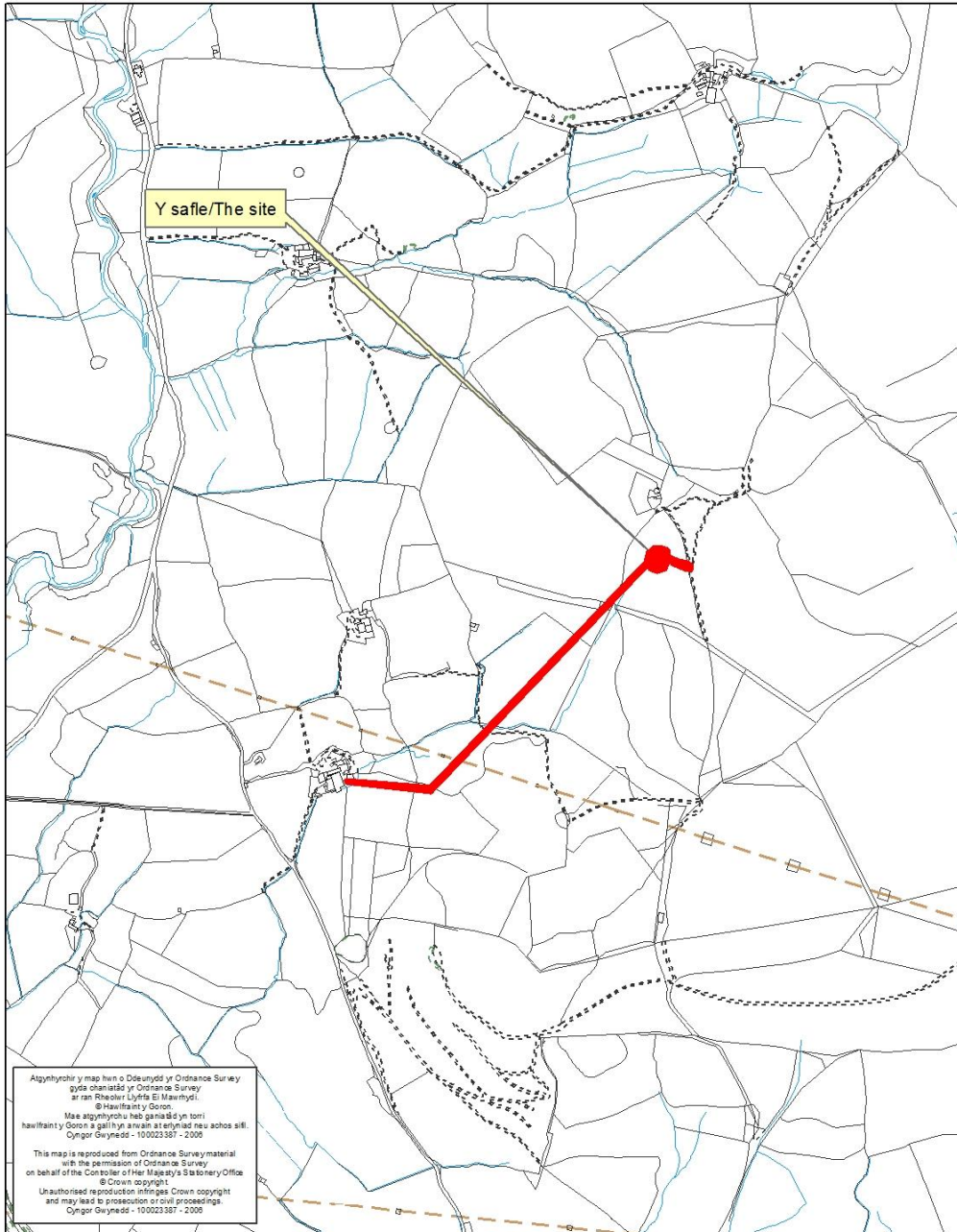


Number: 9



Rhif y Cais / Application Number : C15-0517-04.LL

Cynllun lleoliad ar gyfer adnabod y safle yn unig. Dim i raddfa.
Location Plan for identification purposes only. Not to scale.



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Application Number: C15/0517/04/LL
Date Registered: 01/06/2015
Application Type: Full - Planning
Community: Llandderfel (inc. Llanfor)
Ward: Llandderfel

Proposal: INSTALLATION OF A WIND TURBINE MEASURING 30.5M TO THE HUB (48.01M TO TIP THE TIP OF THE BLADES) WITH A CONTROL BOX AND ASSOCIATED WORKS (RESUBMISSION OF APPLICATION PREVIOUSLY WITHDRAWN)
Location: COED Y FOEL UCHAF, FRON-GOCH, BALA, GWYNEDD, LL23 7NR

Summary of the Recommendation: TO REFUSE

1. Description

- 1.1 The application involves erecting one three-blade 55kw wind turbine on a 30.5 metre mast, with blades measuring 17.51 metre and with a total height of 48.01 metres to the tip of the blades. The application is a resubmission of an application which was withdrawn in April 2015; the turbine site has been changed a little compared to the previously submitted application.
- 1.2 The application site is located on elevated land near the A4212 road which runs as the main link between the town of Bala and the village of Trawsfynydd. The site is located within 60m to a public footpath and within 800m of the residential property of Wern Fawr, which is owned by someone other than the applicant. The second nearest house is approximately 900m away, with dispersed housing situated further away. The boundary of Snowdonia National Park is located approximately 750 metres to the west. Also to the west is the village of Fron-goch which is located approximately 1.5km away, and the site is approximately 3.5km north of the town of Bala. The Bala and Tegid Shores Landscape of Special Historic Interest is located approximately 2km south of the site, and a vast area of Open Access Land designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2005) is located within 300 metres to the east of the site.
- 1.3 The land on which it is intended to locate the turbine is improved agricultural grazing land; electricity pylons are located approximately 450 metres to the south of the site. There are panoramic views of Berwyn, Aran Benllyn, Aran Fawddwy, Arenig Fawr, Arenig Fach, Carnedd y Filiast and Foel Goch mountains around this site.
- 1.4 The proposal can be split into the following elements:-
 - Installing the turbine on a concrete base which measures 9.2m x 9.2m and approximately 126m³ of concrete will be need to create a firm base.
 - Construction work on the site will include installing security fences and temporary entrances together with various engineering work. It is estimated that the construction work will take approximately 2 months to complete.
 - External equipment will include a building measuring 2.2m x 1m x 2m for control equipment and it will be located at the bottom of the turbine itself.
 - The turbine will be linked to the national grid near the applicant's farmhouse namely Fferm Coed y Foel Uchaf.
 - Create and improve access track off an existing agricultural and forestry track in order to allow access to the turbine site.

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- 1.5 The details submitted with the application refer to the fact that it is desired to install a turbine by “Endurance Wind Power” model no “Endurance E-3120” on the site. The applicant states that this particular turbine was chosen based on its strength to withstand inclement weather as well its ability to use the wind effectively whilst reducing noise pollution. The objective of this proposal is to support the viability of the farm business, provide electricity supply for the use of the farm, reduce the farm's carbon footprint, and promote the production of renewable energy.
- 1.6 A Design and Access Statement was submitted with the application in accordance with the requirements of Technical Advice Note 12 Design (2014) which refers to the implications of the turbine based on noise, economic impact, ecology, heritage, landscape and visual appraisal and policy assessment.
- 1.7 The proposal has been screened for an Environmental Impact Assessment under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales and England) Regulations 1999 (as amended). Having assessed the likely impact of the proposal for a 48.01 metre turbine to the tip of the blade using the relevant criteria in columns 2 and 3, together with the guidelines of the Welsh Office Circular 11/99, it is considered that the impact of the development on the environment is insufficient to justify submitting an environmental statement with the application.
- 1.8 The application is submitted to Committee at the local member’s request.

2. Relevant Policies

- 2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales emphasise that planning decisions should be in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Unitary Development Plan.

2.2 Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan 2009 (GUDP):

STRATEGIC POLICY 1 – TAKING A PRECAUTIONARY APPROACH

STRATEGIC POLICY 2 – THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

STRATEGIC POLICY 3 – BUILT AND HISTORIC HERITAGE

STRATEGIC POLICY 4 – DESIGN STANDARDS

STRATEGIC POLICY 9 – ENERGY

STRATEGIC POLICY 17 – TOURISM

POLICY A1 – ENVIRONMENTAL OR OTHER IMPACT ASSESSMENTS - Ensure that sufficient information is provided with the planning application regarding any significant likely environmental impact or other impacts in the form of an environmental impact assessment or other impact assessments.

POLICY A2 – PROTECTING THE SOCIAL, LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL FABRIC OF COMMUNITIES

Safeguard the social, linguistic or cultural cohesion of communities against significant harm due to the size, scale or location of proposals.

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POLICY A3 – PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

Refuse proposals if there is any possibility of serious or irreversible damage to the environment or the community unless it can be shown conclusively at the end of an appropriate impact assessment that the impact can be negated or mitigated.

POLICY B3 – DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING THE SETTING OF LISTED BUILDINGS

Ensure that proposals have no effect on the setting of Listed Buildings and that they conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the special character of the Listed Building and the local environment.

POLICY B7 SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE Refuse proposals which will damage or destroy archaeological remains of national importance (whether scheduled or not) or their setting. It also refuses any development that will affect other archaeological remains unless the need for the development overrides the significance of the archaeological remains.

POLICY B14 – PROTECTING THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK

Protect the landscape character of Snowdonia National Park by refusing proposals that are visually obtrusive and/or are located insensitively and unsympathetically within the landscape.

POLICY B12 – PROTECTING HISTORIC LANDSCAPES, PARKS AND GARDENS

Protect landscapes, parks and gardens of special historic interest in Wales from developments that would cause significant harm to their character, appearance or setting.

POLICY B20 SPECIES AND THEIR HABITATS THAT ARE INTERNATIONALLY AND NATIONALLY IMPORTANT Proposals that are likely to cause unacceptable disturbance or harm to protected species and their habitats will be refused unless they can conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features of the site.

POLICY B23 – AMENITIES - Safeguard the amenities of the local neighbourhood by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the recognised features and amenities of the local area.

POLICY B33 – DEVELOPMENT THAT CREATES POLLUTION OR NUISANCE - Protect public amenities, health and the natural or built environment from high levels of pollution.

POLICY C26 – WIND TURBINE DEVELOPMENTS – Proposals for the development of wind turbines on sites within the Llŷn AONB will be refused. In other locations, only proposals for small-scale or community or domestic based wind turbine developments will be approved provided that a series of criteria can be met which relate to the effect on the visual quality of the landscape and environmental and social factors.

POLICY CH22 – CYCLING NETWORK, PATHS AND RIGHTS OF WAY

All parts of the cycling network, footpaths and rights of way will be protected by encouraging proposals which will incorporate them satisfactorily within the development and by prohibiting plans to extend the cycling network, footpaths or rights of way. Should this not be possible, appropriate provision will have to be made to divert the route or to provide a new and acceptable route.

POLICY CH33 – SAFETY ON ROADS AND STREETS

Development proposals will be approved provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to the vehicular entrance, the standard of the existing roads network and traffic calming measures.

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Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): Onshore Wind Energy (2014).

SPG: Landscape Character (2009).

Gwynedd Design Guidelines (2003).

The Anglesey, Gwynedd and Snowdonia Sensitivity and Capacity Study (March, 2014) document by Gillespies on behalf of the Isle of Anglesey County Council, Gwynedd Council and the National Park.

2.3 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7, July 2014)

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5 - Nature Conservation and Planning (2009).

TAN 8 – Renewable Energy (2005).

TAN 11 Noise (1997).

TAN 12 Design (2014).

Landmap Information Advice Note, Natural Resources Wales, Number 3 – *Landscape and Visual Assessment of Onshore Wind Turbines* (2010).

Circular 60/96 Planning and the Historic Environment.

3. Relevant Planning History:

- 3.1 C15/0057/36/LL – Erect a 30.5m wind turbine to the hub (48.01m to the tip of the blades), control box and associated works – Application withdrawn by the applicant following concerns regarding the visual impact of the development by the Planning Service Officers – 12 April 2015.

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: No response.

Transportation Unit: Whilst there is no objection to the wind turbine as there will be no impact on the local highway network once it has been erected, there is concern about the impact the preparatory and construction work could have on the local network. There is a need for further information in the construction traffic management plan regarding which roads it is intended to use as access for machinery, equipment and material delivered to the site.

Natural Resources Wales: No objection but propose observations on matters involving the visual impact and impact on the landscape in general, ecology and pollution.

MoD No objection.

Crown Castle UK: No response.

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British Gas:	No response.
Welsh Water:	No response.
NATS Safeguarding:	No response.
Arquiva (BBC & ITV):	No response.
Conwy County Borough Council:	No response.
Public Protection Unit:	No response.
Powersystems:	No response.
Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service:	No response.
CADW:	Observations regarding the detrimental visual impact of the proposal on views of listed ancient monuments and the Bala and Tegid Shores Landscape of Special Historic Interest.
Snowdonia National Park:	<p>SNPA still objects to the application on grounds of detrimental visual impact on the setting of the National Park and the special landscape of the area.</p> <p>Both Zone of Theoretical Visibility maps show that the proposed site is visible from extensive parts of Snowdonia, with the majority of the areas coloured green within the Park boundaries.</p> <p>The turbine has the potential to be seen against the mountains and hills of Snowdonia from locations to the east of the site. I note that new photomontages have been submitted but, unfortunately, none of the photomontages is of the vast access areas and public footpaths (e.g. GC63 177) that are adjacent to the turbine which will be used by walkers which are considered to have a high level of sensitivity to such developments.</p> <p>I consider my previous observations regarding the photomontages and the camera selection are still valid.</p>
Senior Conservation Officer:	No response.
Biodiversity Unit:	Recommend amendments to the location of the track to access the site and the route for the connection to the national grid, and a further survey of habitats on the site. Also, the need to plant a new coppice to replace the trees lost as a result of the work of restoring the track through the existing coppice. Need to include relevant conditions in relation to birds should the application be approved.

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Trees Officer: According to the plans submitted (PL1 1:20,000) the electricity cable runs towards the farm through, or possibly adjacent to an area of mature trees. The plan submitted is not detailed enough to show the exact route of the electricity line in this area in relation to the trees. There is potential for the roots of the trees to be destroyed as the cable is buried. A more detailed plan of this area will be required before being able to make a decision on this application. If the cable is near trees a method statement will have to be submitted explaining how detrimental impact to the roots of the trees will be avoided or mitigated.

Countryside and Access: Need to ensure that the developer adheres to the minimum separation distance noted in Table 5 of Chapter 9.1 of the Coed y Foel Landscape Character Assessment submitted with the application in order to comply with Welsh Government guidance in Technical Advice Note 8. Should there be any impact on Public Footpath No. 177, the developers will be asked to contact the Council's Public Rights of Way Unit three months prior to commencing the construction work in order to ensure that footpath users are protected.

Public Consultation: A notice was placed in the press and on the site and nearby residents were informed. The advertising period has ended. An objection to the application was received on the grounds of:

- Views within a vast area within the Snowdonia National Park
- The setting of mountains and hills of the National Park seen from locations to the east of the site.
- Impact on the enjoyment of users of public land and public footpaths of the landscape of the National Park.
- Photomontages not to scale and are not an accurate reflection of the effect of the turbine

5. Material Planning Considerations:

The principle of the development

5.1 TAN 8 considers the contribution of wind turbines to generating electricity to be a national requirement and is one of the principal aims of the Assembly's energy policy. The national policy reflects Welsh Government's central principle of sustainable development, and the role that renewable energy could play, particularly wind energy, in order to reduce climate change, with the aim of achieving a 40% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2020. Clearly a turbine development such as this would make a small contribution towards the targets in relation to generating renewable energy which have been determined nationally.

5.2 No Strategic Search Areas have been identified within the boundaries of Gwynedd because of the proximity to national designated areas, such as the Snowdonia

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National Park and the Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB), therefore any development must be assessed on the grounds of local development plan policies which restrict plans to small scale, community or domestic based wind turbines.

- 5.3 TAN 8 also notes that there is a need to ensure that developments do not affect AONBs or National Parks. However, it also notes that small-scale or domestic developments could be acceptable dependent on all other material planning considerations.
- 5.4 The Local Planning Authority is supportive in principle of plans to generate renewable energy through wind energy methods. As noted above, a number of policies within the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan (GUDP) are relevant when determining the application. The main policy to consider when assessing the principle of the development is policy C26 of the GUDP. The policy presumes against wind turbines within the AONB, and at other locations it states that only small-scale or community or domestic based wind turbine developments will be approved, provided the criteria can be complied with.
- 5.5 The turbine which is the subject of this application is a 55kw turbine and measures 30.5m to the nacelle, with a total height of 48.01m to the tip of the blade. Policy C26 identifies small-scale and community based wind turbine developments as developments that have a generating capacity of less than 5MW. Taking this into consideration, in principle it is considered that the turbine, in terms of the rate of energy it would generate, equates to a small-scale turbine, which in principle is a type of development that may be acceptable under policy C26. However, the application must be assessed carefully against points one to seven of the criteria in Policy C26, landscape, conservation and amenity policies, and national policies.
- 5.6 A Design and Access Statement and photomontages were received as part of the application. There is no assessment of significant impact over a vast area, the scale of the impact or of the quality of the landscape. Photomontages can be very useful when assessing the visual impact of wind turbines, but the information must be dealt with in a precautionary manner, and appropriate weight given to it, bearing in mind that this is ultimately information to support the application. The accuracy and method used to create the images must be taken into consideration, together with the fact that photomontages cannot portray the impact of a moving structure. Also, the prominence of the turbine depends significantly on light and atmospheric circumstances. The Snowdonia National Park Authority's response to the consultation notes that the standard of the photomontages and the location from where they have been taken are also inadequate.
- 5.7 When assessing wind turbine applications, the cumulative impact of wind turbines in this area must be looked at carefully and ensure that turbines are not permitted in inappropriate/sensitive locations, and that there is no unacceptable cumulative impact. Though applications for wind turbines have been approved within the ward of Llandderfel recently, these turbines do not affect views of the landscape in the same area as this site. At present, it is not considered that the cumulative impact is a cause for concern in this area yet, but this does not override other aspects of the development which are unacceptable, nor is it a reason to approve the application.

Visual Amenities:

- 5.8 The application site is in an area of mountainous pasture above a small glacial hanging valley. LANDMAP (2010) information gives high value to the landscape in

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terms of visual and sensory consideration and in terms of habitats, but with a high value in terms of the historical landscape and the cultural landscape and medium in terms of geology. The Anglesey, Gwynedd and Snowdonia National Park Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (March, 2014) is work produced by Gillespies on behalf of these authorities and it assesses the sensitivity and capacity of the landscape to cope with specific types of development (including wind turbines). This Assessment confirms that the applications site is within the G12 Area "Llandderfel" and describes the landscape of the area in general as one of medium scale, which has a rural and undulating landscape, which has medium to high sensitivity to wind energy developments. Furthermore, it states that the landscape is influenced in parts by modern developments such as electricity cables. The assessment states that there is no capacity for further wind energy developments within this area (with the exception of small-scale and domestic wind developments, located on sites which have a good relationship with a settlement / buildings which already exist).

- 5.9 The proposed structure would be a high, manmade structure and would stand isolated on high land. The site is visible from various perspectives in the neighbouring area and beyond, the turbine would be particularly visible whilst travelling along the A4212 down the valley to the direction of the site from the west. This would be due to its elevated and prominent location on the skyline from near and distant views in and out of the National Park. It is therefore considered that the impact on the visual amenities of the area would be substantial. Although electricity pylons are located to the south of the site, it is not considered that this would alleviate the detrimental impact of the development on the rural character and landscape of the area as it is a substantial, moving structure that stands isolated. Although the photomontages of the viewpoints provided on the application are not comprehensive, it is quite obvious that the turbine would be very visible from viewpoints 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 provided by the applicant.
- 5.10 As already noted, the application site is close to the boundary of Snowdonia National Park. It is clear that the landscape in this area is very similar to the landscape seen within the boundaries of the National Park, and consequently consideration must be given to this landscape as a significant part of the setting of the National Park. Policy B14 of the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan is also a consideration for this aspect of the application. The policy presumes against developments that cause significant visual intrusion and are sited insensitively and unsympathetically within the landscape. The objective of policy B14 is to ensure that the land around the Park is protected from unsuitable or unsightly developments. It is crucial to ensure that no new developments impact on the visual amenities and landscape of the National Park. Any development permitted near the Park's boundary must complement the landscape and must be designed and located so that it is beneficial to the area's appearance.
- 5.11 The objection received from Snowdonia National Park and the other objection received note that there would be an effect on the views within the boundaries of the Park. The objections received refer to the effect of the development on the enjoyment of the users of the National Park, and due to the prominence of the development within the landscape and from a vast area within the Park it is considered that it would significantly affect the enjoyment of users of the National Park. There are clear views of the site from a vast area of the Park and it is considered that the proposal would therefore conflict with policy B14 of the GUDP, as well as criteria 1 and 3 of policy C26 of the GUDP which withstand small-scale wind energy developments if they have a significant detrimental effect on the setting of the Park and the landscape in general.

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- 5.12 The LANDMAP assessment recognises the area's attractive scenery, which is generally unspoilt by detracting features, and has a strong sense of place. Because of the close relationship with the Park, it is considered that a moving structure of this scale at this location would impact significantly and would intrude on the visual amenities and landscape of the National Park.
- 5.13 Planning Policy Wales also states that Local Planning Authorities have a duty to have regard to National Park purposes – this also applies to activities affecting these areas, whether those activities lie within or outside the designated areas. As already noted, although the site is not within the national park, the shape, form and character of the landscape are visually connected to it. A turbine at this proposed location would impact on the landscape, draw attention away from the Park, and would impact on the designation of internationally important land.
- 5.14 There would be clear, unobstructed views of the turbine in some parts along the public rights of way and it would be visible in open areas with the blades appearing oppressive and incongruous within the wider landscape. In his Landscape and Visual Assessment, the applicant recognises that the turbine would be clearly visible from public footpath no. 177 – Llandderfel which is within approximately 60 metres of the site, and that there would be high sensitivity to panoramic views of this footpath. Therefore, it is believed that the turbine would not only disturb the quiet and peaceful character of the local landscape but that it would also have a detrimental effect on the wider landscape and terrain for users of the abovementioned public footpath and the network of other public footpath which exists locally. It is therefore considered that the proposal is contrary to policy B14 and criteria 1 and 3 of Policy C26.
- 5.15 In addition to the turbine, the proposal also includes details to resurface an existing access track, and create part of a new access track to the turbine site using slate waste. The design and access statement also states that it is intended to install a control cabinet at the foot of the turbine. These elements of the application are to be expected with a wind turbine development, and planning conditions can be stipulated in order to reduce any visual impact. It is considered that this element of the application satisfies criterion 2 of policy C26, of the GUDP.

Biodiversity Matters:

- 5.16 As already noted, the land on which the turbine is intended to be located is improved grazing land, the land has not been designated as having any special biodiversity value, and no objection has been received from the Council's Biodiversity Unit or from Natural Resources Wales. In development terms, installing the turbine is a quick process, and the footprint of the development is fairly small. The Council's Biodiversity Unit and Trees Officer have asked for steps to be taken to compensate for the effect of the development; the applicant has agreed to these as well as changes to the site of the access track and the course of the connection to the national grid in order to alleviate any potential impact from the development on biodiversity. In addition, the Biodiversity Unit proposes relevant conditions regarding nesting birds and a process of recording any harm to birds. It is therefore considered, subject to complying with biodiversity needs that the proposal would not conflict with the content of policy B20 of the GUDP nor the relevant paragraphs of TAN 5 – Nature Conservation and Planning (2009).

General and residential amenities

- 5.17 Policy B23 of the GUDP emphasise the need to not only protect visual amenities but also the need to protect residential and general amenities. The policy states that

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proposals which would cause significant harm to the amenities of the local neighbourhood will be refused. Similarly, Policy CH33 states that proposals will be refused if they cause significant harm to the quality of health, safety or human amenities due to higher levels of pollution and noise if they cannot be controlled sufficiently through planning conditions.

- 5.18 The site is located within 800m of the residential property of Wern Fawr, which is owned by someone other than the applicant. The second nearest house is approximately 900m away from the application site, with dispersed housing situated further away. A simple and very basic noise assessment was received with the application for this type of turbine (the Endurance E-3120). Should the application be approved, it would be possible to overcome these concerns by imposing relevant mitigating measures conditions under requirements ETSU-R-97; however, due to a fundamental policy objection to the proposal, the need to carry out such an assessment was not discussed with the applicant and it would not be likely to overcome the other fundamental objections involving erecting a wind turbine on this particular site.
- 5.19 National guidelines state that shadow casting from the turbine is unlikely to be a problem over distances of 180m; therefore, there is no substantial concern about such an impact on nearby dwellings in this case. Nor is it considered that the turbine would be likely to create electromagnetic interference to existing transmitting or receiving systems, and the statutory consultees who provided a response to the consultation on the application had no objection. It is therefore considered that the proposal would comply with the requirements of policies B23 and B33 of the GUDP.
- 5.20 The turbine will be high and very prominent from the public footpaths nearby. The Countryside and Access Unit is anxious to ensure that public footpath no.177, Llandderfel, will be protected during and at the end of this development, and a licence will be required to drill along or across the path. Despite the concern, there is no objection on these grounds.

Conservation and Archaeology Matters:

- 5.21 Planning Policy Wales notes the importance of protecting ancient monuments and their settings as a material consideration when determining planning applications whether or not the ancient monument in question is listed. Paragraph 17 of Circular 60/96, Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology elaborates by explaining that this means a presumption against developments which would involve a significant change or cause harm or which would have a significant impact on the setting of visible remains. Planning Policy Wales also explains that Local Planning Authorities have a duty to protect parks and gardens and their locations which have been included in the first part of the Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales.
- 5.22 In response to the consultation, CADW states that the location in the vicinity of listed ancient monuments of Caer Pen-Ucha'r-Llan and the Roman Fortress and Camp at Llanfor which are located approximately 4km from the application site, and it states that the turbine blades would be visible from this direction and would break the skyline on views of the sites of these ancient monuments. However, in response to the consultation it states that, due to the distance between the ancient monument and the site of the turbine that its impact would be small. CADW's response also states that the photomontages show that there would be a very wide impact on views of the Bala and Tegid Shores Landscape of Special Historic Interest as a result of the

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proposal. Nevertheless, its response recognises that the impact would only be a local one. Given this, it is not considered that there would be significant detrimental effect on the listed ancient monuments and the area of historic landscape as noted above. No objections were received to the application from the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service.

- 5.23 The site is located within 900m of grade II listed buildings, namely Wern Fawr farmhouse, Llaithgwm farmhouse and stables and coach-house on Llaithgwm farm. Also, there are various other listed buildings further away from the site. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act states that Local Planning Authorities shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving/safeguarding the setting of a listed building. No observations were received from the Council's Senior Conservation Officer. However, given the setting of the turbine in relation to these statutory designations together with the topography of the landscape and mature vegetation which means that there will be occasional views of the turbine, it is not believed that the proposal will have a significant detrimental effect on the integrity of these designations individually. It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with policies B3, B7 and B12 of the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan.

Transportation

- 5.24 The application includes a proposal to use the existing forestry access to a coppice off the third class county road and the design and access statement states that several vehicles and machinery will be required during the work of preparing and constructing the turbine which vary in weight from cars and light vans to heavy vehicles such as an 80 tonne crane. In response to the proposal, the Transportation Unit states that there is no objection to the application on road safety grounds but that there is a need for additional information and elaboration regarding some details included in the Construction Traffic Management Plan submitted. However, due to the fundamental policy objection to the application, the need to carry out such an assessment was not discussed with the applicant as it is not likely that it would overcome the fundamental objection relating to erecting a wind turbine on this particular site. No objection was presented by the Rights of Way Unit although they would wish for a consultation to be held should there be any impact on public footpath no. 177 – Llandderfel, which is nearby. It is also noted that the path which serves the turbine site follows public footpath no. 144 - Llandderfel. However, it is considered that the development could be acceptable on road safety grounds should the necessary details be received by the Council's Transportation Unit for approval and, therefore, the proposal could ultimately be acceptable on the basis of the requirements of Policy CH33 of the GUDP.

Economic benefits

- 5.25 The proposal is presented as one that would provide electricity supply for the farm activities and would be a diversification enterprise that would assist to secure the future of the agricultural holding itself which is 500 acres. Paragraph 7.15.1 and 2 of the SPG: Onshore Wind Energy (2014) is relevant in the context of this application by stating that the principle of establishing a renewable energy project such as wind turbines is a valid diversification activity on a farm subject to the criteria of Policy C26. However, the SPG does not accept that all forms of wind turbine developments on agricultural land are acceptable as a diversification project on farm and it proposes a series of criteria in paragraph 7.15.2 which such schemes would be required to satisfy.

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5.26 In relation to this application, the following criteria are considered in turn:-

- From the evidence submitted in the design and access statement, the applicants' main enterprise is farming and the wind turbine would be built on the farm holding.
- The turbine would be located approximately 660m from the main farmhouse of Coed y Foel Uchaf - it is not considered that there would be a physical relationship between the turbine and the farm buildings in terms of its size, its scale or its location.
- The design and access statement explains that, should this application be approved, it would be of benefit to the applicant in several different ways: (i) it would reduce the dependency on importing electricity from the national grid: (ii) it would generate a stable income for the agricultural business through the receipt of guaranteed payments of exporting electricity under the "feed-in tariff" and would secure the long-term viability of the business in the future and: (iii) an important part of diversification on the farm which makes the agricultural holding more sustainable.
- The design and access statement states that the farm's annual electricity supply is 489,240 kWh which includes 6,000 litres of oil which is equivalent to 66,000 kWh of electricity. It is anticipated that the wind turbine's annual output would be 400,000 kWh and a supply of 331,960 kWh would be required in order to be carbon-neutral. This confirms that the generating capacity of the turbine is proportional to the energy demands of the farming enterprise.

5.27 The application states that it is expected that the costs of erecting the turbine and connecting it to the national grid will have been paid in full within 7-9 years and from this point onwards, it is anticipated that the applicants will receive financial benefits from the project by selling electricity to the grid itself. There is no information to hand in relation to whether the turbine would be connected to the electricity grid via the farm's electricity meter so the electricity generated can be preferentially used onsite, rather than 100% of the electricity being exported directly to the grid.

5.28 Given the aforementioned assessment along with the information submitted with the application and based on the design and access statement, it is anticipated that a significant element of the enterprise would be for commercial purposes (in 7-9 years' time). Whilst some of the information submitted justifies the development as a way of diversifying, the proposal as submitted does not comply with all the criteria mentioned above which are included in the SPG: Onshore Wind Energy (2014) document.

Response to the public consultation

5.29 It is believed that the above assessment has given full consideration to the responses received as a result of the public notification received.

6. Conclusions:

6.1 Due to the nature of such developments, it is very difficult to integrate them with the landscape and, therefore, when considering such applications, their visual impact, the

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status of the landscape, the economic benefits and the national aim of promoting developments that generate renewable energy must be taken into account.

- 6.2 When weighing up the proposal in the context of the policies discussed above, assessing the likely impact of the turbine against the renewable energy promotion strategies, along with considering the other material considerations, it is considered that the proposal in its current form does not meet the requirements of all above-mentioned planning policies. It is considered that a structure measuring 48.01m at its highest point would be an alien, prominent, tall and dominating feature that would impair the skyline and also have an insensitive impact on the near and distant horizons of the views in and out of the National Park.
- 6.3 Having weighed up the above, and given full consideration to the objections and all material planning considerations, it is considered that the proposal is not materially different to the original application which was withdrawn. It is considered that the proposal does not meet the requirements of the above policies, and that the turbine would have a significant and substantial impact on the features and special character of the National Park.

7. **Recommendation:**

- 7.1 To refuse – reasons -

It is considered that the alien nature and scale of the turbine together with the insensitive and incompatible location within the landscape would be a significant visual intrusion in the surrounding landscape and would have a detrimental impact on prominent and panoramic views by the public into, out of and across the surrounding landscape which includes Snowdonia National Park and open countryside and would therefore be harmful to the features and special character of Snowdonia National Park contrary to Policies B14 and C26 and Strategic Policies 2 and 9 of the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan (2009), Supplementary Planning Guidance: Onshore Wind Energy (2014), Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7, July 2014) and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 8: Renewable Energy (2005).