

**BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
PLANNING, ACCESS AND RIGHTS OF WAY COMMITTEE**

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL RELATED MATTER – FOR NOTING
Hirwaun Power Project - UPDATE
14/10745/IPC**

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the proposal to erect a 299MWe gas fired power station at the Hirwaun Industrial Estate within the administrative area of Rhondda Cynnon Taf County Borough Council (RCT) but in very close proximity to the Brecon Beacons National Park boundary.

The proposal constitutes a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the terms of the Planning Act 2008 and therefore, the applicant, Hirwaun Power Limited submitted an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) on 21 March 2014 to the Planning Inspectorate, who duly formally accepted the application on 15 April 2014.

Proposed Development

The proposal includes:

- Power generation plant – a Simple Cycle Gas Turbine (SCGT) gas fired power generating station capable of providing up to 299MWe with up to 5no. 35m high stacks, operating on a “peaking” basis i.e. to provide electricity at peak times only and therefore will not operate on a 24 hour basis.
- Gas pipeline connection
- Underground electrical connection via Rhigos Substation

A visual presentation of the proposed scheme was presented to Members at PAROW on 29th July 2014.

Determination process

Following acceptance of the application by the Planning Inspectorate, the application will proceed to be determined through a formal Examination process whereby an appointed Panel of Inspectors (the Examining Authority) will preside over the examination and determine the application.

As reported to PAROW on 29th July, the formal examination process into the development has now commenced. The examination process follows a strict timetable that has now been

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set by the Examining Authority, a copy of which is included at Appendix I. Interested parties must abide by the strict deadlines imposed by the Examining Authority.

The first crucial deadline for the Authority was the 21 August 2014 whereby the Examining Authority requested that the following documents had to be submitted:

- **Local Impact Report (LIR)** – a report setting out the impact of the development on the National Park which the Examining Authority is duty bound to take into account when determining the application.
- **Written representations** – to elaborate on the relevant representations and to set out the Authority's case in full
- **Responses to Examining Authority's First Written Questions**

Officers confirm that a LIR and Responses to the Examining Authority's First Written Questions were duly submitted to the Examining Authority on 21 August 2014. A copy of these documents are attached at Appendix II. In summary the LIR identifies that the current proposal would have:

- a negative moderate landscape and visual impact principally due to the introduction of 5no. 35m stacks that would protrude above the existing built height of surrounding development and deficiencies in the assessment undertaken by the applicant;
- a negative minor impact on cultural heritage which is strongly aligned to the landscape and visual impact given that the development would be seen from various cultural heritage assets within the National Park and again, various deficiencies in the applicant's assessment of the proposal's impact on cultural heritage assets; and
- a negative minor ecological impact - subject to NRW's expert opinion on the air quality impacts on ecological receptors.

The LIR was informed by a review of the applicant's Landscape and Visual Impact assessment by Anthony Jellard Associates, a copy of which was appended to the LIR for the Examining Authority's information.

Officers did not consider it necessary to submit Written Representations in addition to the LIR as it clearly sets out the impacts of the development on the National Park and the Examining Authority is duty bound to take the LIR into account when determining the application.

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The next step of the process is to submit a Statement of Common Ground to the Examining Authority by the deadline of 10 September 2014. Discussions with the applicant on the Statement of Common Ground are at an advanced stage.

Members are advised that Officers are, without prejudice, negotiating various matters with the applicants which has already resulted in the Authority being formally recognised as a consultee on particular conditions, therefore in the event permission is granted, the Authority would have a defined role to agree certain aspects such as the use and appearance of materials, landscaping strategies and lighting plans. In addition, following negotiations, the applicant has agreed to undertake further assessment of the night-time effects of the proposals having regard to the National Park's Dark Sky Status.

Officers will continue to provide Members with updates as and when appropriate having regard to the timetable set out at Appendix I.

Proposal

That Members note the content of the report and enclosures.