

The Planning Inspectorate
Crown Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Sent by email to: dns.wales@pins.gsi.gov.uk

03 June 2016

Dear Sir / Madam,

PROPOSED TEMPORARY INSTALLATION OF A SHORT TERM OPERATION RESERVE (STOR) AT LAND TO THE NORTH OF FELINDRE ROAD, PENCOED, CF35 5HU (E 296847, N 181403)

REQUEST FOR A SCREENING OPINION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TOWN & COUNTRY (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (WALES) REGULATIONS 2016

I write in accordance with the Town & Country (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2016, for the above mentioned site, to request a screening opinion to determine whether the proposed temporary installation of a circa 40MW Short Term Operation Reserve (STOR) development on approximately .37ha of land (.49ha inclusive of vehicular access) within the area identified on the enclosed plan constitutes EIA development.

This Letter and the accompanying site location plan at 1:2500 and block plan at scale 1:1000 represent the formal screening request for an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Opinion.

The Screening Opinion is requested in order to confirm whether or not an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required and thus an Environmental Statement to accompany a planning application submission.

In accordance with the Regulations the following information is submitted as part of the EIA Screening Request:

- A Site Location Plan identifying the land; and
- A brief description of the nature and purpose of the development and its possible effects on the environment (this letter)
- Also included is a block plan drawing illustrating a proposed layout of the development and some technical specifications of the equipment proposed to be installed

In accordance with the EIA Regulations, we have addressed the following within this letter: characteristics of the development; location of the development; and characteristics of potential impact.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development is an installation of a Short Term Operation Reserve (STOR) Development with a design capacity of approximately 40MW together with associated infrastructure, access and perimeter fencing. It is comprised of the following main elements:

- 20 x 2MW dual fuel generators measuring approximately 12.2(l) x 1.6m(w) x 2.4m(h)
- 6 x fuel storage tanks positioned back to back, each measuring approximately 6.2(l) x 2.5m(w) x 2.6m(h)
- 1 x Transformer / switch gear housing measuring approximately 12m(l) x 3.1m(w) x 3.2m(h)
- Substation housing
- Access hardstanding
- Perimeter fencing

No major engineering works will be required. All equipment rests on the top of the ground although a temporary hard stand will need to be provided in place of the existing soft topsoil and grass.

All infrastructure can be removed at the end of the 25 year life of the development with the land then being restored to its original form. In effect, visual impacts arising from this development are entirely reversible.

The UK Government has become increasingly aware of the continual falling power generating capacity in the United Kingdom. STOR projects provide an important back-up resource for the UK. This planning application addresses the need for flexible generation developments such as Peak Power Generating Plants and provides an overview as to the rationale behind this site's selection.

The proposed development is a temporary development with permission being required for 25 years. It is now accepted by the National Grid and the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) that such developments are now necessary throughout the country to provide back-up power during times of peak demand.

Ofgem and the National Grid have stated that the requirement for peak power generation will double over the next 8 years. The proportion of electricity from these sources, combined with electricity from new wave and tidal sources, is set to increase to 24% by 2020 to meet EU renewable energy targets. (source: Parliamentary POSTnote 464 May 2014 Intermittent Electricity Generation).

The development sits idle until called upon by the National Grid during critical situations where there is a shortfall of power on the grid. During such infrequent times of operation, the development would not be expected to operate for more than a couple of hours at a time.

LOCATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The site extends to approximately .37ha of land (.49ha inclusive of vehicular access) as indicated on the enclosed Site Location Plan.

The site lies approximately 900m from the centre of Pencoed to the west and is accessed from Felindre Road to the south, itself accessed from the A473 to the west and the A473 accessed from the M4 to the south.

The site is not within an environmentally sensitive area as defined by EIA Regulations 2016. The site has been chosen based on it being the closest available land to the substation which adjoins the western boundary of the site.

CHARACTERISTICS OF POTENTIAL IMPACT

Landscape Impact

The site is very well screened by surrounding vegetation.

The proposed equipment is entirely contained within perimeter securing fencing to a likely required height of 3 to 4m. The equipment enclosed within this compound does not exceed this height and thus any minor landscape impacts should be contained to the impact of the security fencing only; which itself can be screened by a landscape planting scheme, if necessary.

Residential Amenity

The closest residential properties are approximately 270m to the north east, 310m to the east, 380m to the south east and 480m to the west.

The most likely residential impacts arising from such developments relate to noise. However, these distances are expected to be more than sufficient to ensure no harmful impact to local residents during the rare occasions the equipment would be turned on.

A detailed noise assessment would accompany a planning application submission.

Flood Risk & Hydrology

The application site is within Flood Zone 1 and has been carefully chosen to ensure it does not intrude into nearby areas considered at risk of flooding.

All hard standings around the generators and fuel storage areas (the fenced 'compound') would be constructed of non-permeable surface materials; details of which would be provided along with any a prevention of spillage strategy and surface water drainage details. The access track would be constructed of permeable materials. A Flood Risk Assessment should not be necessary for this type of development.

Ecology

This site does not lie within, or form part of any known nature conservation sites. The minor impacts would occur from the removal of part of a hedgerow to the north eastern corner of the field to facilitate a new vehicular access.

Cultural Heritage Impacts & Archaeology

There would be little cultural heritage impacts given the siting of the proposed development.

Only topsoil would be required to be removed to facilitate hard stand areas and therefore it is not likely that the development would impact.

A Heritage Impact Appraisal is not therefore considered necessary for the proposed development.

Traffic and Transport

The construction phase of the development would involve few journeys other than those required to facilitate the hardstand and those required to deliver the proposed equipment.

Post installation, the development would be fuelled by infrequent trips by HGV for bio-fuel delivery. Infrequent access would also be required by small vans for maintenance.

No alterations to existing access arrangements are going to be necessary. Further information would be provided in a Design and Access Statement to accompany the planning application.

Lighting

There will be no external lighting. Security cameras (if required) operate infra-red lighting only with these installed along the perimeter fencing and facing in to the site only.

Air quality

Despite being a dual fuel powered development, the development does have some impacts on air quality. However, the infrequency of the operation coupled with the appropriate measures to filter emissions means that it would comply with prevailing regulations.

An air quality assessment report would be provided. This would have regard specifically for the proposed generators.

A planning application submission is proposed to consist of the following principal documents:

- Planning Application forms and Certificates
- Supporting Planning Policy Statement; incorporating Design and Access
- Site Location and Site Layout Plans
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Air Quality Impact Statement

EIA REGULATIONS (SCREENING)

In the circumstances, the proposals the subject of this planning application are not considered by the applicant to constitute EIA development.

For the avoidance of doubt, the site is not situated within, or near to any environmentally sensitive or vulnerable area. Furthermore, it will not give rise to any unusually complex or hazardous environmental effects.

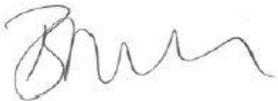
Selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development (as contained in Schedule 3) states that the likelihood of significant effects will generally depend on the scale of development, and its visual impact, as well as other potential impacts.

The scale of the proposed development and the potential environmental and cumulative impacts are considered to be neither complex nor significant enough to warrant an EIA and the proposed scope of planning application work (as outlined in this letter) is both necessary and proportionate to the characteristics and potential effects of the development. As such, we respectfully request a screening direction to confirm that the proposal is not considered to comprise EIA development.

I trust the determining Authority has sufficient information to determine this request under the 2016 EIA Regulations. We look forward to the screening direction and any comments in relation to the listed proposed scope of works the planning application should consist of.

Please note a hard copy of this letter has not been sent in the post although a hard copy may be provided should the Authority require one.

Yours faithfully



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Enc.