Welcome

This exhibition is part of the statutory consultation on proposals for Mynydd y Glyn wind farm, which is located to the west of Pontypridd adjacent to an identified Pre-Assessed Area for the provision of wind farms.

The proposals are being developed by Pennant Walters, a subsidiary of the Walters Group; a local company based at Hirwaun and operating nationally. Since 2003, Pennant Walters has developed, built and now operate six wind farms and solar development in South Wales (on land very typical of the south Wales coalfield with both surface and underground mine features), generating a total of 127MW, making them Wales' largest home-grown renewable energy developer.

Early engagement on the proposed Mynydd y Glyn wind farm took place last autumn, with feedback from local stakeholders and residents helping to inform the emerging plans. A high-level response to key issues raised is provided as part of this exhibition. A draft of the full planning application, including the results of environmental surveys and assessments, is available on the project website for more information.

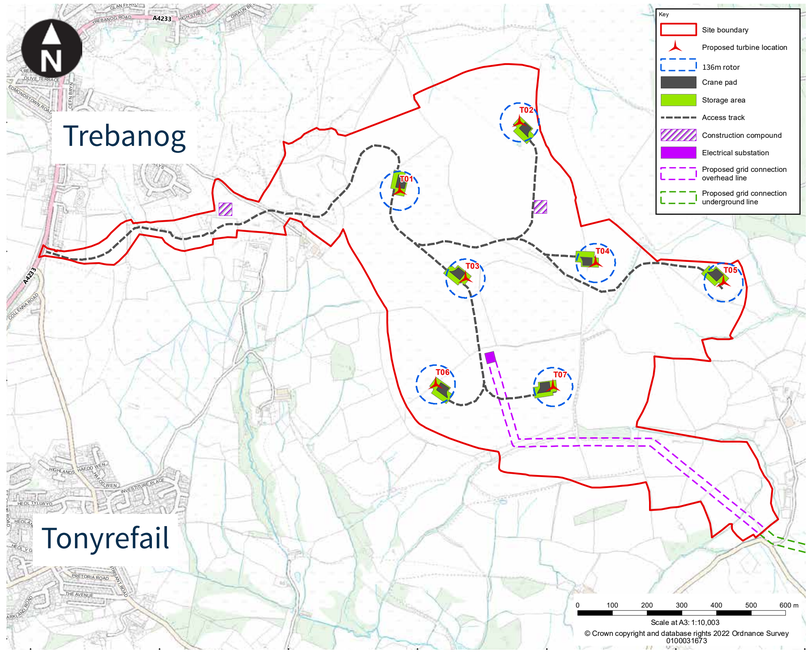
Feedback received during this consultation will be reviewed and used to inform the final proposals, which will be submitted to Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) in spring 2023.

Viewpoint 1: Hafod Wen, Tonyrefail

The proposals

The proposals are for:

- Up to seven wind turbines with a blade height of up to 155m;
- Substation and transformer housing;
- Temporary contractor compounds;
- Grid connection;
- Crane pads and cabling;
- New access and junction off the highway; and improvements to existing access tracks.



Proposed wind farm layout

The design iteration work has been influenced by an extensive suite of assessment and survey work together with modelling of potential views from local sensitive receptors to minimise potential effects. As a result of this assessment work, the wind turbine heights have been reduced from 180m to 155m.

The project team is confident the site can accommodate seven wind turbines, generating up to 30MW of electricity.

The non-turbine infrastructure has been arranged to avoid the identified site constraints where possible, and access track routes have been designed to minimise water crossings and avoid potentially sensitive areas, where possible.

Mynydd y Glyn benefits from good access to the highway network and to the electricity distribution network.

Pennant Walters has an accepted grid offer from Western Power Distribution (WPD) for a 33kV connection at Upper Boat. The connection would comprise approximately 1.5km of overhead line and a further 7.5km underground via ducting in the highway network. Whilst the overhead line will be assessed and consented as part of the DNS application, the underground section will form part of a separate application by WPD.

Ground conditions and visual impact

Ground conditions

Concern was expressed during early engagement about the increased risk of landslides, already common in the area. Ground conditions, land use and topography, hydrology, geology and soils, hydrogeology and flood risk have been assessed in the EIA. A mining risk assessment has also been produced. To minimise increased flood risk, it will be ensured that run-off rates do not exceed the 'greenfield' run-off rates.

Visual impact

The layout has been informed by a range of environmental studies and feedback from early engagement. The Proposals board shows the locations of the turbines and photomontages show what the wind farm would look like from viewpoints around the site (available on screen at the exhibition and on the website).

Shadow flicker

An assessment of shadow flicker on receptors within proximity to the wind farm has been undertaken and reported in the Draft ES. Should potential for significant effects be identified, it is possible to mitigate by switching the turbine off at particular days and times. Normally this is early in the mornings and early in the evenings over a small number of days in the year.

Viewpoint 3: Hafod Lane, Llwyncelyn

Environment/wildlife

Potential impact on the local environment and wildlife were raised during early engagement.

Birds: ornithological surveys have been carried out since early 2020 to identify the type and number of birds using the site in the winter and summer months, as well as flight paths across the site. Collision risk modelling has been undertaken and the proposed turbines have been positioned in locations with the lowest likelihood of collision.

Bats: bat surveys undertaken in 2020 and 2021 identified seven species using the site. Key flight lines and habitat avoidance buffer zones have been identified, with a minimum 50m stand-off between blade-tips and features known to be favoured by bats e.g., hedgerows and other linear features. All turbines are located outside of these buffer zones.

Peat: Initial peat surveys have been carried out identifying small areas of peat localised towards the centre of the site. The layout has been designed to avoid these areas as far as is practicable. Further peat surveys are planned and the results of these, together with comments received during this consultation, will inform the final design.

Key habitats: A very short section of the proposed access route is located 25m to the north of the Rhos Tonyrefail Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), however no direct land take or encroachment effects are anticipated. The outcome of the surveys, alongside the embedded measures proposed would ensure any effects on the SSSI are not significant. The Council's ecologist advised that an increased scope of surveys be undertaken, and the surveys were progressed. Measures, including ecological mitigation and enhancement would be implemented via a Habitat Management Plan (HMP), to be submitted at final submission, to be agreed with the local authority and NRW.

Borrow pits: Plans to use borrow pits onsite have been removed to reduce potential impacts on existing habitats. Stone for turbine bases and internal roads would be sourced from local quarries available at the time of construction. Traffic movements will increase as a result, however, not sufficiently to cause 'significant' environmental effects from traffic.

Local amenity

Proximity to residential areas

The boundary of the Pre-Assessed Area does not consider local centres of population (Tonyrefail, Trebanog and farm steads) and potential proximity issues such as noise, visual and shadow flicker. To avoid impacts, the site needed to extend further north than the PAA boundary. An acceptable distance between wind turbines and residential properties is determined through an assessment of the effects, including noise, shadow flicker and visual amenity. Informed by baseline conditions, these topics have been considered and used to inform the layout, aiming to prevent significant effects.
The site layout has been influenced by other constraints including engineering and ecology. The EIA considers potential effects on residential receptors – the Draft ES reports the conclusions (available in full on the project website).

Noise

To inform the noise assessment, noise monitoring equipment was placed at four identified noise sensitive locations around the site. The data provides an understanding of the noise levels during the daytime and night-time.

The baseline levels are used to generate permitted limits, set to avoid any adverse impacts in accordance with ETSU-R-97, the Institute of Acoustics Good Practice Guide. It is anticipated that planning conditions would be set to protect residents from adverse impacts during operation. Such conditions would likely include a complaint investigation procedure, including monitoring to ensure the turbines operate within the agreed limits. Were these limits to be exceeded, measures would be taken to address any issues.

Viewpoint 6: Llantrisant Road, Pen-y-Coedcae

Transport and access

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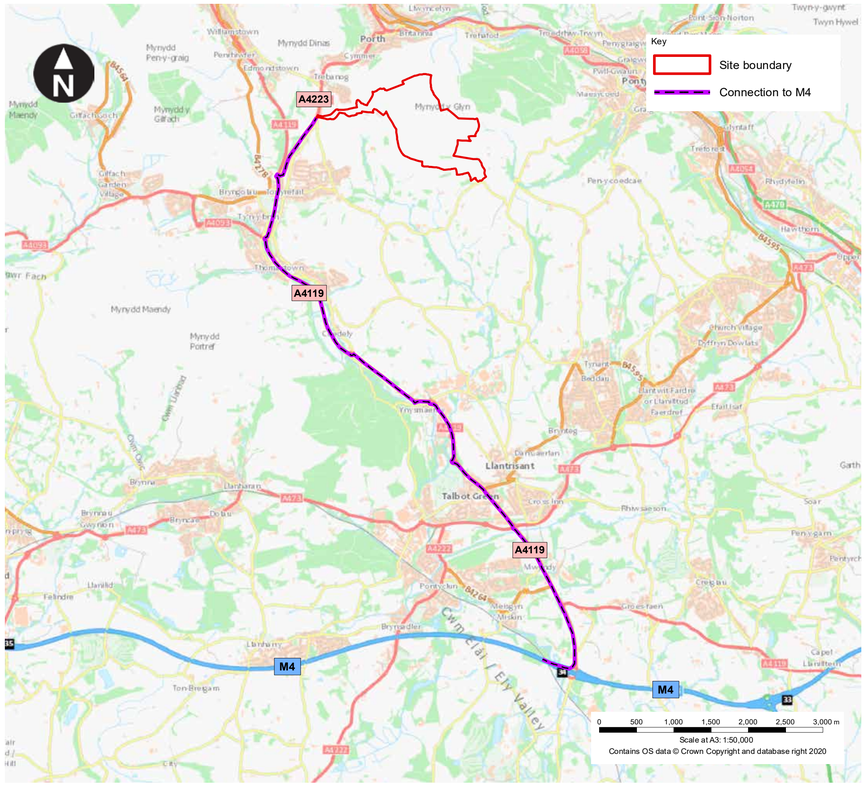
Construction transport:
During early engagement, questions were raised related to the route the turbines would take and capacity within the local road network for Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AILs).

The results are presented in the Draft ES. Transport and access have been carefully considered - an appropriate route for construction vehicles has been identified (including AILs)

Public Rights of Way
There is a limited public rights of way (PRoW) network within and close to the site, principally a PRoW linking Porth in the Rhondda Valley to Langton Court Farm. A large proportion of the site on its western and eastern parts is within an extensive tract of Access Land. The route of the Penrhys Pilgrimage walk does not enter the site but does cross the proposed site access from the highway network. Any potential impacts on PRoWs and long-distance routes are considered as part of the EIA and reported in the Draft ES. Measures will be adopted to minimise any potential impacts for users on such routes.



Access route

This route is:
Swansea Docks – Baldwins Crescent – A483 - A483/Ffordd Amazon/Ashleigh Terrace Roundabout - A483- A483/M4 Eastbound – Junction 34, A4119 – A4119 Northbound – A4233 – Site.

A separate application to the Local Authority may be required for temporary removal of street furniture such as lighting columns or signposts.

Community benefits

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The communities in which the wind farms operate are important to Pennant Walters. A Community Benefits Fund is operated for each of the wind farm projects, investing money into the local communities. To date it has distributed around £4 million to qualifying projects.

As part of the early engagement, feedback about local ownership and the Community Benefits Fund was requested – how it could be most effectively administered, the types of projects it could support and its geographical reach. A workshop with local stakeholders was also held to gain a better understanding of how the fund could positively contribute to the local area.

Feedback so far includes:

- Administration of the fund and the application process should be kept as straightforward as possible.
- The fund's geographic area should be flexible and avoid strict boundaries.
- Flexibility regarding project type would be preferable.
- Partnership working with pre-existing community organisations is key to success.
- There is an appetite locally for shared ownership of renewable energy schemes.

As a Welsh company the wind farm will be locally owned, however other opportunities for an element of shared ownership with the local community would be considered.

Ogmore Vale Bowls Club targets youth membership with £8,000 from Pennant Walters

Pennant Walters donated £20,000 to Friends of Aberdare Park to make a splash!

Pennant Walters donation of £13,000 to Rhondda Football Club for new 60-seater stand

Have your say

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Although the planning application is a Development of National Significance (DNS) and will ultimately be determined by Welsh Ministers, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and the local communities are key consultees, and you can have your say on the proposals for Mynydd y Glyn wind farm by*:

Calling: 01443 548032
Emailing: consultation@mynydd-y-glyn.co.uk
Writing to: Freepost GRASSHOPPER CONSULT
(no stamp or further address required)

Please provide your comments by
9 December 2022.

Feedback received will be analysed and responded to in the Pre-Application Consultation Report, which will be submitted as part of the DNS application.

* These contact details will put you in touch with Grasshopper Communications, who are managing the consultation.

Indicative timeline

Autumn/winter 2022:
Statutory consultation on detailed layout of proposed wind farm

Winter 2022:
Reviewing feedback from the consultation and finalising the proposals/DNS application

Spring 2023:
DNS application submitted to PEDW

Autumn/winter 2023:
Examination of application by PEDW and recommendation submitted to Welsh Government

Spring/summer 2024: Welsh Ministers determine application

Subject to planning consent being granted, the construction of Mynydd y Glyn wind farm would take around two years, so it would be operational and generating electricity by spring/summer 2027.