

Inception Meeting: DNS CAS-03852-P7V7S1
Upper Lliw Energy
Monday 11 November 2024 at 14:00
Via Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

RPS

Ross Irvine
Emily Jones

Cenin

Jessica King
Martyn Popham

**Planning and Environment Decisions
Wales (PEDW)**

Marloes Holtkamp – Planning Officer
Rob Sparey – Planning and Environment Manager

Meeting note:

Representatives from PEDW met with the above-named project team regarding the Upper Lliw Energy windfarm located within the City and County of Swansea Council area.

The project team provided an overview of the proposed project. The site is located in the northern section of the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) administrative boundary, east of Pontardulais, north of Felindre and west of Pontardawe. The site is adjacent to the Upper Lliw reservoir. The site is located within a Pre-Assessed Area for Wind Energy.

The proposed development includes approximately 20 wind turbines, with an installed capacity of 144 MW, and ancillary development. The turbine tip height is 200 m, with a hub height of 119 m and rotor diameter 162 m. The proposed access road is to be confirmed. The operational life of the proposed development is 50 years.

The project team highlighted engagement that has been undertaken with the local community and outlined scheme benefits.

Site characteristics

The project team outlined the work that has been or is being undertaken to date, including:

- High level desk study to review biodiversity data
- Ecological surveys
- High level peat review
- Coal Mining Risk Assessment
- Telecommunications impact assessment
- Preparation of Zone of Theoretical Influence
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment

A desktop assessment has been undertaken to identify constraints and the project team highlighted the following constraints:

- No internationally or nationally designated sites within or immediately adjacent to the site boundary.
- Graig Fawr Site of Special Scientific Interest approximately 1.1 km north-east of the site.
- Coal Authority Development High Risk Zones within the site.
- Heritage assets near the site, including Grade II listed building and Scheduled ring cairn.
- Scattered parcels of ancient semi-natural woodland, primarily to the east, near the Cwm Clydach RSPB reserve.
- Watercourses intersect the site and are connected to the Upper and Lower Lliw reservoirs. Afon Llan is to the east of the site.

PEDW recommended that although not a statutory consultee, given the proximity to an RSPB reserve, it would be helpful for the project team to consult the RSPB early. PEDW would also consult the RSPB at scoping stage. The project team confirmed it has two years of bird surveys and their ecologist will be discussing this matter with the RSPB.

Consenting regime

The project team stated secondary consent will be required for the exchange of Common Land (Section 16) and works on Common Land (Section 38).

The project team confirmed that they intend to submit the proposed development in time to proceed under the DNS route, rather than the Infrastructure Consent route.

Project Timeline

The project team provided the following anticipated project timeline:

- EIA scoping submitted: Spring 2025
- Pre-Application advice request to the LPA: Spring 2025
- Statutory Consultation: September 2025

- Submission: November 2025

The project team highlighted that they may need to wait longer than 5 years for their grid connection and queried whether they could therefore request a condition that allows for a grid connection within 10 years instead of 5 years. PDW advised they can request this as part of their application, but this would be a matter for the appointed Inspector and Welsh Ministers to consider on a case-by-case basis.

PEDW asked that the project team keep them updated regarding their anticipated timetable.

Environmental Impact Assessment

PEDW highlighted that when the scoping request is submitted, it would be helpful to include all data / surveys available at that point, to facilitate more detailed responses from consultees.

PEDW also highlighted to the project team that it will aid consultees if indicative turbine heights, hub height, rotor diameter and locations are provided at scoping stage.