

Delegated Report

Ref No: NP/NP/20/0222/FUL
Proposal: Installation of underground electricity cables (including below ground jointing bays and one above ground link pillar) and underground fibre optic cables; temporary construction compound and construction haul roads.
Site Location: Linear site extending from the intertidal sand flats at Freshwater West to Neath Farm, Rhoscrowther, Pembroke, Pembrokeshire

Consultee Response

Angle Community Council: No response received to date
PCNPA Tree and Landscape Officer: Conditional consent
PCNPA Planning Ecologist: Conditional consent
PCNPA Access Manager: No objection subject to informative
PCC Transportation and Environment: Conditional consent
PCC Planning Authority: No comment
PCC Drainage Engineers: SAB approval required
PCC Public Protection: Conditional consent
Natural Resources Wales: Conditional consent
Cadw: No response received to date
Dyfed Archaeological Trust: Conditional consent

Public Response

A site notice and neighbour notification letters were posted in accordance with requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012.

Correspondence from Valero Energy Ltd has been received which indicates that the proposed application crosses an operational high pressure multi fuel pipeline and ancillary apparatus. There is potential for interference of ongoing use of this pipeline without mitigation and protection. In addition concerns have been raised with the potential for bio-security, soil temperatures and top soil compaction.

The above concerns have been passed over to the agent to address and the Authority is currently awaiting a formal response on these aspects and a verbal report will be given at the committee meeting.

Policies Considered

LDP Policy's – 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 21, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 53 and 55
PPW10
SPG's – 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 21, 22 and 23
TAN's – 5, 6, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18 and 24
LDP2 - Inspectors Report

Officer's Appraisal:

Background

Greenlink Interconnector Limited (GIL) is proposing to develop an electricity interconnector (Greenlink) linking the existing electricity grids in Great Britain (GB) and Republic of Ireland. The overall development will consist of two converter stations, one close to the existing EirGrid substation at Great Island in County Wexford (Ireland) and one close to the existing National Grid substation at Pembroke

in Pembrokeshire (Wales). The converter stations will be connected by underground cables (onshore) and subsea cables (offshore). The proposed scheme is configured so that power will be able to flow in either direction at different times, depending on supply and demand in each country. The project is designated as a European Union Project of Common Interest.

The development will be of key strategic importance providing significant additional interconnection between Ireland, GB and onwards to mainland Europe. It will provide additional transmission network capacity, reinforcing the existing electricity grids in Ireland (EirGrid) and GB (National Grid), whilst contributing to each country's strategic interconnection objectives.

Pre-application discussions have been extensive over a number of years

Current Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the installation of underground electricity cables (including below ground jointing bays and one above ground link pillar) and underground fibre optic cables; temporary construction compound and construction haul roads.

The application in detail includes two permanent high voltage direct current (HVDC) electricity cables to be installed underground from the landfall site at Freshwater West to the boundary with PCC at Neath Farm over an area of approximately 3.2km. The laying of these cables below ground incorporate joint bays at intervals along the route. In addition to the two HVDC cables permanent fibre optic cables for communication and control purposes, laid underground alongside the HVDC from the landfall site at Freshwater West to the boundary with PCC at Neath Farm.

A temporary landfall compound at Freshwater West, from which the HVDC cables would be installed below the beach and sand dunes at Freshwater West by Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD). The compound would act as the primary construction compound for cable installation within PCNPA. A link pillar no greater than 1.3m in height to be located where the marine cable links with the landfall cable. A series of temporary haul roads would be installed along the HVDC cable route from temporary landfall compound at Freshwater West to Neath Farm.

Pembrokeshire County Council also have two applications to cover the proposed route from Neath Farm to the Proposed converter station site and also for the new converter station structure which is to be linked to the National Grid connections near to the existing RWE Power Station. A separate application has been made for a marine licence for the off shore works which will be administered by Natural Resources Wales.

Key Issues

The application raises the following planning matters:-

- Policy and Principle of Development
- Visual Amenity and Special Qualities of the National Park
- Impact on Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Impact on Listed Buildings
- Siting and Sustainable Design
- Amenity and Privacy
- Highway Safety and Access
- Landscaping
- Biodiversity

- Land Drainage and Flooding
- Other Material Considerations

Policy and Principle of Development:

The site lies within a countryside location as defined by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) with the relevant key policies in relation to the principle of the development being LDP Policies 8, 15 and 55.

Policy 8 of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) is a strategy policy which refers to the special qualities of the National Park and lists priorities to ensure that these special qualities will be protected and enhanced.

Policy 15 of the LDP seeks the conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park with criteria 'a', 'b' and 'd' resisting development that would cause significant visual intrusion, be insensitively and unsympathetically sited within the landscape, and/or fail to harmonise with, or enhance the landform and landscape character of the National Park.

Policy 55 of the LDP seeks to ensure that the least obtrusive and damaging location, route or means of provision is chosen. Proposals will be rigorously examined with regard to siting and design and will be permitted only where there are no unacceptably adverse effects on the special qualities of the National Park. Where it can be demonstrated that proposal are of national significance, applications should be accompanied by technical and financial feasibility studies.

The on-shore works which form the current application have been carefully designed to have a limited visual impact through careful siting and limiting the scale and size of these features as part of the temporary works associated with the laying of the cabling. Based on this approach the current proposal for a national energy scheme is considered to be acceptable in principle and will comply with the aims of the relevant LDP1 policies and is supported.

LDP2 Inspectors report

The Inspectors Report on the soundness of LDP2 was received by this Authority on the 13th May 2020. The requirements are that the Plan should be adopted within 8 weeks of its receipt. However, due to the persisting exceptional circumstances relating to the Covid-19 restrictions limiting public access to documents, the Plan will be reported to a future National Park Authority meeting for Adoption. In the interim the inspector's report has been made available on the National Park Authority website to help provide a context for Development Management Committees and applications determined through the delegated powers process. The findings in the Inspector's Report are binding on the Authority and although not yet formally adopted by the Authority, the policies in LDP2 now become a material consideration of significant weight.

Having considered the current application in respect of LDP2 it is considered that the development complies with the relevant policies of the post examination LDP2 documentation and matters arising changes received from the inspector.

Visual Amenity and Special Qualities of the National Park:

In considering the application the impact of the proposal on the National Park landscape is a key consideration and therefore Policies 8 and 15 are particularly relevant. Policy 15 aims to control development causing a significant visual intrusion. In addition to these policies the Authority has adopted a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) and Seascape (SCA) Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

of which the current site straddles the boundary of LCA 7 (Angle Peninsula) and SCA 34 (Freshwater West).

Effects from the development on LCA 7 (Angle Peninsula) landscape character will be restricted to within this character area where the introduction of the on-shore works which will result in an increased awareness of manmade features within the landscape. These proposed works will require several large vehicles to lay the cables within open cut trenches and undertake the HDD, together with the associated storage of excavated materials and creation of haul roads which will all be made good once the work is completed. Landscape impacts will be limited to areas close to the application site area and will be temporary in duration with the only permanent above ground feature being a link pillar which will be located within the corner of an agricultural field and will measure a maximum of 1.3 metres high and is coloured green to ensure that it will not stand out within its landscape context.

From the majority of the landscape character area there will be no perceptible change in landscape character following the laying of the proposed HVDC cables and associated communication cables.

Any effects on SCA 34 (Freshwater West) seascape character will also be restricted to this area. Within this area the movement of vessels undertaking the laying of the marine cable and HDD work will be visible, although the movement of vessels is already a common feature within this part of the seascape. The introduction of the temporary compound where the marine cable will reach landfall and connect with the land cable may result in a very minor temporary change in character to the foreshore, although any effects will be limited to a small proportion of the seascape character area as a whole and will be temporary in duration.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have also considered the impact of the application on landscape impact and agree with the findings of the Environment Statement (ES), that the landscape and visual effects on the National Park would not be significant. The effects of the construction of the landfall and installation of cabling within the National Park would be localised and significant, however once restored and operational the effects should be minimal and not significant.

Construction stage impacts including lighting and equipment are considered to be of relatively short duration and these impacts can be mitigated to an acceptable level by the recommended conditions.

As such, it is considered that the current proposal will only have a very limited visual impact and this will temporary in duration and it is considered that the mitigation will be sufficient in the longer term. The overall impact is not considered to result in a significant adverse impact on the special qualities of this area of the National Park and also the character and identity of the landscape and seascape character areas as identified above.

Impact on Scheduled Ancient Monuments:

A Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) known as Gravel Bay Anti-Aircraft Battery (PE494) is located approximately 200 metres away from the HDD route and some 430 metres away from the proposed above ground link pillar.

Officers consider that given the nature of the current proposal with a significant proportion being underground with only temporary disturbance within the vicinity of the SAM and a very small green link pillar structure to be located within an agricultural field some 430 metres it is considered that there is unlikely to be any significant impact on the setting of this monument. Cadw have not responded on the

application to date and if a response is received before the committee meeting a further verbal response will be given on this aspect.

Impact on Listed Buildings:

There are several listed buildings within the surrounding landscape which include War Memorial at Broomhill Burrows (26/D/18(2)), Rocket Cart House (26/D/22(2)), Lookout Tower (26/D/23(2)), Seaweed Hut on foreshore (42/E/7 (1)), Corse Bridge and attached Walled Channel (42/E/8 (1)).

Most of these listed structures are in excess of 750 metres away from the route of the development but the War Memorial will be around 130 metres away from the nearest route of the development however this part of the route will be delivered via HDD and therefore there will be no impact on the setting from this aspect.

The proposed above ground link pillar will be around 300 metres away from the War Memorial and the proposed temporary landfall compound and the start of the cut and fill trench laying route. There will be a degree of impact on the setting of the War Memorial from these parts of the development. However, the landfall compound and cut and fill trenching will be very temporary and therefore there will be no significant impact on the setting of the War Memorial in the long term. In respect of the proposed above ground link pillar this structure will not be of any significant scale and will be coloured to assist with screening views of the structure within the surrounding landscape and therefore it is considered that this proposed structure will not have any significant adverse impact on the setting of the listed War Memorial feature.

Siting and Sustainable Design:

Policy 8 of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan (LDP) is a strategy policy which refers to the special qualities of the National Park and lists priorities to ensure that these special qualities will be protected and enhanced. Policy 15 of the LDP seeks the conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park with criteria 'a', 'b' and 'd' resisting development that would cause significant visual intrusion, be insensitively and unsympathetically sited within the landscape, and/or fail to harmonise with, or enhance the landform and landscape character of the National Park. Policy 29 of the LDP requires all development proposals to be well designed in terms of place and local distinctiveness (criterion 'a').

The siting of the proposed HVDC cables, communication cabling, link pillar and temporary works are considered to be appropriate for this development without having any adverse impact on the surrounding landscape. The nature of the proposal is to import and export electricity (including from renewable sources) and the proposal will utilise materials and structures which can be re-used on several projects therefore limiting any waste and embracing sustainable design principles which can be supported.

Amenity and Privacy:

The siting of the proposed works will be located away from residential properties and therefore there will be no impact on privacy. In respect of amenity impact from the construction/de-commission works and the running of a generator to power lighting during the temporary construction/de-commission periods have been carefully considered in respect of amenity to residential properties. It is noted that these features will be used over a very limited period of several days during the dusk until dawn period there will be very limited impact due to the location and distance away from sensitive receptors. In addition the location and orientation of the associated

lighting will be such that it limits any potential impact to such receptors. As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in respect of impact on amenity and privacy.

Highway Safety and Access:

Pembrokeshire County Council Transportation and Environment section have indicated that a Traffic and Transport Study and a Transport Assessment (TA) has been submitted as part of this application and covers all the separate aspects of this scheme. In principle the TA has demonstrated that the impacts of the scheme can be satisfactorily addressed. However, there are some details which will need to be clarified once a contractor has been appointed and therefore subject to condition to provide a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), developed from the Framework provided as part of this application, and Travel Plan shall be agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

The PCNPA Access manager has indicated that the proposed development will not affect any public rights of way. It is noted that the cable duct will be constructed by horizontal direct drilling in order to bring it onshore to the landfall compound. It will not therefore affect public footpath SP2/13 (part of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail) at Freshwater West (Grid reference SM8820 0060) and there will be no construction activity on the public footpath. Therefore, no highway safety or access objections are raised on the current application.

Landscaping:

The application has provided information to detail the landscape impacts and there are no landscape objection raised to the proposed works. However, a condition is required relating to Arboricultural observation and adherence for the duration of the project. In addition to this no details have been provided to confirm the proposed planting of the areas disturbed from the development, a further condition will be imposed to confirm these details.

Biodiversity:

PPW, TAN5 and LDP policy 11 requires biodiversity and landscape considerations to be taken into account in determining individual applications. The presence of a species protected under UK or European legislation is a material consideration when dealing with applications that are likely to result in disturbance or harm to the species or its habitat.

NRW have indicated that there should not be a detriment to the maintenance of the favourable conservation status of the bat species and dormice present, providing that the Dormice Method Statement, and mitigation measures set out in section 6.10 of the ES are implemented.

The PCNPA Ecologist has considered the proposal and supports the application subject to conditions relating to the management and maintenance of reinstated habitat, construction environmental management plan (CEMP), external lighting and all works to be undertaken in accordance with the mitigation / enhancement recommendations which will conform with relevant requirements of PPW, TAN5 and LDP policy 11.

Land Drainage and Flooding:

Pembrokeshire County Council Drainage Engineers have indicated that the application states that surface water will be disposed of via sustainable drainage systems. Given the scale of the development it is noted that the development will

require consent from the SuDS Approval Body (SAB) and an informative will be added to any consent granted to cover this aspect. In addition the drainage engineers have advised on ordinary water courses which would fall within 20 metres of the development site and the restrictions of any works to these features. A further informative note will be added to also cover this aspect.

Other Material Considerations:

Pembrokeshire County Council Planning Section have no comments to make in relation to PCNPA application ref. NP/20/0222/FUL, but will continue to liaise with PCNPA on this cross-boundary development.

Pembrokeshire County Council Pollution Control Team indicate that no contaminants of concern were identified within the reports submitted with the application (based on a commercial end use) and no significant Made Ground was encountered in the proposed location of the landing area or pipeline route within the National Park.

However, there is the potential given the scale of the overall project for previously unidentified contamination to be identified during excavation and construction of the underground bays and cable route. Although standard good working practices during the construction phase are likely to mitigate risks posed to construction workers it is essential that any contamination encountered is investigated to ensure there are no residual risks posed and that the impacts identified within Chapter 13 are not adversely altered and a condition can be imposed to address this.. Therefore, subject to a condition covering contamination the Pollution Control Team do not raise any objections.

Dyfed Archaeological Trust advised that it has considered the archaeological evaluation report and it is clear that important surviving archaeological deposits have been revealed, along the line of the proposed route. These include several funerary features such as those identified within area's 8 and 14 within the report. Consequently there is a possibility that the ground works for the proposed development could reveal and destroy archaeological features, including human remains.

Therefore, in order to protect potential archaeological interests they indicate that should consent be granted, a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) condition should be attached to protect the historic environment interests whilst enabling development.

Conclusion

Following consideration of the policies contained within the Local Development Plan and National Planning Policy in the form of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10, December 2018) and having regard to all material considerations it is considered that the development will be in keeping with the aims of the LDP in that the development is considered to provide an energy scheme whilst maintaining the special qualities of the National Park and not impacting on privacy or amenity of neighbours. As such, and subject to a schedule of suitable conditions, the development is considered to be acceptable and complies with the requirements of policies within the adopted Local Development Plan and LDP2 which is now a material consideration of significant weight.

Recommendation

Subject to no material objections arising from those outstanding consultations, the recommendation is that the application be delegated to the Chief Executive / Director

of Planning / Team Leader to grant planning permission subject to the conditions as outlined within the report.

Conditions

1. The development shall begin not later than five years from the date of this decision.
Reason: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:
Drawing Reference: 001/P6
Drawing Reference: 002/P6
Drawing Reference: 003/P7
Drawing Reference: 004/P7 - Sheet 1 of 4
Drawing Reference: 004/P7 - Sheet 2 of 4
Drawing Reference: 004/P7 - Sheet 3 of 4
Drawing Reference: 004/P7 - Sheet 4 of 4
Drawing Reference: 005/P6 (Received 08.07.2020)
Drawing Reference: 011 (Received 22.05.2020)
Drawing Reference: PL011/01
Drawing Reference: PL012/01
Drawing Reference: PL014/01
Drawing Reference: PL015/01
Drawing Reference: PL017/01
Drawing Reference: PL022/01 (Received 08.07.2020)
Design and Access Statement
Pre-Application Consultation Report
Arboricultural Method Statement
Drainage Strategy
Transport Assessment
Environmental Statement – Non Technical Summary
The above plans and documents were received on 21.04.2020 unless otherwise stated.
Reason: In order to be clear on the approved scheme of development in the interests of protecting visual amenity and the special qualities of the National Park. Policy: Local Development Plan – Policies 1 (National Park Purposes and Duty), 8 (Special Qualities), 15 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park) and 29 (Sustainable Design).

3. Prior to commencement of onsite works the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority and the details agreed in this plan shall be implemented for the duration of the works unless otherwise agreed in writing with the LPA. An informative has been attached to provide further guidance on the exact information required for the subsequent discharge of the CTMP.
Reason: In order to mitigate the impact of the development on the local highway network in the interests of highway safety and ensure the development is carried out in a sustainable manner. Policy: Local Development Plan – Policies 1 (National Park Purposes and Duty), 8 (Special Qualities), 15 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park), 29 (Sustainable Design), 30 (Amenity) and 53 (Impacts of Traffic).

4. No development shall commence until a Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) for the provision, management and maintenance of the reinstated

and newly created habitats has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The LEMP should include:

- Details of habitats, landscape, environmental and ecological features present or to be created at the site;
- Details of the desired conditions of features (present and to be created) at the site;
- Details of scheduling and timings of activities;
- Details of short and long-term management, monitoring and maintenance of new, re-instated and existing habitats, to deliver and maintain the desired condition;
- Details of the restoration of the soils and vegetation in the cabling route and of hedgerows/banks crossed by the proposal to be included within the detailed plans;
- Details of management and maintenance responsibilities;
- Details of the method to review and update plans (informed by monitoring) at specific intervals as agreed.

The LEMP shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the successful reinstatement and management of habitats and to ensure the success of new enhancement habitats. Policy: Local Development Plan - Policies 1 (National Park Purposes and Duty), 8 (Special Qualities), 11 (Protection of Biodiversity), 15 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park), 30 (Amenity).

5. Prior to the commencement of works a full Construction Environment Method Plan (CEMP) must be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and the details agreed in this plan shall be implemented for the duration of the works. The plan will include full details of temporary construction lighting. The CEMP shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure construction activities do not result in an adverse impact on designated landscapes and to prevent pollution of controlled waters and the environment. Policy: Local Development Plan – Policy 11 (Protection of Biodiversity).

6. Works must be undertaken in strict accordance with the mitigation recommendations made within Chapter 6 of the submitted Greenlink Environmental Statement.

Reason: To ensure that animal and plant species and habitats listed under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 are adequately protected, and to protect and enhance the character and appearance of the site and its setting within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. Policy: Local Development Plan – Policies 1 (National Park Purposes and Duty), 8 (Special Qualities), 11 (Protection of Biodiversity) and 15 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park).

7. No development, demolition or site clearance shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme relating to the immediate landscape. The approved scheme shall include the following details:

- Arboricultural observation and adherence confirmation;
 - Full details of the proposed landscaping to the re-instated areas within the site
- The scheme must be implemented as approved.

Reason: In the interests of maintaining a suitable scheme of landscaping to protect the visual amenity of the area, to maintain the special qualities of the landscape and habitats through the protection, creation and enhancement of links between sites and their protection for amenity, landscape and biodiversity

value. Policy: Local Development Plan - Policies 1 (National Park Purposes and Duty), 8 (Special Qualities), 11 (Protection of Biodiversity), 15 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park), 30 (Amenity), Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009) and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 10: Tree Preservation Orders (1997).

8. If evidence of contamination is found in or around the development area not previously identified, development must not proceed until a report on potential contamination of the site has been prepared by an appropriately qualified person and submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. This report shall include a phased investigation approach, incorporating risk assessment, to identify the extent of contamination and any measures required to remediate the site, including post-development monitoring. Where remediation works are required, the development shall not be occupied/used until a Validation Report, to show that the works have been satisfactorily carried out, has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors. Policy: Local Development Plan – Policy 30 (Amenity) and Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10, December 2018) – Chapter 6 (Distinctive and Natural Places).

9. Within 6 months of the cables not being used for the supply of electricity a de-commissioning and site restoration scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include provision for:
- (a) removal of all above-ground elements of the authorised development;
 - (b) removal of HVDC cables and associated communication cables; and
 - (c) restoration of the areas disturbed by the authorised project.

Decommissioning and restoration shall be completed in accordance with the approved decommissioning and site restoration scheme within the period set out in the approved scheme.

Reason: In order to be clear on the de-commissioning and site restoration scheme in the interests of protecting visual amenity and the special qualities of the National Park. Policy: Local Development Plan – Policies 1 (National Park Purposes and Duty), 8 (Special Qualities), 15 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park) and 29 (Sustainable Design).

10. No development shall take place until a qualified and competent archaeologist has submitted a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for approval in writing by the local planning authority. This WSI will describe the different stages of the work and demonstrate that it has been fully resourced and given adequate time. On behalf of the local planning authority, their archaeological advisors (DAT DM) will monitor all aspects of this work through to the final discharging of the condition. This work will not be deemed complete until all aspects of the WSI have been addressed and the final report submitted and approved.

Reason: To protect historic environment interests whilst enabling development. Policy: Local Development Plan - Policy 8 (Special Qualities) and PPW10 Chapter 6.

11. Notwithstanding the details approved under this application no development or site clearance shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme relating to Link Pillar/Box and Marker Posts. The approved scheme shall include the following details:

- Link Pillar or Link Box details including location;
- Marker Post details including location locations.

Reason: In order to be clear on the approved scheme of development in the interests of protecting visual amenity and the special qualities of the National Park. Policy: Local Development Plan – Policies 1 (National Park Purposes and Duty), 8 (Special Qualities), 15 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park) and 29 (Sustainable Design).