of Simon White's scoping report review identified a number of key landscape and visual impact assessment issues. How these have been taken on board by the LVIA
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			assessor and the degree to which they have been resolved or remedied is considered in detail. 21. As a result of the request for additional viewpoints, I consider that, in combination with site visits by any SLVIA reader, the viewpoints set out cover all of those aspects that I feel are necessary for a reviewer to fully appreciate the parameters of the scheme and their effects on landscape and visual receptors. 22. As an overarching observation, the SLVIA assessment contains a large volume of data that has been collected. The quality of analysis of that data and the format in which it is presented has an influence on how effects are quantified and presented and on how conclusions are drawn. 23. I have read the SLVIA and observe that there is generally sufficient data set out in the SLVIA. However, there are points of omission: I consider that it is essential for an assessment for a development of this scale and form to very clearly present effects in terms of impacts on groups of visual receptors and individual receptors such as dwellings or long distance walking routes, in a way that really clearly demonstrates how the proposals would affect a resident or visitors experience of the environment around them and their perception of the landscape. I do not gain a sense of how the landscape is currently experienced and how it would be experienced from the range of receptors. This layer of analysis is generally missing. 24. Therefore, I conclude there is insufficient evaluation information provided in the SLVIA, in an appropriate form, for the effects of the proposed scheme to be fully understood and assessed in relation to the overarching policy. 25. For example, only 17 of the 120 dwellings likely to experience significant changes in view have been physically visited. This is an omission all of these receptors should have been visited individually. The routes of the long distance paths have not been sufficiently analysed in terms of how the proposed development would change the experience of a path user. I cannot gain a sense of how the experience would change, over what duration in time and distance, and how that change would be experience for a walker using the route in each direction. More clarity of reporting is required with a greater depth of analysis to enable the report reader to gain a full understanding of what the change would mean for the receptor. This observation also applies to the cumulative assessment.
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			26. The scoping consultation report suggested a study area out to 45km. However, as Simon White stated, and I would concur, an inner study area of 15km, supported by mapping information at a more detailed scale, is necessary. I note that in the figures file there is insufficient detail provided on the 15km study area figures. Additional figures are required for the 15km study area. For example, Figure 8.39: LANDMAP Aspect Areas Identified with Potential for Significant Effects: Visual and Sensory Evaluation, is only included at 45km and it is very hard to read the detail within the 15km area when viewed at A2/A3. 27. The amount of forestry needing to be felled is recorded in the ES. The total felling required for constructing the proposed development is set out as being 119.24ha. However, being told that it is equivalent to only 4.7% of the study area does not describe the effect sufficiently, and analysis in relation to a long distance walker experience and the resultant patterns as observed from public rights of way including long distance named paths, for example is essential for the full evaluation of effects to be at a standard required for an ES for such a large scale development. 28. There is no mention in the landscape and visual impact assessment of the changing patterns that the forestry felling would create, there is only raw data presentation of the area of forestry to be removed. The experience of the landscape through the loss of this forestry in terms of the patterns created is a direct effect as well as an effect on character and needs to be fully evaluated. 29. The need to divert the route of the St Illtyd's Walk and the impact this will have on the quality of walking experience and the historic relationship between this walking route and the landscape is not evaluated. 30. This links into concerns over the effect the proposed turbines would have on the relationship between the large-scale development on the relatively undeveloped, forested, coalfield plateau in the environs of the site, the nearby scarp slope, the coast and coastal plain and the related Seascape of Swansea Bay. The summing up of effects in terms of how the landscape is experienced is absent. 31. The development is split over two clusters, the larger of which is to the south and outside of the Pre-Assessed Area on land rising to 342 m AOD above the coastal fringes to the south and a valley within the middle of the development as well as the Afon Alan valley to the north.
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			32. In this regard, starting from such a large scale proposed turbine development, the reduction in height from 250m with some of the turbines to 206m is not considered as minimising affects in this particular landscape. The consideration of turbines only at a range of over 200m height may not be realistic and there is no consideration of alternatives that covers considerably smaller turbines. I consider that this exploration needs to form part of the environmental assessment. Section 4.5 of Chapter 4: Site Selection and Design Evolution talks about the evolution of turbine sizes based on technology but makes no assessment of scale of turbine in relation to landscape scale and form. This is an omission. 33. Therefore, the consideration of alternatives is flawed, and more information in relation to the exploration of other forms of turbine configurations numbers and heights is missing from the report alongside analysis that goes with that. Therefore, the report does not read as being landscape led but led by technology. The output from each of the 18 turbines is assessed as being 6.6 megawatts. However, shorter turbines, whilst having less output, would be more readily accommodated in this landscape and it is my opinion that a higher number of much smaller turbines would be more easily accommodated in landscape and visual terms. For example, the V136 with an installed generating capacity of 4.5 megawatts, measuring 150m to the tip of the blade. Residential Amenity Assessment 34. The scale and form of the proposals are such that local residents and communities are likely to undergo significant visual effects with dominant or prominent turbines, and in some cases, residents may suffer unacceptable effect on residential visual amenity. The settlements of Duffryn and Maesteg lie to the east, Port Talbot, Margam and Cwmafan to the west and Bryn in the middle of the proposed development. I have concerns over the quality of data analysis, particularly in relation to the experience of being in and around and living in Bryn, including cumulative effects, and the effects of the two clusters impacting on different sides of settlement. The impacts on Maesteg are not clearly articulated in the SLVIA. 35. The residential amenity assessment has been reviewed. Simon White recommended a 2km study area and I am pleased to see this recommendation has been taken on board. This assessment identifies 120 significant effects. However, only 17 of the dwellings were actually visited (paragraphs A8.16.17-18). All 120 should have been individually visited
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			because this issue in particular is unique to each property and needs to be properly assessed. 36. The SLVIA records that significant effects are predicted from limited sections of St Illtyd's Walk and Ogwr Ridgeway Walk. As an overarching observation, my impression is that the effects on the users of long distance and named paths has been underestimated. 37. There is a considerable amount of wind farm development in the landscape around the site, and particularly within 15km. The cumulative effects in combination with existing and consented windfarms, especially those nearby, including Foel Trawsant, Llynfi Afan, Mynydd Brombiol and Penny Cymoedd, has been included in the ES. The assessment methodology and conclusions drawn out of this assessment have also been reviewed. 38. With regard to cumulative impact assessment, the developments that are most important to be fully considered are those with existing or consented turbines at closer distances and juxtapositions, where there is a large sweep of turbines visible, and where receptors, especially residential, have developments on two or more sides. The additional viewpoints recommended by Simon White were selected to better reflect the potential for cumulative impacts and have been included in the ES. 39. Part of my review has been to check that the relevant cumulative baseline has been used. In particular, the factors that make a landscape more or less susceptible to a series of development, especially ones of different sizes and design. Simon White noted in his Scoping Consultation Review that these were not set out and this needed to be reflected in the final assessment. 40. In this regard the format of reporting of the cumulative assessment and quality of data analysis does not enable a reader to fully understand how the addition of the proposed development would alter the perception of the landscape or views from visual receptors sufficiently well. There is an over reliance on the analysis of individual viewpoints and of the assessor drawing conclusions on the basis of 37 individual points in the landscape rather than looking at groups of receptors and routes more thoroughly. 41. Generally, there is no assessment of impacts on users of outdoor recreation spaces. Setting of Margam Historic Park and Garden
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			42. The effect on the setting of the Margam Historic Park and Garden and associated visitors to the Country Park forms a key consideration of effects on highly sensitive landscape and visual receptors. I am concerned that the effects on these receptors has been underplayed. Forestry Management 43. The potential for views to open up towards the windfarm over time, as the forest is managed with clearance before re-planting in places takes place, forms a key aspect of the assessment of effects on the setting of the Margam Historic Park and Garden and associated visitors to the Country Park as well as on long-distance walkers in particular. Conclusions 44. in conclusion, there are a few parts of the assessment that require attention in terms of outputs. These are that: • Insufficient information has been provided to enable the impacts of the proposed access to be fully evaluated. Engineering drawings are required and resultant impacts of what is actually proposed need to be considered thoroughly in the SLVIA. • The construction stage effects appear to be underplayed, I would anticipate significant effects from a development of this form and scale and extent. The detail of the 15 km study area needs to be more carefully considered in the SLVIA, in particular figures need to be included but cover this study area in addition to the figures included for the 45km study area. • There is a large volume of information provided but there is no narrative describing how receptors experience the landscape and how the proposed change would alter perception. • A more thorough assessment needs to be undertaken of the changing experience for a walker using the long distance paths in both directions, including cumulative changes, with descriptions of how the view would change along the route, including cumulative changes. • All of the 120 residential receptors likely to be afforded significant effects should be visited to make the assessment more robust.
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			45. Whilst the turbine numbers have been reduced, consideration should be given to the removal of turbine 6 from the scheme and consideration should be given to an alternative smaller turbine being used throughout the scheme, for the reasons set out above.
Applicant response			
All points arising in relation to landscape and visual impacts are addressed within Chapter 8 of the ES (Appendix 8.6). Following PAC, NPTCBC requested a number of further visualisation locations, based around (i) Margam Park, (ii) the AIL access road from the M4. A number of new visualisations and accompanying assessments have been produced. Noise planning conditions have now been agreed between the Applicant and the Council's noise consultant, as detailed in Chapter 12 of the ES.			

9.2. Non statutory consultees

Whilst not statutory consultees, detailed responses to the consultation were submitted by several key stakeholders or consultees, which are shown in the table below along with responses from The Applicant.

Consultee	Type	Overview	Consultee Issues Raised
Wildfox Afan Valley	Stakeholder	Supportive of Y Bryn Wind Farm	Representations are made in this letter on behalf of Wildfox Resorts Group Ltd (Wildfox) – Wildfox Afan Valley in response to the statutory consultation associated with the proposed Y Bryn Wind Farm. The representations are made in respect of Wildfox's land interest at Pen Y Bryn Croeserw, Cymmer, which is located approximately 2.8km to the