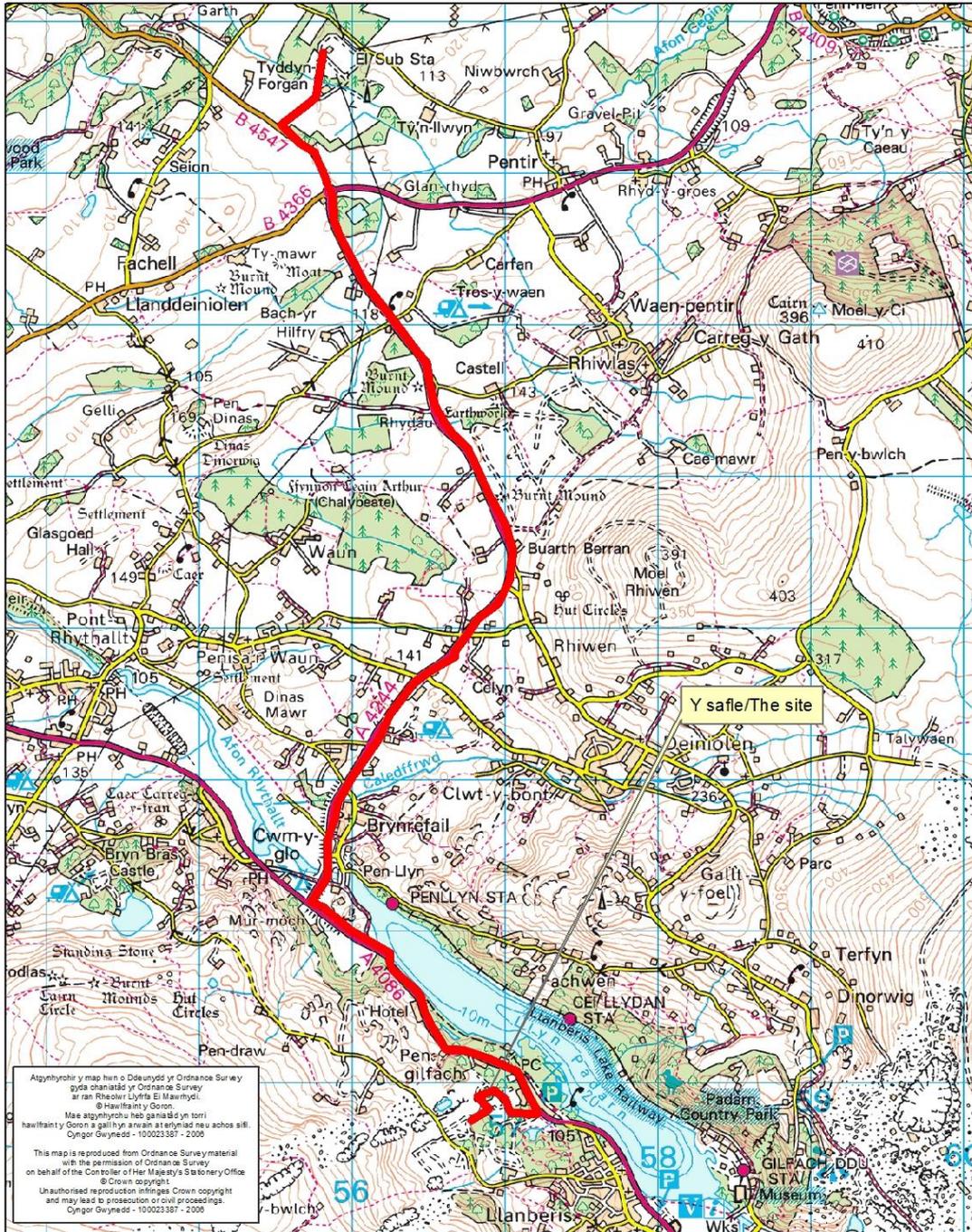


Number: 9



Rhif y Cais / Application Number : C16/0886/15/LL

Cynllun lleoliad ar gyfer adnabod y safle yn unig. Dim i raddfa.
Location Plan for identification purposes only. Not to scale.



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Application Number: C16/0886/15/LL
Date Registered: 28/07/2016
Application Type: Full - Planning
Community:: Llanberis, Llanddeiniolen, Llanrug, Pentir
Ward: Llanberis, Pentir, Cwm y Glo, Deiniolen, Penisarwaun

Proposal: AN APPLICATION TO INSTALL AN UNDERGROUND 132KV GRID CONNECTION BETWEEN THE GLYN RHONWY PUMPED STORAGE SITE AND PENTIR SUBSTATION
Location: GLYN RHONWY PUMPED STORAGE, GLYN RHONWY, LLANBERIS, CAERNARFON, GWYNEDD, LL55 4EL

Summary of the Recommendation: TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

1. Description:

- 1.1 This is a full application to install an underground 132KV grid connection between the Glyn Rhonwy pumped storage site and the existing substation in Pentir.
- 1.2 The connection will run for approximately 8km to the north-east from the source of the connection in Glyn Rhonwy and it will all be laid underground. First of all, it would run within the Glyn Rhonwy site, through a 0.6m wide and 1.2m deep ditch and then through a similar ditch along the verge of the A4086, A4244 and B4547 highways towards the substation in Pentir. The cables themselves would be installed within a protected duct, at a depth of 1.7m within the ditch. At the point where the path crosses Afon Rhyddallt, it is proposed to bore into the land near the riverside and send the borer under the riverbed to the land on the other side of the river. This is essential as the existing duct within the bridge is not suitable for 132kv cables.
- 1.3 The land affected by the proposal is mainly previously developed land, including roads and public pavements and green verges on the edge of public roads. In some places, it would cross public junctions and private vehicular accesses.
- 1.4 The proposal has been assessed in terms of the need for a formal Environmental Impact Assessment, and it was deemed that a formal assessment was not required in this case.

2. Relevant Policies:

- 2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales emphasise that planning decisions should be in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Unitary Development Plan.
- 2.2 Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 the Council has a duty not only to carry out sustainable development, but also to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet its sustainable development (or well-being) objectives. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the "sustainable development principle", as set out in the 2015 Act; in making the recommendation the Council has sought to ensure that present needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is

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considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being objectives as a result of the proposed recommendation.

2.3 Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan 2009:

POLICY B10 – PROTECT AND ENHANCE LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION AREAS - Protect and enhance Landscape Conservation Areas by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at avoiding significant harm to recognised features.

POLICY B12 – PROTECTING HISTORIC LANDSCAPES, PARKS AND GARDENS - Safeguard landscapes, parks and gardens of special historic interest in Wales from developments which would cause significant damage to their character, their appearance or their setting.

POLICY B16 – PROTECTING NATIONALLY IMPORTANT NATURE CONSERVATION SITES - Refuse proposals which are likely to cause significant harm to nature conservation sites of national significance unless they conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting, enhancing and managing the recognised features of the sites.

POLICY B20 – SPECIES AND THEIR HABITATS THAT ARE INTERNATIONALLY AND NATIONALLY IMPORTANT - Refuse proposals which are likely to cause disturbance or unacceptable damage to protected species and their habitats unless they conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features of the site.

POLICY B21 – WILDLIFE CORRIDORS, HABITAT LINKAGES AND STEPPING STONES - Safeguard the integrity of landscape features which are important for wild flora and fauna unless the reasons for the development outweigh the need to retain the features and that mitigating measures can be provided.

POLICY B23 - AMENITIES - Safeguard the amenities of the local neighbourhood by ensuring that proposals must conform to a series of criteria aiming to safeguard the recognised features and amenities of the local area.

POLICY B29 – DEVELOPMENT ON LAND AT RISK OF FLOODING - Manage specific developments in the C1 and C2 flood zones and direct them towards suitable land in zone A unless they conform with a series of criteria relevant to the features on the site and to the purpose of the development.

POLICY C3 – RE-USING PREVIOUSLY USED SITES - Proposals will be approved that prioritise re-using land and buildings previously developed and located within or around development boundaries, provided that the site or the building and the use are suitable.

POLICY C6 - THE GLYN RHONWY REDEVELOPMENT SITE - Proposals for the Glyn Rhonwy redevelopment site that create quality employment or leisure opportunities for the benefit of Gwynedd's communities will be permitted provided that the development conforms to a series of criteria relating to cultural, linguistic, amenity, environmental, visual and highways matters. It is also noted that the site should be developed in an integrated manner.

POLICY C27 - RENEWABLE AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SCHEMES – Proposals for renewable energy and sustainable energy management schemes will be approved provided that a series of criteria relating to the impact on the visual quality of the landscape and environmental and social factors can be met.

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POLICY CH18 – AVAILABILITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE - Development proposals will be refused unless there is an adequate provision of necessary infrastructure for the development, unless one of two specific criteria can be satisfied which require that appropriate arrangements are made in order to ensure an adequate provision, or that the development is carried out in phases in order to conform to any proposed scheme for providing infrastructure.

CH19 – PROVISION OF NEW INFRASTRUCTURE OR PUBLIC SERVICES

Proposals to provide infrastructure or public services will be approved provided they can conform to a series of specific criteria relating to the scale and design of the development, along with visual, environmental, amenity and highway matters.

POLICY CH33 – SAFETY ON ROADS AND STREETS - Development proposals will be approved provided they conform to specific criteria relating to the vehicular entrance, the standard of the existing roads network and traffic calming measures.

2.4 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales, 8th edition, (2016).

TAN 5: Planning and Nature Conservation

TAN 12: Design

3. Relevant Planning History:

3.1 c12/1451/15/LL - Development of 49.9MW pumped storage facility to include an upper reservoir at Chwarel Fawr and associated dam, a lower reservoir at Glyn Rhonwy with associated dam, erection of powerhouse to include turbines, associated engineering works including the creation of new slate spoil heaps and diversion of highways - approved 19.02.14

For information, a current application is being considered for a Development Consent Order for a 99.9MW pumped storage scheme in Glyn Rhonwy. An application of this size is considered to be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, therefore, the final decision will be made by the Secretary of State.

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: As the path of the proposed line crosses the lands of three different Community Council areas, the community councils of Llanberis, Llanddeiniolen and Pentir were consulted. None of the three councils responded to the consultation.

Transportation Unit: Confirmation was received that there was no objection to the proposal, it is suggested that a standard note be included with the conditions stating the need for relevant licences to undertake work that affects highway lands.

Natural Resources Wales: Express concern regarding the proposal but suggest that conditions be imposed to protect the environmental interests, attention and advice given to the need to contact NRW to discuss some aspects further in order to secure the relevant licences.

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Welsh Water:	Not received
Public Protection Unit:	Observations on the need to contact the Service to discuss whether or not any work will affect contaminated lands.
Rights of Way Unit:	Need to protect rights of way paths.
Biodiversity Unit:	Agree with the observations of Natural Resources Wales and the need to include relevant conditions.
Archaeological Service:	Not received
SP Manweb:	Confirmation that elements of the work are likely to affect some of the company's assets; suggest that discussions will be needed with the company regarding safeguarding methods prior to the commencement of the work.
Seiont/Gwyrfai Angling Association:	Not received
Dinorwig Power Station:	Not received
Public Consultation:	A notice was placed in prominent places along the path of the proposed line and nearby residents and businesses were informed. The application was advertised in the local press also. The advertisement period has ended and no objection in the form of a letter / correspondence was received.

5. Assessment of the relevant planning considerations:

5.1 The principle of the development

- 5.1.1 It can be seen from the planning history that the principle of creating a pumped storage resource in Glyn Rhonwy has already been accepted and agreed by the Council. When this application was being considered, there was concern regarding the way that the electricity generated on the site would be distributed to the national grid and whether pylons or poles would be erected all the way from Glyn Rhonwy towards Pentir.
- 5.1.2 Therefore, it can be seen through this application that the connection will be underground and that this is a positive attempt to ensure that there will be no harmful impact on the visual amenities of the local area.
- 5.1.3 It is believed that the principle is acceptable and that this element is a necessary step following the previous approval by ensuring that a connection exists between the site where the electricity is generated and the site where it is distributed.
- 5.1.4 For information, a current application is being considered for a Development Consent Order for a 99.9MW pumped storage scheme in Glyn Rhonwy. An application of this size is considered to be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, therefore, the final decision will be made by the Secretary of State. The work of creating a grid connection could usually be considered as an Associated Development but here in Wales it cannot be approved as a part of the process; therefore, a formal application for permission must be submitted in line with the Planning Act. Similarly, work

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normally carried out by the electricity, gas, telephone, water companies, etc. can be undertaken through permitted development rights and they will not require formal planning consent.

- 5.1.5 The Glyn Rhonwy site has been specifically designated for redevelopment, it is believed that the principle has already been established and that this element is necessary and relevant to the previous approval; therefore, the proposal complies with the requirements of policy C6 of the UDP. The majority of the work will be carried out within previously developed lands and thus it is believed that the proposal satisfies the requirements of policy C3 of the UDP.

5.2 Visual amenities

- 5.2.1 A section of the work's path is located within a Landscape Conservation Area whilst the entire path is located within the Dinorwig Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest designation. Installing this connection above ground would disrupt these designations; however, as the proposal is one in which the connection is buried, it is not believed that these landscapes will be visually harmed. Consequently, it is believed that the proposal would be acceptable from the perspective of visual amenities and therefore it complies with the requirements of policies B10 and B12 of the UDP.

5.3 General and residential amenities

- 5.3.1 This type of work, in particular considering that it would be undertaken on the verges of busy roads, is likely to affect local amenities including the amenities of residents who live near the path and who will be directly affected should it cross sections of private lands. It is also likely to have an impact on occasions when traffic management measures need to be put in place when work is undertaken on narrower sections.
- 5.3.2 Despite these impacts, it is believed that they would be short-term impacts and that there would not be a long-term harmful impact on the general amenities of the area or on the affected residents. This type of work is commonplace on roads and road verges in the County and is often carried out without the need for planning permission. It is not believed that the development would have an unacceptable or long-term disruption on amenities; therefore, it is believed that it complies with the requirements of policy B23 of the UDP.

5.4 Transport and access matters

- 5.4.1 The Council's Transportation Unit does not object to the proposal and neither does the Rights of Way Unit. Both units acknowledge that the work is likely to have an occasional impact on movements, but that this impact will not be a long-term. The developer needs to submit applications for relevant licences to carry out the work on highway lands and this will ensure that restoration work will be done to an acceptable standard; however, this is not a matter to be considered as a part of the planning application.
- 5.4.2 It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of the requirements of Policy CH33 of the UDP.

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5.5 Biodiversity matters

- 5.5.1 The majority of the work will be carried out within the verges of existing public highways and as a result it is not believed that there would be a prominent harmful impact on protected species as mentioned in the 'Habitats Survey Part 1' submitted with the application.
- 5.5.2 The work of boring under Afon Rhyddallt means that it will cross a section of the Padarn Lake Site of Outstanding Historic Interest. Natural Resources Wales and the Council's Biodiversity Unit have confirmed that there is no objection to the work and have made observations on the proposal, including conditions that the work will not be carried out between 17 October and 31 December in order to avoid any harmful impact on salmon spawning grounds and that no lights will be installed where they would affect fish.
- 5.5.3 Given that neither NRW nor the Biodiversity Unit object to the proposal, provided that conditions are imposed, the relevant advice is followed and that relevant licences are secured prior to the commencement of the work, it is believed that this proposal is acceptable and complies with the requirements of policies B16, B20 and B21 of the UDP.

5.6 Flooding matters

- 5.6.1 The path of the connection crosses Afon Rhyddallt/Seiont near the village of Brynrefail and, therefore, permission would be required from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) in the form of a special licence to carry out the work.
- 5.6.2 NRW does not object to the proposal and therefore, it is not believed that there would be a harmful impact in terms of flooding issues. Consequently, it is believed that the proposal is acceptable in terms of its compliance with the requirements of policy B29 of the UDP.

5.7 Infrastructure matters

- 5.7.1 Policies CH18 and CH19 refer to matters relating to the available infrastructure and the provision of new infrastructure. It is believed that both these policies are relevant as they refer to the need to ensure that a sufficient infrastructure provision is available to enable a development to proceed. Permission has been granted for the creation of a pumped storage facility and the grid connection is essential as part of the development. It is believed that the proposal is acceptable in terms of the requirements of policies CH18 and CH19 and that it complies with the relevant requirements of both policies.
- 5.7.2 Policy C27 refers to renewable and sustainable energy plans. Although this application is not specifically for this type of development, it is believed that it is a relevant consideration as the criteria of the policy notes:
- That any ancillary equipment be designed and, where possible, sited so as to alleviate its potential visual impact on the landscape;
 - That any associated overhead connection lines and pipes do not cause significant harm to the visual quality of the landscape.

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5.7.3 By ensuring that the grid connection is completely underground, it is believed that the proposal is acceptable in terms of the above-mentioned criteria and thus satisfies the requirements of policies C27 of the UDP.

6. Conclusions:

6.1 Having considered the above and all the relevant matters including the local and national policies and guidance, together with planning background, it is believed that this proposal is acceptable and complies with the requirements of the relevant policies noted above.

7. Recommendation:

7.1 To approve – with conditions

1. Time
2. Comply with plans
3. Need to submit and agree on a construction environmental management plan

4. Natural Resources Wales conditions
5. Highways notes
6. Party Wall Act Note