

**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL CASTELL-NEDD PORT TALBOT**

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
ASSESSMENT) (WALES) REGULATIONS 2017**

SCOPING OPINION

Name and address of the applicant

**Heather Pitcher
Natural Power**

DATE REGISTERED: 12 August 2025

APPLICATION NO: P2025/0591

LOCATION: Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm, Between Afan And Neath Valley, 2
KM West Of Glyncorrwg

PROPOSAL: Request for a Scoping Opinion in accordance with Regulation
14(1) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Wales)
Regulations 2017 to extend the operational life of Ffynnon Oer
Wind Farm by an additional 10 years.

THE NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL AS THE LOCAL PLANNING
AUTHORITY IN PURSUANCE OF ITS POWER UNDER THE ABOVE MENTIONED ACT
AND REGULATIONS HEREBY ADOPTS THE FOLLOWING SCOPING OPINION
SUBJECT TO ANY COMENTS BELOW:

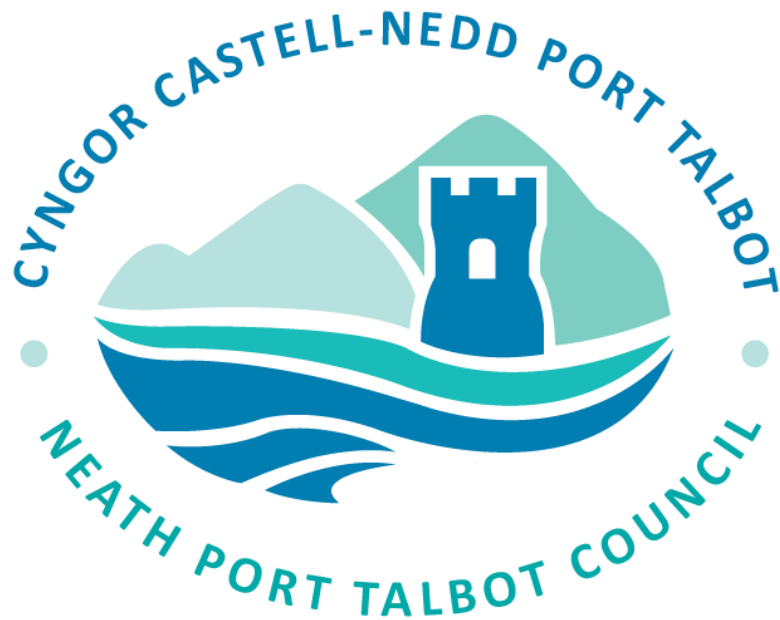
The Environmental Impact Assessment required to be submitted in respect of the above
proposal should cover the matters referred to in Schedule 4 of the Town and Country
Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017, together with
addressing all those matters raised in the formal Scoping Report attached to and comprising
part of this decision.

Signed:



Ceri Morris – Head of Planning & Public Protection

Date: 14 October 2025



EIA Scoping Opinion

Ref: P2025/0591

Site: Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm

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This Scoping Opinion is provided on the basis of the information submitted to the Planning Authority in support of the application, in addition to consultation responses received. The advice does not prejudice any recommendation made by an Authority in relation to the development, and does not preclude the Authority from subsequently requiring further information to be submitted during the course of the application under Regulation 24 of [The Town and Country Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2017](#) (“The 2017 Regulations”).

1. Introduction

The Local Planning Authority has received a request under Regulation 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment Wales) Regulation 2017 for a Scoping Opinion in relation to a proposed development to extend the operational life of Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm by an additional 10 years.

The request has been accompanied by a scoping Report that outline the proposed scope of the Environmental Statement (ES) addendum for the proposed development.

This Opinion has taken into account the requirements of the 2017 Regulations as well as current best practice towards preparation of an ES. In accordance with the 2017 Regulations the Authority has consulted on the Scoping Report and the responses received from the consultation bodies have been taken into account in adopting this Opinion.

This Scoping Opinion is provided on the basis of the information submitted to the Planning Authority in support of the application, in addition to consultation responses received. The advice does not prejudice any recommendation made by an Authority in relation to the development, and does not preclude the Authority from subsequently requiring further information to be submitted during the course of the application under Regulation 24 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017.

The following comments will not seek to repeat the statements made within the applicants submitted Scoping Statement but will instead comments on the submitted information.

2. Site Description and Proposed Development

The development site is described within part 2.2 of the Scoping Report, highlighting that the application site is located between the Neath and Afan Valley, approximately 2km west of Glynccorwg.

The site extends approximately 150 hectares and consists of 16no turbines each of 2 megawatt output and measuring 93m to turbine tip with a total installed capacity of 32MW.

The application would seek to extend the life time of the development by an additional 10 years, until 31st July 2036.

The site has the following, but not limited to, identified constraints;

- Surface water and Small Watercourses Flood Zone 3
- Public Rights of Way
- Contaminated Land
- High Risk Coal Area
- Landslip Zone
- SINC watercourse
- HSE Padhi Pipelines
- National Gas
- GGAT sites
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments

The application site is located within a High Risk Coal Area and within an identified Contaminated Land Area. While a Coal Mining Risk Assessment and a Contaminated Land Desktop Assessment, together with a Land Stability Risk Assessment would be normally be expected, it is noted that no development is proposed as part of the application as the wind turbines are existing.

3. Consultations

In line with Regulation 14(6) of the 2017 Regulations, formal consultation was undertaken with the following bodies:

- NRW
- Authority Public Rights of Way
- Authority Contaminated Land
- Authority Structures
- Authority Ecology
- The Coal Authority
- National Gas
- CADW
- GGAT/ Heneb
- Authority Highways
- Authority Environmental Health (Noise)
- Authority Drainage
- Dwr Cymru/ Welsh Water

4. Planning History

Application Reference	Description	Decision
P2002/1322	A Wind Farm Development Including The Associated Infrastructure. (This Includes 16 Wind Turbines, Access Tracks, Cable Routes, Anemometer And A Substation With Parking.)	Approved 27.05.2005
P2005/0398	Discharge Of Condition 18 Of Application P/02/1322 With Regard To The Submission Of A Habitat Management Plan Relating To Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm	Approved 09.05.2005
P2004/1800	Discharge Of Condition 10 Imposed Upon Planning Permission P/02/1322 Regarding A Soil Survey	Approved 01.04.2005
P2005/0103	Discharge Of Condition 4 Of Planning Approval No P/2002/1322 Regarding A Construction Compound	Approved 15.02.2005
P2005/0102	Discharge Of Condition 2 Of Planning Approval No P/2002/1322 Regarding Materials And External Finishes	Approved 15.02.2005
P2005/0075	Discharge Of Condition 3 (Substation Building) In Relating To Planning Permission P/2002/1322	Approved 15.02.2005
P2005/0425	Discharge Of Condition 14 (Method Of Working) Relating To Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm.	Approved 09.05.2005
P2006/1554	Agree Condition 8 Of Planning Application P/2002/1322 With Regard To The Submission Of A Programme Of Archaeological Work	Approved 07.12.2006

5. Environmental Impact Assessment Approach

The Applicants should satisfy themselves that the ES includes all the information outlined in [Schedule 4](#) of the 2017 Regulations. In addition, the Applicant should ensure that the Non-Technical Summary includes a summary of all the information included in Schedule 4. Consider a structure that allows the author of the ES and Decision Maker to readily satisfy themselves that the ES contains all the information specified in [Regulation 17](#) and Schedule 4 of the 2017 Regulations. Cross refer to the requirements in the relevant sections of the ES, and include a summary after the Contents page that lays out all the requirements from the Regulations and what sections of the ES they are fulfilled by.

As the assessments are made, consideration should be given to whether standalone topic chapters would be necessary for topics that are currently proposed to be considered as part of other chapters, particularly if it is apparent that there are significant effects and a large amount of information for a particular topic.

There may also be topic areas scoped out of the ES where the developer may wish to include application documents that sit outside of the ES and provide information that will support their consultation(s) and the decision-making process. The developer is encouraged to liaise with key consultees regarding non-ES application documents which are not a legislative requirement.

The ES should focus on describing and quantifying significant environmental effects. Policy considerations / arguments relating to those impacts should be addressed in other

documentation supporting the application (e.g. a Planning Statement), which cross references the ES where necessary.

5.1 Reasonable Alternatives.

In line with the requirements of [Regulation 17](#) and [Schedule 4](#) to the 2017 Regulations, any reasonable alternatives studied by the Applicant should be presented in the ES. The reasons behind the selection of the chosen option should also be provided in the ES, including where environmental effects have informed the choices made. This assessment should also include an assessment of a 'do nothing' approach.

It is worth bearing in mind that under the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) ("the Habitats Regulations") unless it can be clearly shown that the project would have no adverse effect on the integrity of any designated sites, it would have to be shown that there is no feasible alternative solution. Further advice regarding the Habitats Regulations is provided in the final chapter of this Screening Direction.

5.2 Currency of Environmental Information

For all environmental aspects, the applicant should ensure that any survey data is as up to date as possible and clearly set out in the ES the timing and nature of the data on which the assessment has been based. Any study area applied to the assessments should be clearly defined. The impacts of operation and decommissioning activities should be considered as part of the assessment where these could give rise to significant environmental effects. Consideration should be given to relevant legislation, planning policies, and applicable best practice guidance documents throughout the ES.

The ES should include a chapter setting out the overarching methodology for the assessment, which clearly distinguishes effects that are 'significant' from 'non-significant' effects. Any departure from that methodology should be described in individual aspect assessment chapters. Where professional judgement has been applied this should be clearly stated.

The ES topic chapters should report on any data limitations, key assumptions and difficulties encountered in establishing the baseline environment and undertaking the assessment of environmental effects.

5.3 Cumulative Effects

All of the other development considered should be documented and the reasons for inclusion or exclusion should be clearly stated. Professional judgement should be used to avoid excluding other development that is close to threshold limits but has characteristics likely to give rise to a significant effect; or could give rise to a cumulative effect by virtue of its proximity to the proposed development. Similarly, professional judgement should be applied to other development that exceeds thresholds but may not give rise to discernible effects.

The scope of the cumulative assessment should be fully explained and justified in the ES and in this case should consider the in combination effect of the development with the Mynydd Foch Dwm Wind Farm development and the Pen Y Cymoedd Wind Farm

development. While it is noted that these developments have been consented since the current projects and therefore should have considered the existence of Ffynnon Oer, they would not have considered the extended life expectancy proposed by the current development and it is this aspect of the impact that the EIA would have to consider.

The ES would also have to address if any new development schemes being considered or been consented (and not yet completed) have considered the Ffynnon Oer development as being removed in 2026 or if their assessment is based on the presence of Ffynnon Oer being retained.

5.4 Mitigation

Any mitigation relied upon for the purposes of the assessment should be explained in detail within the ES. The likely efficacy of the mitigation proposed should be explained with reference to residual effects. The ES should provide reference to how the delivery of measures proposed to prevent / minimise adverse effects is secured (through legal requirements or other suitably robust methods) and whether relevant consultees agree on the adequacy of the measures proposed.

Clear distinctions should be made between mitigation, compensation and enhancement initiatives. With clear identification within relevant section of the ES of where each of these initiatives is being proposed.

5.5 Population and Human Health

The Applicant should ensure that the ES addresses any significant effects on population and human health, in light of the EIA Regulations 2017. This could be addressed under the separate topic chapters or within its own specific chapter.

5.6 Transboundary Effects

[Schedule 4 Part 5](#) of the EIA Regulations requires a description of the likely significant transboundary effects to be provided in an ES. The ES should address this matter as appropriate.

6. Environmental Impact Assessment Topics

This section contains the Authority's specific comments on the scope and level of detail of information to be provided in the Applicant's ES. The comments provided refer to the description of the development, the Environmental Impact Assessment process, structure of the ES and any other matter deemed relevant in the preparation of the ES. Environmental topics or features are not scoped out unless specifically addressed and justified by the Applicant and confirmed as being scoped out by the Authority. In accordance with Regulation 17(4)(c) the ES should be based on this Scoping Opinion in so far as the Proposed Development remains materially the same as the Proposed Development described in the Applicant's Scoping Report.

6.1. Relevant topics

- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Ecology and Nature Conservation
- Arboriculture
- Traffic and Transport
- Air quality
- Noise and vibration
- Major Accident and Incidents and Risk to Human Health
- Historic Environment and Archaeology
- Geo-environmental
- Agricultural land and soil quality
- Hydrology and geology (Drainage)
- Socio-economic Assessment
- Climate Change
- Waste
- Ornithology

6.1.1 Landscape and Visual Impact (LVI)

The application site is located outside of the Vale of Neath Special Landscape Area, which was designated with the wind farm in existence. The scoping report submitted as part of the scoping opinion includes an updated landscape and visual baseline section which identifies that the change to the landscape since the determination of the original application is that the wind farm has been constructed, which was assessed during the original application.

While the wind farm is existing and the original ES considered the LVI of the development it is noted that consideration would need to be given to the LVI of the development on the landscape for a further 10 years. Also noting that other wind farm developments have been granted consent or are going through the consenting process at present.

Section 8.4.9 of the Scoping report notes that LVI cumulative effects and sets out that *'there have been many changes to the cumulative situation since the LVIA was prepared, with several further schemes becoming operational, including the Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm, which is located to the north-east and west (with their closest turbines approximately 500 m apart). In addition, there are also other consented schemes, including the Mynydd Fforch Dwm Wind Farm (of which the closest proposed turbine lies approximately 1 km to the south-west of the nearest turbine).'*

8.4.10. Such other nearby wind energy development only serves to consolidate the presence of wind energy in this part of the landscape and each of the applications will have fully considered the potential cumulative effects with Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm. For the reasons set out separately in this Scoping Report it is therefore not considered that there would be any new significant cumulative effects.'

A response has been received from NRW which states;

From Section 3.1.7 of the Scoping Report ("Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm Life Extension, Neath Port Talbot, Wales – Scoping Report, Figures and Appendix A1 – Scoping Volume 1 of 2" by Natural Power Consultants, dated August 2025), we note that there will be no new infrastructure constructed.

Therefore, we agree that landscape and visual impacts can be scoped out of the ES (Environmental Statement) Addendum as per question 8.1 within the scoping report.

From the information provided and given that the wind farm is existing it is considered that Landscape Visual Impact can be scoped out of the EIA, however any planning application would have to adequately address if the new schemes recently consented or currently going through the consenting process have considered the Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm being removed after 2026 or if their applications have assessed Ffynnon Oer existing past the consented period to ensure that the cumulative impacts have been adequately addressed, such as the current proposed Y Bryn Windfarm Development.

6.1.2 Ecology, Ornithology and Nature Conservation

The Scoping report submitted details that ornithology and bat surveys were completed this year, together with an assessment of the Habitat Management Plan.

It is noted that Coedydd Nedd a Mellt Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is identified within the Scoping Report as being within 10km of the site boundary however was considered unlikely to be connected to Ffynnon Oer, with no new development proposed and therefore Designated Sites have been scoped out of the EIA by the applicant.

The scoping report also sets out that only birds and bats would be scoped into the EIA, with designated sites, habitats and protected mammals scoped out.

The Authority's Ecologist has been consulted as part of the Scoping opinion and has confirmed the approach to the bird and bat surveys and the updated HMP assessment is acceptable however reports are yet to be submitted and would be required.

NRW have also been consulted as part of the scoping opinion and have provided the following response;

Question 9.1: Please confirm that a desk-based study in combination with a single year of bird distribution and abundance surveys, as outlined in Section 9.2, is sufficient to update the assessment of impacts of the Proposed Life Extension on birds?

Broadly yes. Section 9.4.4 (page 43 of the scoping report) seems to imply that carcass searches for birds and bats will be undertaken in relation to collision risk assessment, however, no method for carcass searches for birds has been provided. We advise that a similar level of detail as provided for bats will be required for birds.

Question 9.2: Please confirm that a desk-based study in combination with static activity surveys, carcass searches and persistence trials, as outlined in Section 9.2, is sufficient to assess the impact of the Proposed Life Extension on bats?

We advise the site is subject to assessment to determine the likelihood of protected species being present in the area and likely to be affected by the proposals.

Targeted species surveys should be undertaken for all species scoped in and:

- i. Be undertaken by qualified, experienced and where necessary, licensed ecologist; and*

- ii. *Comply with current best practice guidelines. In the event that the surveys deviate from published guidance, or there are good reasons for deviation, full justification for this should be included within the EIA.*

We welcome that 'bats' are being scoped into the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) and concur with the bat survey methodology proposed; including static activity surveys, carcass searches and persistence trials that are proposed for 2025.

Bat Activity Analysis

We advise that the Ecobat tool is used to assess the significance of bat activity per species and used to infer bat activity at each turbine location / or group of turbines as suitable. In addition, we advise that the EIA includes a comparison of the abundance of bat activity in relation to wind speed data and presents analysis in the context of the cut in speed of the proposed turbines.

Potential Mitigation measures

We advise that the EIA clearly sets out all measures that the proposed scheme will implement to reduce the identified impacts. In this context, we acknowledge that habitat buffers were unlikely to have been implemented under the existing site permission. Therefore, we recommend that the EIA includes information to determine the minimum required buffer distances between turbine blade tips and the nearest bat habitat features, in line with NatureScot guidance. The proposed development may need to incorporate these minimum buffer distances around wind turbines to ensure adequate protection of bat habitats.

We reserve further comments on any additional mitigation until further information has been presented within the EIA.

Impact Assessment

Should protected species be found during the above surveys, we advise that the EIA includes information identifying the species-specific impacts in the short, medium and long term together with any details of retention, mitigation and / or compensation measures proposed to offset the impacts identified.

Where proposals concern protected species which are also notified features of designated sites (E.g. SAC, SSSI), we advise that the EIA considers the impacts on those species from both perspectives.

We advise that the EIA sets out how the long term site security of any mitigation or compensation will be assured, including management and monitoring information and long term financial and management responsibility. Where the potential for significant impacts on protected species is identified, we advocate that a Conservation Plan is prepared for the relevant species and included as an Annex to the EA.

EPS Licence

Where a European Protected Species is identified and the development proposal will contravene the legal protection they are afforded, a licence should be sought from NRW. The EIA must include consideration of the requirements for a licence and set out how the works will satisfy the three requirements as set out in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). One of these requires that the development

authorised will 'not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status (FCS) in their natural range'. These requirements are also translated into planning policy through Planning Policy Wales (PPW) December 2018, section 6.4.22 and 6.4.23 and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5, Nature Conservation and Planning (September 2009). The local planning authority will take them into account when considering the EIA where a European Protected Species is present.

Question 9.3: Please confirm that an updated assessment of HMP objectives is sufficient to assess impacts of the Proposed Life Extension on habitats?

Description of Biodiversity

The EIA must include a description of all the existing natural resources and wildlife interests within and in the vicinity of the proposed development, together with a detailed assessment of the likely impacts and significance of those impacts.

Key Habitats

We note that the most recent Phase 1 habitat survey of the site was undertaken in 2002. We advise that updated Phase 1 surveys are carried out to assess the potential presence of protected species and to determine the need for more detailed, species-specific surveys. These surveys should be conducted during the summer months to maximise the likelihood of identifying the habitats present. All habitat surveys should follow the NCC Phase 1 survey guidelines (NCC (1990) Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey. NCC, Peterborough).

We acknowledge that a Habitat Management Plan (HMP), comprising four management objectives, was implemented on the site between 2005 and 2009 in accordance with Planning Condition 18 of P/2002/1322. We also note that no new or replacement infrastructure is proposed as part of the development.

The scoping report proposes that an assessment of site condition against the existing HMP objectives will be undertaken in 2025 and included within the Environmental Statement. In this regard, we advise that the scope of HMP objectives for the duration of the proposed development extension is discussed with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) ecologists.

We recommend that the EIA includes a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of the HMP to date. We support the inclusion of an assessment of the favourability of on-site habitats, which should be clearly depicted on maps. Based on the current condition of habitats, management proposals should be revised accordingly.

Additionally, the EIA should include information on how future management will be overseen, funded, and implemented. This should be informed by the findings of the condition assessment and aligned with current biodiversity enhancement targets to ensure that meaningful outcomes can be achieved on site.

Local Biodiversity Interests

We recommend that the developer consults the local authority Ecologist on the scope of the work to ensure that regional and local biodiversity issues are adequately considered, particularly those habitats and species listed in the relevant Local Biodiversity Action Plan and that are considered important for the conservation of biological diversity in Wales.

We would expect the developer to contact other relevant people/organisations for biological information/records relevant to the site and its surrounds. These include the relevant Local Records Centre and any local ecological interest groups (E.g. bat groups, mammal groups).

Question 9.4: In line with the EIA guidance in relation to proportionality, the EIA focuses on features which may be subject to significant effects from the Proposed Life Extension (either directly or indirectly). Please confirm that this approach is accepted.

Given that there is no material change to the wind farm, then we confirm that this approach is acceptable.

From the responses provided by NRW and the Authority's Ecologist it is considered that bird and bats are scoped into the EIA addendum in terms of ecology and ornithology.

While NRW identify that the EIA addendum should include information on how the future habitat management will be overseen and implemented together with a review of the effectiveness of the HMP to date. Following discussions with the Authority's Ecologist it is considered that this information can be provided as part of the application and can be adequately assessed within the application with suitably worded conditions, as the wind farm is existing. As such the Habitat Management Plan can be scoped out of the EIA, but needs to be submitted in support of the application.

6.1.3 Arboriculture

The proposal is for the lifetime extension of the existing development with no new development proposed and therefore it is considered that arboriculture can be adequately assessed during the planning application and can be scoped out of the EIA addendum.

6.1.4 Traffic and Transport

The Scoping Report confirms that the low volumes of operational and maintenance traffic would continue to use the site entrance and access tracks on site and would not result in any additional construction traffic.

The Scoping Report sets out that the proposed life extension of the project would not generate additional traffic movements beyond current levels considered acceptable and have scoped traffic and transport out of the EIA.

The Authority's Head of Highways and Engineering have been consulted as part of the Scoping Opinion and have provided the following comments;

12.1 Overview - confirms that no new infrastructure is proposed and that existing access routes will continue to be used.

12.2 Baseline

- The baseline conditions reflect the current operational status of the wind farm, which has been in use since 2006.*
- No changes to the physical access route or traffic volumes are proposed as part of the life extension.*

12.3 Potential Effects

- The report explicitly states that no additional traffic volumes are anticipated.*

- *There will be no construction traffic or delivery of new components, as the extension does not involve physical upgrades or new infrastructure.*
- *Routine maintenance traffic will continue at existing levels, and no increase in vehicle movements is expected.*

Conclusion

There are no changes or alterations to traffic volumes proposed in the life extension application. Therefore, we are happy for the traffic and transport to be scoped out of the EIA due to the lack of new impacts or infrastructure changes.

From the information provided and the response provided by the Head of Highways and Engineering, it is considered that the highway impacts are not considered to be significant and can be 'scoped out' of the EIA addendum.

6.1.5 Air Quality

As the development is existing and is not proposing any additional development as part of the submission the impact upon Air Quality is not considered to be significant and can be 'scoped out' of the EIA addendum.

6.1.6 Noise and Vibration

The Scoping Report sets out that a condition has been attached to the original planning consent (condition 5). In addition, Pen Y Cymoedd Wind Farm and Mynydd Foch Dwm have been built and consented, respectively, since the operation of Ffynnon Oer and have provided cumulative assessments with Ffynnon Oer in accordance with the required limits.

The Authority's Environmental Health (noise) Officer has been consulted as part of the Scoping Opinion and provided a response confirming that no further noise assessment is required for the reasons set out in section 13 of the Scoping Report submitted.

The scoping report identifies that 'The original ES for Ffynnon Oer considered noise from Bonus (now Siemens) 1.3 MW wind turbines. However, the project has been constructed with Repower MM70 2 MW turbines with a 58 m hub height. New noise predictions have been carried out for the as-built scheme for the Repower MM70 turbines using a sound power level of 105.5 dB LWA at rated power (typically at wind speeds from 7 to 10 m/s at 10 m height). The predictions have been carried out according to ISO 9613-253 with input parameters and restrictions specified in accordance with the IoAGPG. Current Welsh Government planning guidance indicates that the IoAGPG should be used for wind turbine noise assessments. A noise contour plot for the Proposed Life Extension is provided as Figure 13.1: Predicted Noise Contours, of this Scoping Report.

Predicted noise levels at Troed-y-Rhiw Farmhouse are 38.6 dB LA90 at rated power. This indicates the Proposed Life Extension complies with the noise limit in the planning conditions. Based on the available aerial imagery, Troed-y-Rhiw Farmhouse appears to be unoccupied. The next nearest residential properties are at least 1,400 metres from the nearest turbine of Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm. In addition to the operational noise from the Proposed Life Extension, any occasional traffic noise associated with its maintenance is also deemed negligible and is also scoped out of the assessment'.

This information should be clearly set out within the planning application submission to demonstrate that the turbines are still within the acceptable noise limits, in regard to noise outputs due to the time that has past since their installation. Subject to this information being provided as part of the application, it is considered that noise can be scoped out of the EIA addendum.

A statement based on the information contained within the Scoping Request Report shall be submitted to support the application.

6.1.7 Major Accident and Incidents and Risk to Human Health

It is noted that a National Gas pipeline runs through part of the site (feeder main 02 Dowlais to Dyffryn Clydach) and has an easement of 12.2m. National Gas have been consulted as part of the scoping opinion and have provided a no objection response due to no new development being constructed.

As the wind farm is currently operational and only seeks to extend the life time of the development by 10 years it is considered that Major Accidents and Risk to Human Health can be scoping out of the EIA addendum.

6.1.8 Historic Environment and Archaeology

The scoping report sets out that the existing wind farm would continue within the landscape with the date of decommissioning extended to allow the development to continue operating for an additional 10 years. Paragraph 7.1.4 of the scoping report identifies that *'a review of designated historic assets in the vicinity of the site boundary has been undertaken as part of this scoping exercise, to identify assets designated after the original wind farm was assessed and consented. This has identified a number of historic assets designated after the wind farm application was submitted in 2002. It is the case that these assets have been designated with the Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm in situ and as such, the turbines clearly do not cause such a reduction in significance or value that would render them lacking in the key features of that particular asset class – for example the special architectural or historic interest of a listed building or the national archaeological interest of a scheduled monument.'*

However, the report does progress to identify that Listed Buildings designated post 2002 were not included within the original ES and have identified that 7 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, 1 Grade II* Registered Historic Park and Garden, 3 Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden and 48 Grade II Listed Buildings have been designated post 2002.

CADW have been consulted as part of the application and have provided the following response;

'Cadw, as the Welsh Government's historic environment service, has assessed the characteristics of this proposed development and its location within the historic environment. In particular, the likely impact on designated or registered historic assets of national importance. In assessing if the likely impact of the development is significant Cadw has considered the extent to which the proposals affect those nationally important historic assets that form the historic environment, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered historic parks, gardens and landscapes.'

These views are provided without prejudice to the Welsh Government's consideration of the matter, should it come before it formally for determination.

Advice

Our records show that the following historic assets are potentially affected by the proposal.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments:

Historic Assets designated since 2022

Within the application area:

Scheduled Monuments

- GM581 Cefn Mawr cairn

Within a developer ZTV to blade tip:

Scheduled Monuments

- GM277 Blaen-Cwmbach Earthwork

Registered Parks and Gardens

- PGW(Gm)53(NEP) Rheola

Listed Buildings

- 82086 Goose rearing shelters and mounting block at Tan-y-rhiw
- 2269 Bridge over Neath Canal at Farmer's Arms Lock
- 82272 Milestone NE of Abergarwed on B4242
- 82451 Crugau
- 82452 Barn at Crugau
- 87633 Icehouse at Rheola House
- 87862 Milestone on B4242, 100 m east of Rock & Fountain PH
- 87889 Catholic Church of Our Lady and St Patrick

This advice is given in response to scoping opinion as to the contents of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that will be submitted in support of an application for a Scoping Opinion in accordance with Regulation 14(1) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2017 to extend the operational life of Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm by an additional ten years.

The request for a scoping opinion is accompanied by a scoping report prepared by Natural Power. This report explains that the Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm was granted consent in 2003 and the environmental statement submitted with that application considered the impact of the wind farm on the historic environment at that time. It therefore proposes that only historic assets that have been designated since that environmental statement will need to be considered in any new environmental statement. We concur with this position.

Section 7 Cultural Heritage of the scoping report has been prepared by Pegasus and has identified that inside 10km of the Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm seven Scheduled Monuments; one Grade II Registered Historic Park and Garden; Three Grade II Registered Historic Park and Gardens; and 48 Grade II Listed Buildings have been designated since 2022: However, the Zone of Theoretical Impact for the wind farm has identified that only the designated historic assets identified above will potentially be affected by the wind farm.*

The scoping report then considers the scale of impact of the windfarm on these designated historic assets, noting that it existed before the assets were designated and therefore any impact on their significance would have been considered during the designation process. It concludes that the extension of the operating period of the windfarm for ten years will not have a significant impact on the significance of the designated historic assets and will therefore not cause unacceptable damage to their settings. I concur with this conclusion. Consequently, we agree with the scoping report that Cultural Heritage can be scoped out of the environmental statement that will be submitted with any planning application for an extension of the operating period of the wind farm.

It is noted that the scoping report has identified that there is a possibility that accidental damage could be caused to scheduled monument GM581 Cefn Mawr cairn during the decommissioning of the wind farm. It has therefore been suggested that protection measures to prevent this damage occurring should be to be provided with the application. We concur that these protection measures will be required and sufficient detail should be provided with the application to allow an appropriate condition to be attached to any consent that is granted for the extension of the operating period of the wind farm.'

Heneb (GGAT) has also been consulted as part of the scoping opinion and has provided the following response;

We have consulted the information contained within the Historic Environment Record and note the proposal is located in an area of archaeological potential. There are multiple significant sites within the proposed development, including Scheduled Monuments.

However, as the submitted information indicates the current proposal is to extend the operational life of an existing wind farm by an additional ten years. Therefore, no significant impact on the below ground archaeological remains is expected. We concur and it is unlikely that any archaeological material will be adversely impacted.

Consequently, we do not envisage any archaeological or historic environment issues that will be material considerations in the determination of any planning application in this area.

We note that no chapter addressing Cultural Heritage is proposed and we concur that Cultural Heritage is unlikely to be a significant factor and does not need to be addressed in any Environmental Impact Assessment.

While it is noted that the site is located in close proximity to Historic assets including Schedule Ancient Monuments, the proposed extension to the lifetime of the development is not considered to result in significant impacts upon the assets. As such, as set out within the responses received from CADW and Heneb, Historic Environment and Archaeology can be scoped out of the EIA addendum.

6.1.9 Geo-environmental

The application site is located within an identified area of historic land contamination and within a High Risk Coal Area.

The Coal Authority has been consulted as part of the scoping opinion and has provided the following comments;

'I have reviewed the Site Location plan included as Figure 1.2 in the supporting Scoping Report (August 2025, prepared by Natural Power) and can confirm that parts of the wind farm site fall within the defined Development High Risk Area (DHRA).

Our records indicate that 34 coal mine entries (adits) are present within the site or close to its boundary, concentrated on the outcrops of coal seams of potentially workable thickness which are present within the site. Our records also indicate the presence of discrete areas of shallow coal workings along with shallow underground roadways within the south eastern part of the site. Such mining legacy can pose a risk to ground stability and public safety.

We understand from the Scoping Report that Ffynnon Oer Wind Farm was approved planning permission under planning application reference P2002/1322 and became fully operational on 31st July 2006. We note that the applicant is now seeking to amend the existing consent to extend the operational life of the wind farm by an additional 10 years, until 31st July 2036, which will be subject to a future Section 73 application.

As you will be aware, our general approach in cases where development is proposed within the DHRA is to recommend that the applicant obtains coal mining information for the application site and submits a Coal Mining Risk Assessment to support their planning application.

For this particular site, we assume that ground conditions and land stability matters, including the implications posed by coal mining legacy, were considered at the time of the determination of planning application P2002/1322, with any necessary mitigation measures implemented prior to the construction of the wind farm to ensure its stability.

Based on the above and in cognisance of the fact that no new development is proposed, we do not consider that a Coal Mining Risk Assessment or specific consideration within any Environmental Statement of coal mining activities is necessary for any future Section 73 application for the extension of the operational life of the wind farm.'

The Authority's Contaminated Land Officer has also been consulted as part of the application and provided the following comment;

I have no objection to extending the operational period of the existing wind farm by an additional 10 years, as no intrusive works such as ground-breaking are proposed.

In light of the above comments and due to the nature of the proposal, it is considered that geo-environmental matters can be scoped out of the EIA addendum.

6.1.10 Agricultural land and soil quality

The proposal is for the life time extension of the existing development and therefore it is considered that agricultural land and soil quality was adequately considered at the initial application stage and can be scoped out of the EIA addendum.

6.1.11 Hydrology and Geology

The application site is located within an identified High Risk Coal area and with a Landslip Zone. Due to the elevated position of the site, it is not located within a rivers or seas flood zone however is located within the new TAN15 Surface water and Small Watercourses Flood Zone 3.

A response from NRW has been received and confirmed 'We agree that hydrology, hydrogeology and geology related assessments can be scoped out of the ES Addendum as we note that there will be no new infrastructure constructed (section 3.1.7 of the scoping report)'.

The Head of Highways and Engineering (Drainage) has been consulted and provided the following response;

Justification for Scoping Out Hydrology

- *This is based on the absence of new physical interventions and the continuation of existing operations, which are not expected to affect site drainage or watercourses.*

Conclusion

Based on the contents of Section 14 - Scoping Report, there is no indication of new impacts to site drainage or watercourses within the site, with justification provided by the consultants. Therefore, as there are no physical changes or alterations/new impacts to any water courses or the site drainage in the life extension application, we are happy for the hydrology to be scoped out of the EIA due to the lack of new impacts or physical interventions which would create changes.

Noting the responses received above and as no physical changes are proposed to the wind farm with no additional infrastructure required, it is considered that Hydrology, Hydrogeology and geology can be 'scoped out;' of the EIA.

6.1.12 Socio-economic Assessment

The proposal would result in the retention of the existing wind farm with no additional development proposed. A Public Right of Way is located to the west of the application site (20/6) however is located outside of the site boundary.

It is considered that the impacts upon socio-economics could be adequately assessed through suitably worded planning conditions and Section 106 financial contributions. As such it is considered that Socio-economic can be 'scoped out' of the EIA addendum.

6.1.13 Climate Change

All development should consider the impact upon climate change, the development is existing and would be seeking to extend the lifetime of the development by a further 10 years, with no additional development or infrastructure proposed. Over the past 25 years climate change considerations have changed and while it is not considered that an assessment of the developments contribution towards climate change is necessary, it is considered that any potential impacts that climate change would have upon the development over the next 10 years would have to be considered.

6.1.14 Waste

The development has already been constructed, and therefore decommissioning waste would be relevant for this application. It is noted that decommissioning has been considered as part of the original application however due to the age of the development the developer should review and update their proposed decommissioning plans as part of the material change in circumstances for the Section 73 application.