XXXX
Cadw
Welsh Government
Ty'r Afon
Coed Bedwas Road
Caerphilly
CF83 8WT

Our reference
11863

Date
31 October 2023

Address
1st Floor, Brunel House
2 Fitzalan Rd
Cardiff CF24 0EB
Tel: 0292 032 9006

Dear sir/madam

Approach to Grid Connection Assessment, Gaerwen Wind Farm ES

At the time that the scoping report was submitted for Gaerwen wind farm, the anticipated grid connection was into a transmission line approximately 2km to the north of the Gaerwen site. The situation has subsequently changed in this respect, with the grid connection now expected to be to a substation approximately 7km to the northeast of the site.

As indicated in the scoping report, the grid connection will be subject to a separate application in the future. The grid connection route is currently envisaged as consisting of underground cabling within the Gaerwen site as far as the public highway (A494); overhead line on trident wood poles following the alignment of the A494/A5, A5104 and a minor road for approximately 7.5km to the vicinity of Tyddyn Angharad (south of Gwyddelwern); and a short final stretch of underground cabling running northwards to the substation site. This route specification is outline and indicative only at the present time, however: a discrete route design process will be followed prior to finalisation of the route proposals for the purposes of a future submission, through which the route proposals may be modified in various respects in response to environmental and other considerations.

Taking account of the terms of the adopted scoping direction and the current degree of certainty in relation to the grid connection proposals, we propose to take the following approach to the assessment of Gaerwen wind farm's grid connection within the wind farm ES:

- As the grid connection proposals will not form part of the wind farm consent application, they will be treated in a separate ES appendix.
- The currently assumed grid connection route and specification will be detailed in the appendix, including an indicative connection route figure.
- The appendix will set out a variety of environmentally-led design parameters that the grid connection design, when finalised, would be assumed to follow at the present time. These will be broken down by relevant EIA topics: for example, they will include an assumed separation distance between overhead line elements of the connection and residential properties with respect to landscape and visual effects. This part of the appendix will also include discussion of alternative design approaches if the core design parameters present conflicting requirements: these could include, for example,

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undergrounding short sections of the overhead part of the route in the event that advisory separation distances between two different environmental receptors proved to be mutually incompatible.

- The appendix will conclude whether significant effects from the grid connection, either taken in isolation or in combination with the wind farm, are predicted to occur on the assumption that the design parameters detailed within the appendix are followed.

This approach is considered to comply with the objectives of the scoping direction and to be proportionate and appropriate to the current level of certainty with respect to the grid connection proposals. We will take it that Cadw is in agreement in this regard unless you notify us to the contrary. Please do not hesitate to contact me, however, if you wish to discuss the proposed approach further.

Yours sincerely

XXXX XXXX
Associate Planner XXXX@landuse.co.uk