

Outline Habitat Regulations Assessment Scoping Brief for Conjoined Mid Wales (Powys) Windfarm Public Inquiry

The six proposals being considered as part of this Public Inquiry have the potential to affect three European designated sites, namely:-

- River Wye SAC (SSA C projects)
- Pen Llyn a`r Sarnau SAC (Carnedd Wen)
- Berwyn SPA (SSA B projects)

This document aims to provide an example, in outline, of the information that Natural Resources Wales advises is required in order to inform an in-combination assessment as part of the Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRAs) of the projects being considered by this Public Inquiry on the three European designated sites.

The following is specifically in relation to the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and considers the in-combination assessment specifically in relation to the three wind farm project and one grid line project being considered as part of this Public Inquiry.

River Wye SAC

In-combination

Natural Resources Wales advises that the following information is required in order to inform an in-combination HRA for the River Wye SAC:-

- total area and overall percentage of the River Wye Ithon sub-catchment (hereafter referred to as 'the catchment') covered by the potential in combination application sites (including relevant Town & Country Planning Act (TCPA) applications in planning),
- total turbine numbers estimated within the catchment,
- estimated total length of on-site roads to be built by wind farms, grid lines and other relevant projects within the catchment, together with turbine base, crane-pad and borrow pit areas,
- Inclusion of any other relevant plan or project that has the potential to occur simultaneously with the construction of the wind farms / grid line eg forestry clear felling,
- identification of key fish spawning areas on the catchment, and most sensitive times of the year (available from Natural Resources Wales),
- spatial distribution of wind farm / grid line applications relative to key catchment spawning areas, and hence which wind farms / grid line collectively may pose a risk, and which may be confidently excluded in terms of potential 'in combination' effects,
- an assessment of impacts should all or some of the wind farms /grid line be constructed concurrently,
- suggested mitigation in the form of conditions including consideration of the need for phasing development or timing of specific works should it be considered that simultaneous construction of all or some wind farms / grid line could lead to a likely significant effect on the SAC.