

ADDITIONAL ITEM

REPORT BY THE HEAD OF PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES

**AWEL Y MOR OFFSHORE WINDFARM – NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT**

**REPORT SEEKING APPROVAL TO SUBMIT A LOCAL IMPACT REPORT AND
FORMAL REPRESENTATIONS TO THE PLANNING INSPECTORATE UNDER
DELEGATED POWERS**

1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.1 Denbighshire County Council have received notification from RWE Renewables and partners (the 'developer') of their intention to submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the Awel y Mor offshore windfarm to the Planning Inspectorate on the 20th April 2022.
- 1.2 Once the DCO application is valid, affected local authorities and other statutory consultees will be formally consulted on the application.
- 1.3 Owing to the scale of the proposed development, all seven North Wales local planning authorities will be consulted.
- 1.4 As an affected local authority, Denbighshire County Council will be invited to make formal representations on the application and submit a Local Impact Report, and the Council will have five weeks to respond to the consultation.
- 1.5 In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, a resolution of planning committee is required for representations on applications of this nature.
- 1.6 However, as there will be no planning committee meeting in May owing to the local Council elections, given the timing of the submission of the DCO application, the Council may not be in a position to gain committee approval within the statutory consultation timescales.
- 1.7 Therefore this report seeks Members approval to make representations on the DCO application and submit a Local Impact Report under delegated powers, in consultation with affected Ward Councillors, the Lead Member for Planning and the Chair of Planning Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Awel y Mor windfarm is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.
- 2.2 Under the Planning Act 2008, consent for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects is issued through the enactment of a Development Consent Order (a statutory instrument) rather than planning permission.
- 2.3 Applications for Development Consent Orders (DCO) are submitted to, and assessed by, the Planning Inspectorate and are determined by the relevant UK Secretary of State.
- 2.4 Members may remember the proposed offshore windfarm was the subject of a statutory pre-application consultation which ran from August to October 2021.
- 2.5 The response to the pre-application consultation was discussed at the October Planning Committee. At this meeting, Members raised concerns with the onshore works and in particular the impact on Rhyl Golf Course

and the proposal to build a new substation on an agricultural greenfield site, rather than at a site which is better related to the existing substation developments.

2.6 For information, the Council's final response to the pre-application consultation is attached as Appendix 1.

2.7 The developer has advised that they have made changes to the development in response to the pre-application consultation, however in advance of the DCO application being submitted, Officers cannot confirm the extent of changes which have been made at this time.

3. THE AWEL Y MOR OFFSHORE WINDFARM PROPOSAL

3.1 The developers are proposing a new offshore windfarm off the coast of North Wales.

3.2 The proposed offshore windfarm would be located off the North Wales coast between Colwyn Bay and Llanfairfechan. The scheme would be to the west of the existing Gwynt y Mor offshore windfarm.

3.3 The associated onshore works, including an underground high voltage cable and a new substation will form part of the Development Consent Order application.

3.4 Members are advised that all onshore works are proposed to be within Denbighshire.

3.5 The 'landfall' location is the point where the electricity cable is brought ashore. The landfall location is proposed at Rhyl Golf Course.

3.6 A new substation is proposed on agricultural land to the west of the St. Asaph Business.

3.7 A high voltage underground cable is proposed to be installed from the landfall location at Rhyl Golf course leading to the new substation at land to the west of St. Asaph Business Park.

3.8 A further underground cable and other associated works are also proposed to connect the new substation to the existing Bodelwyddan National Grid substation, which is located on land to the south of Glascoed Road.

3.9 The development proposal includes ancillary development such as construction compounds, laydown areas, new tracks and vehicular accesses at the landfall location, along the cable corridor and at the substation site.

4. FORMAL REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 The Council will be invited to comment on the merits of the development proposal. Representations can raise material planning considerations which the Council wishes to bring to the attention of the Planning Inspectorate, and the Council may wish to formally support or object to the proposal.

4.2 The Local Impact Report can be used to inform any representations the Council wishes to raise.

5. LOCAL IMPACT REPORT

5.1 Affected local planning authorities will be invited to submit a Local Impact Report.

5.2 The Local Impact Report is a written report detailing the likely impact of the proposed development on any part of the authority's area, based on their existing body of local knowledge and robust evidence of local issues, and should list the impacts and their relative importance.

5.3 The Local Impact Report is meant to give a factual, objective view of the impacts of the proposed development on the area in question. The impacts should be presented in terms of their positive, neutral and negative effects.

5.4 The report is distinct from any representation a local authority may make on the merits of an application. A local authority or individual Councillor may submit a separate representation on the merits of the application.

5.5 The Local Impact Report may draw attention to matters raised with the local planning authority by interested parties or community groups, but only if the authority considers those matters to be planning considerations that should be included in the report.

5.6 In producing a Local Impact Report, the local authority is not required to carry out its own consultation with the community.

5.7 As the application is yet to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, the Local Impact Report has not been finalised at the time of writing this report.

5.8 The developer has however agreed to cover the cost of an independent landscape consultant to carry out an appraisal of the impact of the proposed onshore substation to inform the Council's assessment of the impact on landscape character and visual amenity with respect to Denbighshire interests. Accordingly Land Use Consultants Ltd were commissioned to carry out an Onshore Substation Review, and a copy is attached as Appendix 2 to this report for Members information.

6. RESOLUTION

6.1 Approval is sought from Committee for Officers to submit representations and a Local Impact Report to the Planning Inspectorate under delegated powers, in consultation with the Members.

6.2 Officers would suggest the draft written representations and Local Impact Report are circulated with affected Ward Councillors, Lead Member for Planning and Chair of Planning Committee for their consideration prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate.

6.3 Members are therefore requested to consider the following resolution:

- Delegate approval for representations on the DCO application and the submission of the Local Impact Report to Officers, in consultation with the affected Ward Councillors, Lead Member for Planning and the Chair and Planning Committee.

EMLYN JONES

HEAD OF PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COUNTYSIDE SERVIC

Attachments:

Appendix 1 – Denbighshire County Council response to the developer's pre-application consultation
Appendix 2 – Onshore substation review (independent landscape consultant's appraisal)