



Gwyddelwern

3

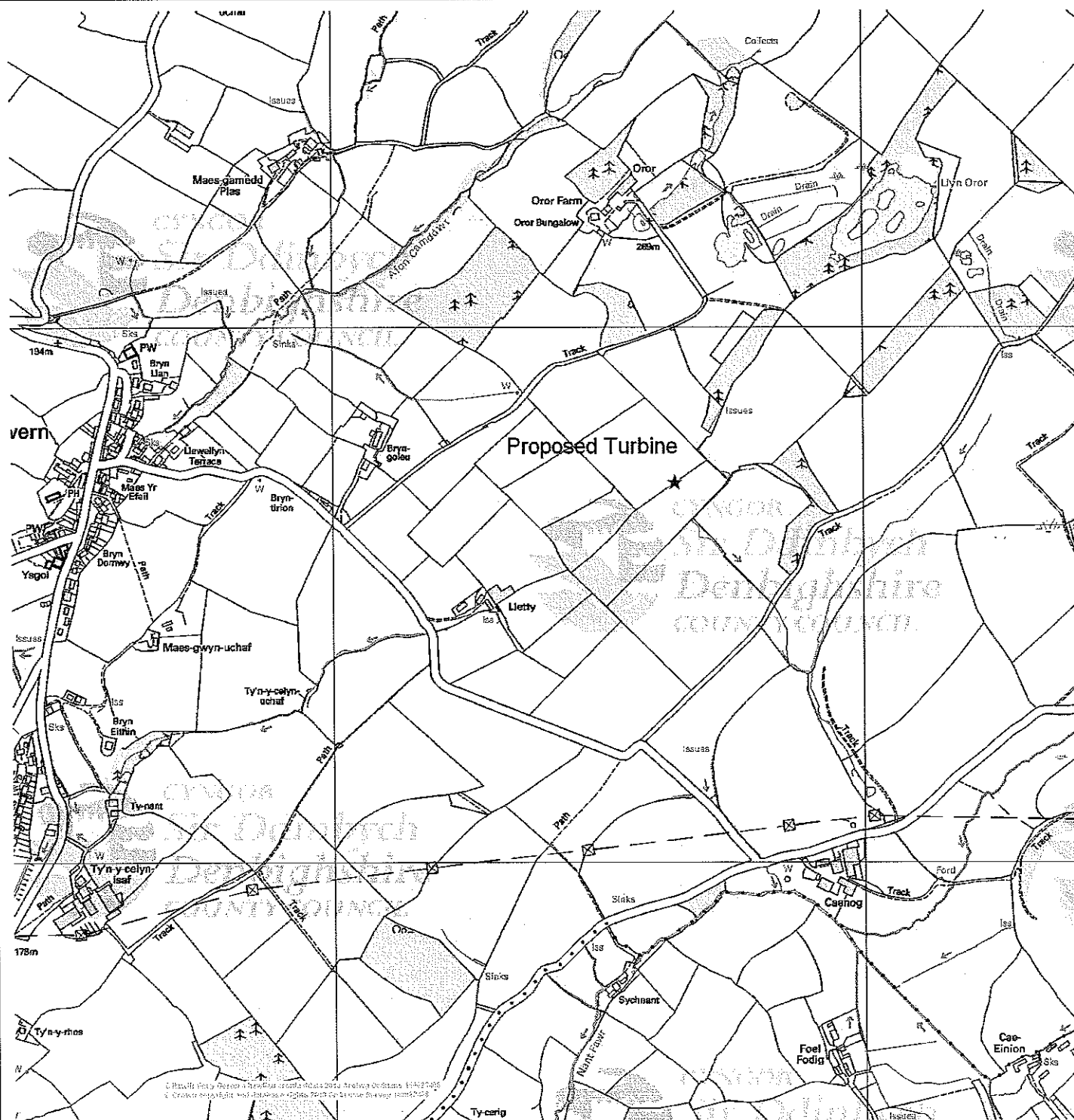
Tel: 01824 706800 Fax: 01824 706709



Scale 1/10691

Centre = 308399 E 346553 N

This plan is intended solely to give an indication of the LOCATION of the application site which forms the subject of the accompanying report. It does not form any part of the application documents, and should not be taken as representative of the proposals to be considered, which are available for inspection prior to the meeting.



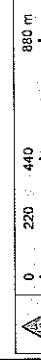
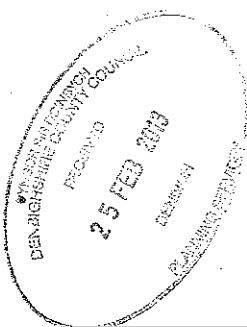
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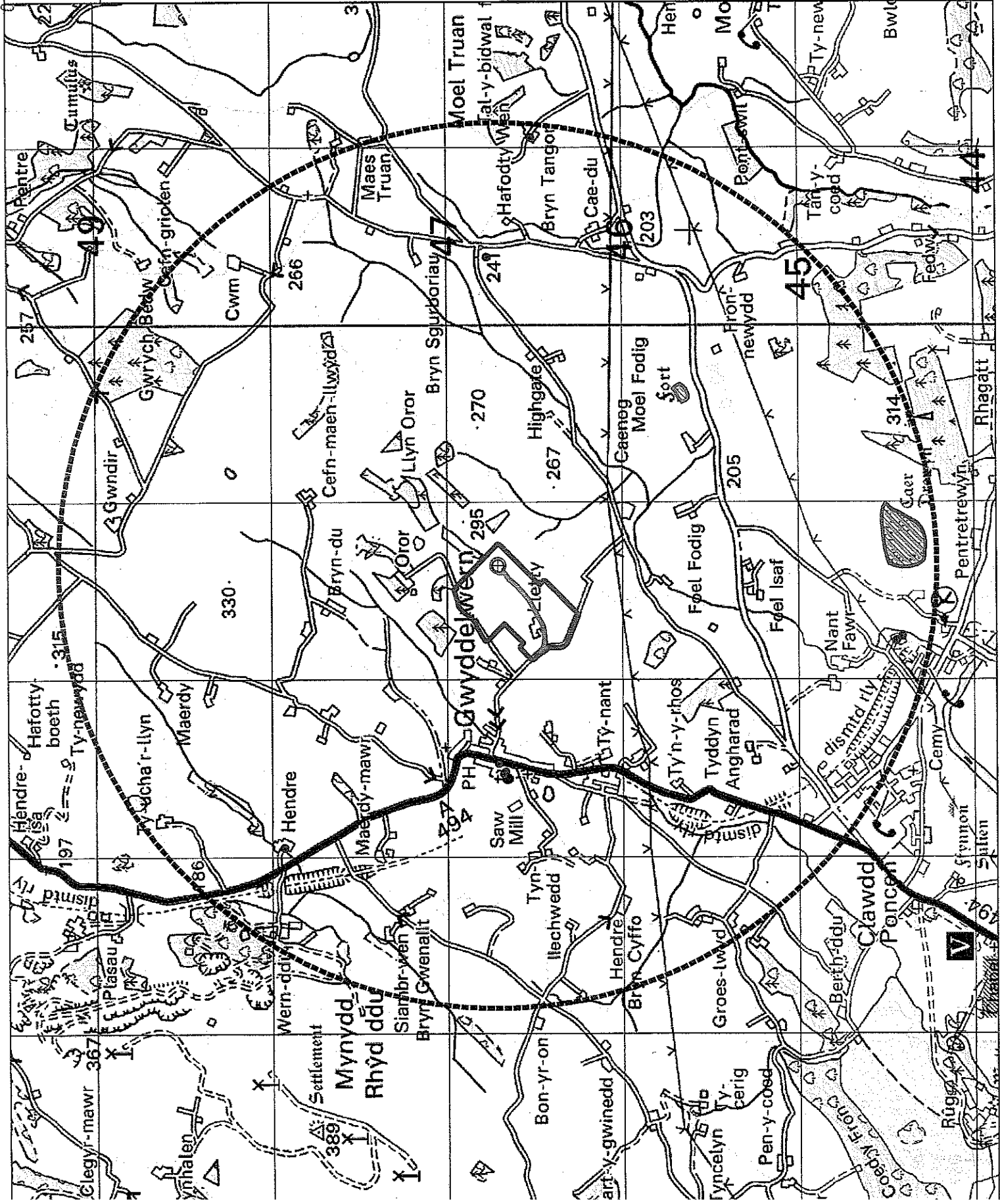


Legend

- Boundary: Application Site
- Boundary: Land in the Ownership/Control of the Applicant
- Turbine Location
- Boundary: 2.5km Study Area
- Scheduled Monuments
- Listed Buildings



Project	Lletty Farm, Gwyddelwern		
Drawing Name	Heritage Asset Location Plan		
Date	Feb 2013	Scale	1:20,000 at A3
Reference	Appendix 06		



NXW

ITEM NO: 3

WARD NO: Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd / Gwyddelwern

APPLICATION NO: 06/2013/0253/ PFT

PROPOSAL: Installation of a 500 kW wind turbine up to 77m to blade tip (up to 50m to hub height), access tracks and hardstanding, transformer station and ancillary works

LOCATION: Lletty Llety Road Gwyddelwern Corwen

APPLICANT: Ms M Jones

CONSTRAINTS:

PUBLICITY Site Notice - Yes

UNDERTAKEN: Press Notice - No

Neighbour letters - Yes

REASON(S) APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE:

Scheme of Delegation Part 2

- Referral by Head of Planning / Development Control Manager

CONSULTATION RESPONSES:

GWYDDELWERN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

No response received

CORWEN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

"No observations to make "

NATURAL RESOURCES WALES (NRW) (formerly EA and CCW)

Landscape/Ecology

1 No objection in principle, however it advises that the Local Planning Authority decision making includes detailed assessments of the landscape impacts of the proposal.

In raising no objection in principle it has commented on the possible effect the proposed development would have on:-

(a) Statutory sites such as the AONB which is approximately 2Kms away.

(b) Protected species.

(c) Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006)

Land drainage/water supply/flooding

Records show a private water supply within 150 metres of the site. As such request that any decision includes a condition to ensure that there is no detriment to private water supplies in the area.

NATS (EN ROUTE) PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY (NERL)

No safeguarding objection to the proposal.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

No response received

AIRBUS

No aerodrome safeguarding objection.

DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTEES

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE (HIGHWAYS)

Highways Officer

No response at the time of preparing the report

POLLUTION CONTROL OFFICER

No response at the time of preparing the report

LANDSCAPE CONSULTANT

Considers that the main issues are:

- The effect of the proposal upon the landscape character, public views and residential amenity
- How the proposal would relate to existing wind development in the locality, the emerging pattern and implications on cumulative landscape impacts

The comments are set out as follows:-

The site lies 2.2km to the north of Caer Drewyn Hill fort – which is one of the most sensitive public viewpoints within the study area given that it is one of the closest publically accessible locations within the Clwydian and Dee Valley AONB to the site, has promoted public access and is an important cultural feature (Scheduled Ancient Monument) in its own right. This viewpoint has not been assessed by the applicant. I have used this view point primarily to assess the proposal.

Panoramic views northwards from the hill fort take in the 4 large wind turbines at Rhyd Ddu in the distance (southern edge of the TAN 8 Clocaenog Strategic Search Area) and the three 46m high wind turbines above Gwyddelwern 1.5km away within the middle distance. These two areas of wind development appear to have a linear arrangement following the north east - south west topographical grain of hill tops and shallow ridgelines which are a landscape characteristic of the area.

The established presence of wind development at Gwyddelwern reduces the sensitivity of views to change from the proposed additional single turbine.

The proposed turbine would 'read' as a continuation of the three existing turbines at Gwyddelwern and follow the alignment established by this development. In this respect the existing and proposed wind development would have a simple, balanced distribution following the topographical pattern of the landscape, and be seen extending away from Caer Drewyn Hill fort. This balance and relationship to landscape pattern follows good practice (Scottish Natural Heritage) in siting wind development and would also avoid stepping unacceptably closer to the AONB.

The proposed turbine would however be of a very different scale and form than the existing turbines at Gwyddelwern, being more than a third greater in height and having more than twice the rotor diameter (77m high and 50m diameter rotors of this proposal compared to 46m high and 19m diameter rotors at Gwyddelwern).

He considers that the proposal by virtue of its difference in scale and form characteristics would contrast and have a dissimilar, discordant effect when viewed alongside the turbines at Gwyddelwern, to such a degree that it would have an unacceptable cumulative impact.

Given that there is an evolving 'wind farm landscape' developing here, the siting and wind turbine characteristics of new development needs to be compatible with existing development which it is located near to, if integration and balance within the landscape is to be achieved.

The proposal represents a significant departure in the size of wind turbines being proposed beyond the edges of the Strategic Search Area and within close range of one of Denbighshire's most sensitive landscapes. One of the most sensitive viewpoints from the Clwydian and Dee Valley AONB has not been assessed by the applicant. He considers that the differences in scale and form characteristics proposed by this application in an area evolving towards a 'wind farm landscape' would result in an unacceptable cumulative impact, contrary to policy MEW10. He therefore recommends refusal.

RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY:

In objection

Representations in objection received from:-

Ramblers Cymru – North Wales Area, Michael Skuse (County Secretary Denbighshire)
Campaign for the protection of Rural Wales c/o T.J. and K Culhane, 22 Min yr Afon, Ruthin.

J. Broughton, Blaen Dinam, Llandrillo (O)

Summary of planning based representations in objection;

Landscape: countryside evaluated as "High" or "outstanding" implies that the landscape is not suitable for a massive vertical structure within 15 Km of the AONB therefore would affect views out of the protected area and will lead to an industrial landscape.

Proliferation: There are 6 turbines within 3.2kms of the proposed site and this was not the intention of TAN 8 to have so many outside the SSA.

Farm Diversification: The electricity production from a 500Kw turbine must far exceed the needs of the farm therefore must be considered as a commercial venture rather than as a means of reducing farm costs.

Principle

Estimate of output and efficiency is flawed/untrue that such turbines save CO² emissions overall.

Public health impacts/not in accord with DCC guidance.

EXPIRY DATE OF APPLICATION: 22/04/2013

REASONS FOR DELAY IN DECISION (where applicable):

- timing of receipt of representations

PLANNING ASSESSMENT:

1. THE PROPOSAL

1.1 Summary of proposals

- 1.1.1 The proposal is to erect a 77 metre high 500Kw 3 bladed wind turbine on land to the north east of Llety Farm Gwyddelwern.

- 1.1.2 The purpose of the scheme is to provide electricity directly to the local grid network. The supporting information indicates that the 500 Kw turbine should provide enough electricity to supply around 400 households. It is anticipated that the annual generation should equate to 1,314 MWh and this would be estimated to offset 565 tonnes of CO2 from conventional electricity generation.
- 1.1.3 The proposed turbine would have a Hub height of 50 metres with a blade diameter of 54 Metres. The development will also include a hardstanding area for erecting cranes, an on- site access track and a site access route from the main road access, an on-site sub-station and an on-site cabling linking the turbine to the grid connection.
- 1.1.4 The electricity will feed directly to the local electricity network
- 1.1.5 The construction of the turbine should take approximately 3 months. The area surrounding the turbine will revert to agricultural use on completion
- 1.1.6 Construction working hours will be 0700 to 2100 Monday to Saturday.
- 1.1.7 At the end of the turbine life (25 years) the turbine would be removed and the land returned to agriculture.
- 1.1.8 The application submission includes the following;
- Planning Application forms and certificates
 - Environmental Investigation Statement and appendices,
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Site Location Plan
 - Block Plan
 - Proposed Turbine elevations
 - Transformer Station Details
 - Swept Path Drawings

1.2 Description of site and surroundings

- 1.2.1 Land at Llety Farm is located approximately 1Km to the east of the village of Gwyddelwern and approximately 3.5Km to the north of Corwen.
- 1.2.2 The site comprises improved grassland with small coppices of trees to the north ,north east and north west of the site.
- 1.2.3 The site itself around Llety in the control of the applicant comprises approximately 29.6 acres (12ha) of land. The applicant's agent has indicated that there is further land tenanted by the applicant.

1.2.4 The site is located at an elevation of approximately 260 m AOD and the land and its surroundings are undulating in nature with small areas of woodland and traditional field boundaries.

1.2.5 There is a distance of at least 500 metres from the turbine to other residential properties.

1.2.6 The proposed turbine is close to the three existing operational turbines at Tyn y Celyn, Gwyddelwern with the four turbines at Wern Ddu being further away to the west (see the plan at the front of the report).

1.2.7 Visually in the landscape the present proposal will be significantly larger than the three 46 m turbines at Gwyddelwern, and will be of a scale and size approaching the 90 m height and c70 m rotor diameter of those at Wern Ddu.

1.3 Relevant planning constraints

1.4 Relevant planning history

1.4.1 A negative screening opinion was issued for one turbine on this site in August 2012 i.e. no Environmental Impact assessment was required with the application.

1.4.2 As of December 2012 a total of 92 wind turbines had been granted planning permission within the County

1.5 Developments/ changes since the original submission

None

1.6 Other relevant background information

1.6.1 Wind turbines of this scale are eligible for feed in tariffs (FIT's), which is a government backed financial incentive designed to encourage renewable electricity generation. FIT payments for wind turbines are guaranteed for 20 years.

2 DETAILS OF PLANNING HISTORY

2.1 The applicant submitted a request for a screening opinion in August 2012 for a 500Kw turbine at the land at Llety, Gwyddelwern. A negative screening opinion was issued on the 17th August 2012 and therefore a formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was not required to accompany the application in this instance.

3 RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

The main planning policies and guidance are considered to be:

3.1 DENBIGHSHIRE UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (adopted 3rd July 2002)

Policy STRAT 1 General

Policy STRAT 2 Energy

Policy STRAT5 Design

Policy STRAT 7 Environment

Policy GEN 3 Development Outside Development Boundaries

Policy GEN 6 Development Control Requirements

Policy ENV 1 Protection of the Natural Environment

Policy MEW 8 Renewable Energy
Policy MEW 10 Wind Power

3.2 GOVERNMENT POLICY GUIDANCE

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 5, 2012)
TAN 8 Planning for Renewable Energy (2005)
TAN 5 Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)
TAN 6 Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)
TAN 11 Noise (1997)

WELSH GOVERNMENT PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Planning Implications Of Renewable And Low Carbon Energy (Practice Guidance 2011)

3.3 Other material considerations

Denbighshire Landscape Strategy (2003) / LANDMAP

4 MAIN PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:

4.1 The main land use planning issues are considered to be:

- 4.1.1 Principle
- 4.1.2 Context for the development
- 4.1.3 Landscape and visual impact, including cumulative effects of / with other wind turbines
- 4.1.4 Ecology
- 4.1.5 Noise and residential amenity
- 4.1.6 Geology and Hydrology
- 4.1.7 Historic Environment
- 4.1.8 Aviation and Radar
- 4.1.9 Shadow flicker
- 4.1.10 Transport and Access

4.2 In relation to the main planning considerations

4.2.1 Principle

Welsh Government policy and guidance

The UK is subject to the EU Renewable Energy Directive, which includes a target of generating 15% of the UK's total energy demand from renewable energy sources by 2020. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) reaffirms UK and Welsh Government energy policy and recognises that wind energy generation remains the most commercially viable form of renewable energy in Wales. As illustrated in PPW, the total capacity for energy generation from onshore wind by 2020/2025 is estimated at 2GW.

For planning purposes, PPW defines the following renewable and low carbon energy scales, which is of relevance to the application before Committee:

This application therefore falls within the 'sub local authority' scale of development in PPW. Sub local-authority scale renewable energy projects are applicable in all parts of Wales subject to the assessment of site specific impacts.

TAN 8 supplements PPW and provides technical advice and guidance on renewable energy projects; TAN 8 introduced the principle of spatial planning for the delivery of energy policy and identifies 7 Strategic Search Areas (SSAs) where large scale onshore wind developments should be concentrated.

TAN 8 makes reference to smaller scale (less than 5MW) schemes in para. 2.11 - 2.14, however this puts the onus on local planning authorities to define what is meant by 'smaller scale' schemes. It also refers to the need for local planning authorities to consider the cumulative impact of smaller schemes in areas outside of the defined Strategic Search Areas and the need to strike the right balance between the desirability of renewable energy and landscape protection. Whilst that balance should not result in severe restriction on the development of wind power capacity, TAN8 acknowledges there is a case for avoiding a situation where wind turbines spread across the whole of a county.

Chapter 15 of the Welsh Government Practice Guidance: Planning Implications of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (2011) defines cumulative effects as '*where more than one renewable energy scheme is proposed by one or more developers or where a single scheme is proposed in an area with existing schemes, the combined effect of all schemes taken together is known as the 'cumulative effect'*' (para. 15.1). The Guidance mentions that potential cumulative effects of renewable energy developments could impact on landscape and visual amenity; viability of bird populations; ecological features; and noise levels.

Given the increasing number of consented wind turbine development both within the Denbighshire and in neighbouring counties, it is imperative that cumulative effects are fully considered when planning applications are assessed.

Denbighshire Unitary Development Plan Policies

The strategic policies contained in the UDP promote a sustainable approach to development, with STRAT 2 supporting the principle of generating energy from renewable sources so far as they are compatible with the Plan's policies.

UDP Policy MEW 8 supports renewable energy development in principle, provided that proposals do not give rise to unacceptable effects on the environmental quality of the locality. Policy MEW 10 is a criteria based policy which specifically deals with wind power developments. It states that wind turbine development will be permitted subject to compliance with the policy criteria.

Policy GEN 6 refers to general development control requirements which applies to all development proposals and ENV 1 relates to the protection of the natural environment. It states "*Development must be designed to maintain or enhance the landscape character of the countryside and biodiversity of the natural environment*".

Taken together, the policies contained in the UDP provide support in principle for renewable energy development subject to the detailed assessment of localised impacts, taking into account the cumulative impact and spread of wind turbine development of varying scales throughout the County.

For Members information the developer indicates that this proposed turbine would supply the equivalent of approximately 400 households with an annual generation of approximately 1,314 MWh. It is estimated that this will offset 565 tonnes of Co2 per annum.

4.2.2 Context for the development

The application has been put forward on the basis of promoting a form of

farm diversification in so far as it will help subsidise the farm enterprise. TAN 6 supports national planning policy on sustainable rural communities and section 3.7 focuses on farm diversification. It states that "*When considering applications for farm diversification projects, planning authorities should consider the nature and scale of the activity*". It goes on to state that "*many economic activities can be sustainably located on farms. Small on-farm operations such as..... renewable energy, are likely to be appropriate uses*". Therefore the principle of installing a wind turbine may be a valid farm diversification activity, subject to consideration of the nature and scale of the activity.

The electricity will be fed directly into the local electricity network and none of the electricity will be used directly on the farm. The submission indicates that the farmer will generate an income from the electricity generation which he will be able to invest in the farm. The applicant's agent has supported the farm diversification element of the scheme by indicating that the present owner has operated the farm for over 40 years, the farm comprises 80 acres of primarily grazing land and has a current stock of 40 cattle and 50 sheep. The farm employs 1 full and 5 part time contractors. It also indicates the revenue received will enable the farm to survive in the future.

Whilst noting the above submissions by the agent, having regard to the basis of the application it is suggested that the scheme has to be assessed purely on its own merits as a stand alone commercial venture designed and operated to produce electricity for the grid with the farmer benefitting only by an income from the scheme.

4.2.3 Landscape and visual impact, including cumulative implications

Detailed Unitary Development Plan policies relevant to the visual and landscape impact associated with wind energy development are policy GEN 6 and policy MEW 10. GEN 6 requires consideration of ii) *the effect of development on the form and character of surrounding landscape*; iii) *the effect on prominent views into, out of, or across any area of open countryside*; iv) *incorporating existing landscape features and taking account of site contours and changes in levels and avoids prominent skylines*; and v) *the impact on residential amenity*.

MEW 10 (iii) *requires that proposals do not unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the landscape*, (viii) *requires that proposals would not lead to an unacceptable cumulative visual impact in an area where zones of visibility (with other wind turbine development) overlap, and that particular attention will be paid to the potential proliferation of such developments in any one area*; and vii) *the proposal does not cause unacceptable harm to the enjoyment of the landscape*.

PPW and TAN 8 provide the strategic policy framework for assessing wind energy development and contain some specific guidance on the detailed consideration of landscape and visual impact to assist local planning authorities determine planning applications. TAN8 Annex D states that within SSAs, the implicit objective is to accept landscape change i.e. a significant change in landscape character from wind turbine development. However, given the increasing number of consented wind turbine developments within and on the periphery of the SSA, it is imperative that cumulative effects are fully considered when planning applications are assessed.

The Denbighshire Landscape Strategy is based on the LANDMAP study, which provides useful background material on the essential characteristics and quality of the landscape of the County. The application site lies on the

western edge of the "Denbigh and Derwen Hills" Character Area where the Visual and Sensory evaluation is identified as 'High'.

The Landscape Consultant has assessed the proposal and has concluded that:

The proposed turbine would 'read' as a continuation of the three existing turbines at Gwyddelwern and follow the alignment established by this development. In this respect the existing and proposed wind development would have a simple, balanced distribution following the topographical pattern of the landscape, and be seen extending away from Caer Drewyn Hill fort. This balance and relationship to landscape pattern follows good practice (Scottish Natural Heritage) in siting wind development and would also avoid stepping unacceptably closer to the AONB.

The proposed turbine would however be of a very different scale and form than the existing turbines at Gwyddelwern, being more than a third greater in height and having more than twice the rotor diameter (77m high and 50m diameter rotors of this proposal compared to 46m high and 19m diameter rotors at Gwyddelwern).

He considers that the proposal by virtue of its difference in scale and form characteristics would contrast and have a dissimilar, discordant affect when viewed alongside the turbines at Gwyddelwern, to such a degree that it would have an unacceptable cumulative impact.

Given that there is an evolving 'wind farm landscape' developing here, the siting and wind turbine characteristics of new development needs to be compatible with existing development which it is located near to, if integration and balance within the landscape is to be achieved.

The proposal therefore represents a significant departure in the size of wind turbines being proposed beyond the edges of the Strategic Search Area and within close range of one of Denbighshire's most sensitive landscapes. One of the most sensitive viewpoints from the Clwydian and Dee Valley AONB has not been assessed by the applicant. He considers that the differences in scale and form characteristics proposed by this application in an area evolving towards a 'wind farm landscape' would result in an unacceptable cumulative impact, contrary to policy MEW10.

The Officer view is that the concerns raised by the Landscape consultant are sound and the change in scale of this proposal compared to the three existing 50 Kw turbines at Tyn y Celyn, Gwyddelwern is such that it would have an adverse effect on the landscape in and around Gwyddelwern.

4.2.4 Ecology

The general requirement to consider the impact of development on biodiversity interests is set out in PPW Chapter 5, TAN 5, UDP policies STRAT 1, STRAT 7, GEN 6, ENV 5 and ENV 6 and SPG 18. Specific to wind turbine development is policy MEW 10 criterion x) which states that wind turbine development will be permitted provided that '*There is no unacceptable effect on nature conservation*'.

The applicants carried out an ecological assessment between September 2011 and February 2013. A walkover survey took place in September 2011 and an updated survey was undertaken in February 2013. The study consists mainly of improved grasslands in use as grazing pasture. There is a marshy grassland to the south east of the application site and there are well

-maintained hedgerows which form the field boundaries.

The ecological assessment did not identify any ecological interests which would prevent the development progressing. The applicants have however indicated that any vegetation clearance required to facilitate the development should take place outside the bird nesting season.

The Officer opinion is that there are no ecological concerns raised by the proposal.

4.2.5 Noise and residential amenity

UDP Policies GEN 6 and MEW 10 seek to ensure development does not have an adverse impact on residential amenity.

TAN 11 relates to the assessment of noise in relation to development proposals. The general guidance is that local planning authorities should ensure noise-generating development does not cause an unacceptable degree of disturbance, but in some instances it may be acceptable to allow noise-generating activities near to noise sensitive receptors.

ETSU-R-97 is the industry standard for the Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms. For single turbines ETSU-R-97 proposes that a simplified noise condition may be suitable and recommends that noise is limited to 35dB_{LA90,10min} (A) up to wind speed of 10m/s at 10m height and considers that this condition alone would offer sufficient protection of amenity, and background noise surveys would be unnecessary.

The applicant has identified three properties one of which is Llety which are the closest to the site and could be affected by noise emanating from the proposed turbine.

The applicants have identified the likely noise generators caused by this development namely the construction period, the operation of the turbine and the decommissioning. The applicants has recognised that there will be a need for different noise limits at night than during the daytime.

The applicants have undertaken noise monitoring surveys in line with ETSU-R-97 guidance, and an assessment of the implication of the operational turbine in that environment.

The assessment indicates that the predicted turbine noise levels will fall below the daytime and night-time criteria at all the three receptors. The study also indicates that even the cumulative noise effects of this proposed turbine with existing turbines locally will not be above the ETSU-R-97 criteria.

The response of the Council's Pollution Control Officer are awaited. Comments on the cumulative impact of this proposal with the three existing 50kw turbines at Tyn Y Celyn will be important to ensure that there would be no detrimental impact to properties from the cumulative noise from 4 turbines. Comments will be reported to Committee on the lat representations sheet.

4.2.6 Geology /Hydrology

UDP Policy ENP 1 seeks to protect the environment and the amenity of nearby properties in terms of i) pollution of sea, surface water or ground water.

The applicants have undertaken an assessment of the baseline data and also undertaken a walkover of the site and its surroundings. The evidence

indicates that there are no issues in relation to geology or hydrology which should prevent the development proceeding.

No response has been received from the County's Hydrologist, but it would be appropriate in the event of permission being granted to include a standard condition to ensure mitigation measures are implemented in the event of any impacts of private water supplies etc. as a result of the development.

4.2.7 Historic environment

A desk top study appraisal of the cultural assets in close proximity to the site was undertaken by an on-line search of the Historic Environment Record (HER) of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust records. The assessment concludes that there will be no significant impacts on designated cultural heritage receptors as a result of the proposed turbine. It is considered that this assessment is reasonable and is a fair assessment of the position in respect of this single turbine.

4.2.8 Shadow flicker and safety

Consideration of impacts such as shadow flicker are required by Policy MEW 10.

The incidence of shadow flicker depends on a range of climatic factors and tends to only affect properties within 10 rotor diameters of a turbine.

The applicants have undertaken a quantitative assessment of shadow flicker using computerised software and has referred to current advice on the subject. The blade diameter of the turbine is 54 metres therefore the potential impacts would only be experienced up to 540 metres from the turbine location and only then within 130 degrees either side of north. There are only 2 properties within this radius, namely Ogor Farm house and the host property Llety farm house

The shadow flicker assessment indicates that Ogor Farm house will not experience shadow flicker whilst Llety would have the potential to experience a total of 22.5 days of shadow flicker per year spread over the period from the end of May to mid-July. The report indicates that the property is not orientated towards the site and it has the benefit of additional screening and its location adjacent to existing farm sheds.

The assessment therefore indicates that shadow flicker would not be significant and is mitigated by existing and proposed hedgerow and tree screening.

Subject to the inclusion of detailed planning conditions to address shadow flicker, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposal would comply with policy GEN 6 criterion v) and MEW 10 criterion iv) and v).

4.2.9 Aviation And Radar

It is not anticipated that the proposed turbine will have any adverse effects on Aviation or Radar interests in the area.

4.2.10 Construction, transport and highways.

UDP policy GEN 6 vii), TRA 6 and MEW10 vi) seek to ensure new development proposals do not unacceptably affect the safe and free flow of traffic, and the capacity of the surrounding road networks can satisfactorily serve the development. Policy TRA 10 seeks to ensure development proposals do not have a detrimental impact on public rights of way.

The applicant has undertaken a route assessment and provided a Route Assessment and Traffic Management Plan for the construction stage operations

The plan has identified a designated route along the A5 then the A494 to Gwyddelwern and then along the unregistered road that leads to the site. Delivery of the turbine will entail 9 abnormal loads in total.

The applicants have indicated that a routing agreement and a traffic management plan would be designed and agreed with the relevant authorities to address the potential impacts of the proposed development.

Officers consider that there will be some impact on the highway network mainly during construction period but this can be minimised by adequate controls being put in place.

5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.2 The report sets out a number of considerations Officers suggest are relevant to the determination of this application. As with all wind energy developments, inevitably there will be factors that weigh against and in favour of the grant of planning permission.
- 5.3 As there are already operational wind turbines at Tyn y Celyn in close proximity to the application site it has been easier for the landscape consultant to see the impact that turbines have had on the landscape, and to assess cumulative impact the four turbines would have on the landscape and on the amenity residents of Gwyddelwern could reasonably expect to enjoy.
- 5.4 Officers retain concerns over the sporadic spread of 'one-off' medium / sub-local authority scale wind turbine developments outside of the Strategic Search Area, which will have strategic implications upon the ability to conserve the integrity of wider Denbighshire landscapes in the longer term. Officers continue to stress the need for Members to take a strategic approach to the determination of one-off applications such as this, especially considering the volume of applications currently lodged with the Council, which it is not anticipated will abate.
- 5.5 In advance of any interim planning guidance coming into force specific to this type of turbine proposal, it is important to stress the need for the Council to continue to assess the landscape and visual impact of wind turbine development in combination with operational, consented and in-planning wind turbine proposals to ensure cumulative effects are fully addressed and to prevent the wind farm landscape encroaching beyond the boundaries of the Strategic Search Area. In this respect the Council's landscape consultant has recommended that the application be refused.
- 5.6 The application site is within a high quality landscape of County value; taking into account the views of the Council's Landscape Consultant, Officers' assessment has identified that a turbine of the scale proposed in this location would conflict with the existing turbines at Tyn y Celyn in a way which would give rise to adverse landscape and visual impacts, giving rise to cumulative landscape impacts to which is contrary to UDP Policies GEN6 and MEW10.
- 5.7 Members will recall considering the same basic issues in making decisions at planning committee on similar wind turbine applications including the adjacent operational turbines at Tyn y Celyn. Whilst Officers in that instance suggested there should be little weight attached to the farm diversification benefits of these projects, Members were of the view in that location a 50kW/55kW wind turbines would be of a suitable scale, size and capacity to qualify as a form of farm diversification and used this as a basis of support for the farming community in general. The application for consideration in this instance is for a much larger structure with a power generation of 500Kw, it will supply electricity direct to the grid and is intended purely to provide

an income for the farmer. Officers respectfully suggest this application should not be assessed on the basis of being a farm diversification project.

5.8 In the absence of a clear policy framework which would enable the Council to take a more strategic approach to the determination of medium/sub-local authority scale wind turbine proposals outside of the SSA, Officers continue to recommend a precautionary approach is taken where adverse landscape and visual impacts have been identified, to ensure the integrity of high quality local landscapes is not eroded by incremental wind turbine development and to ensure a satisfactory level of amenity is maintained for the residents of the area. Whilst Members considered the Tyn Y Celyn turbines to be acceptable as farm diversification projects and to support green energy, and that this should outweigh the concerns in respect of the impact on the landscape, in this instance that argument is considered to be much weaker and should not outweigh the landscape and visual impact concerns raised.

Determination of this application and all others at this Committee has to be made on the basis of the policies of the current adopted Development Plan, which is the Denbighshire Unitary Plan. Given the progress on the Local Development Plan and the possibility of its adoption in the near future, consideration has been given to whether any significant planning policy implications are likely to arise from acceptance of the Officer recommendation on the application. In this case, it is suggested that the recommendation would not be inconsistent with the basic approach in the proposed policies of the Local Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE for the following reason:-

1. It is the opinion of the Local Planning Authority that the erection of a 77 metre high 500kW turbine in this part of a high quality landscape of County importance would have unacceptable adverse cumulative landscape and visual impacts when viewed with the much smaller operational turbines at Tyn y Celyn Gwyddelwern, to the detriment of the level of amenity the residents living in and around the village of Gwyddelwern could reasonably expect to enjoy, and would further contribute to wind turbine development appearing to spread in this part of the County's attractive open countryside, giving rise to additional cumulative landscape impacts. The farm diversification merits of the proposal and the potential benefits of increased renewable energy generation are not considered to outweigh national and local policy objectives which seek to protect the local landscape and visual amenity. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to Denbighshire Unitary Development Plan policies STRAT 7, GEN 6, ENV1, MEW 8 and MEW 10, and the principles set out in TAN 8 (para. 2.11 - 2.13) and PPW Edition 4 (para.12.10).

NOTES TO APPLICANT:

None