

Electricity Act 1989

The Electricity Generating Stations and Overhead Lines (Inquiries Procedure)
(England and Wales) Rules 2007

Application by Vattenfall dated 30 November 2007 for consent to construct and operate a 59.5MW Wind Turbine Generating Station in Powys, Mid-Wales ("Llanbadarn Fynydd")

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND ON LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL BETWEEN:

Vattenfall

And

Powys County Council

1. Introduction

1.1.1 This is a Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) between Vattenfall and Powys County Council (Powys CC) concerning an application made to the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) for consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989.

1.1.2 The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change has given notice that a combined inquiry (Inquiry) will be held under Section 62(3) and Schedule 8 of the Electricity Act 1989 into Llanbadarn Fynydd Wind farm, in addition to four other Section 36 wind farm applications and one Section 37 Grid Connection application.

1.1.3 This SOCG has been produced and the statements within it are agreed by both parties (unless indicated to the contrary) in connection with session 1 of the Inquiry and is specific to Vattenfall's application for the Llanbadarn Fynydd Wind Farm only.

1.1.4 This SOCG concerns the topic of landscape and visual.

1.1.5 Powys CC has objected on landscape and visual grounds on the basis of "*The unacceptable landscape and visual impact of the applications including the detrimental effect upon tourism and other economic factors.*" More detailed reasons for the Council's objection on landscape and visual grounds are set out in Powys CC'S Updated Outline Statement.

2. Landscape and Visual

2.1 Baseline

2.1.1 Full details of the methodologies employed and baseline situation for the Llanbadarn Fynydd Wind Farm site are provided in:

- Chapter 7 of the ES (2207).

2.1.2 The limited number of changes to the baseline that have taken place since 2007 are set out in Section 3 of the February 2013 SEI documents.

2.2 Methodologies

2.2.1 The 2007 landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) baseline was undertaken in accordance with the then current second edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA). The scope of the baseline was agreed in 2006 with Powys CC and the Countryside Council of Wales (CCW now Natural Resources Wales - NRW) via a scoping request. Additional consultation took place with Powys CC, CCW and Shropshire AONB with regard to the selection of visualisation viewpoints. No response was received from Shropshire AONB's landscape officer.

2.2.2 Powys CC engaged consultant landscape consultants to review the LVIA with their findings being set out in the December 2008 Report: 'Powys Onshore Wind Farms – Llanbadarn Fynydd. Development Control Support'. This Report (page 17) states that *“the graphics provided to illustrate the LVA are of a high standard and the photomontages and wireframes are considered to provide a good representation of the range of views of the turbines that would be available.”*

2.2.3 The February 2013 SEI was also undertaken under the second edition of the GLVIA. The SEI updated the 2007 baseline principally with regard to:

- The completion and quality assurance review by CCW of all five LANDMAP aspect layers in Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire;
- The publication in 2008 of the Powys Landscape Character Assessment;
- The limited changes with regard to the introduction and removal of some landscape elements within the application site and across the detailed study area as a whole; and
- Changes to the cumulative baseline within SSA C.

2.2.4 The baseline study was undertaken across a study area that extends to a distance of 35km from the closest proposed turbine location resulting in a circular study area that is 36.5km in radius. This is in accordance with SNH guidance. In line with best practice in undertaking wind farm LVIA's the baseline and the subsequent assessment has concentrated upon landscape and visual receptors considered to have a greater potential to sustain higher magnitudes of landscape and visual change. Consequently the 2007 and 2013 SEI both adopted a detailed study area with a radius of 10km from the closest proposed turbine. No objection has been raised to this approach in either the 2008 CCW response to the LVIA or in the Powys CC Report of March 2012.

2.2.5 The assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects in Session 1 will be restricted to Llanbadarn Fynydd together with the six proposed wind farms situated within SSA C (Llaithddu; Hirddywel; Llandinam Repowering; Bryngydfa; Garreg Lwyd; and Neuadd Goch Bank)

2.2.6 All visualisations have been produced in accordance with Scottish Natural Heritage's 'Visual Representation of Wind Farms Good Practice Guide' March 2006. Whilst draft SNH revised guidelines have recently been issued for comment they will not be formally issued in late 2013/early 2014 and SNH have stated that until the formal adoption of the new guidelines visualisations produced under the 2006 Guidelines remain 'fit for purpose'.

2.3 Assessment of Effects - Landscape

2.3.1 The application site is not subject to any national or local landscape designations. The closest part of Snowdonia National Park is located 37km to the north-west and Snowdonia National Park has raised no objection to the proposed wind farm. The closest national landscape designation is the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which at its nearest point is 5.5km east of the closest turbine. The landscape assessment concluded that effects upon the AONB and the key characteristics identified in its Management Plan would be not significant. No objection has been received from Shropshire AONB.

