

<b>BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL</b>	
<b>Report to:</b>	Planning, Regulatory & General Licensing Committee
<b>Report Subject:</b>	Potential DNS Schemes for Wind Farms
<b>Report Author:</b>	Team Manager Development Management
<b>Directorate:</b>	Regeneration and Community Services
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> October 2021

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

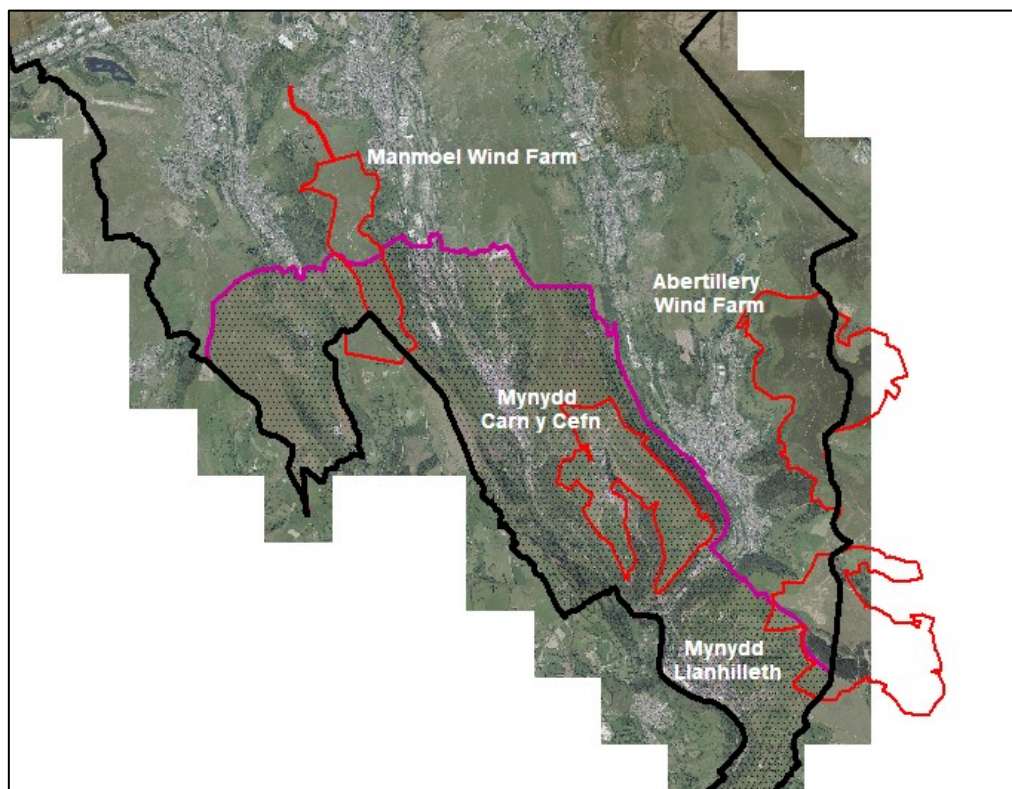
- 1.1 Members may be aware of that The Council has recently been consulted by Welsh Government (via The Planning Inspectorate) in respect of four Scoping Directions which have been submitted to them in relation to wind farms at:
- Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn (DNS/3272424)
  - Mynydd Llanhilleth (DNS/3273368)
  - Maenmoel (DNS/3239181); and
  - Abertillery (DNS/3278009).
- 1.2 Details of the Scoping Request can be found at <https://dns.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/>. A request for a Scoping Direction is not a planning application, it is a process whereby it is formally agreed what information will be included in an Environmental Impact Assessment which will accompany any future planning applications submitted to the Welsh Government.
- 1.3 The Council is not the developer nor is it the landowner. We have no part in the development of any of these projects nor are we a partner.

- 1.4 It is important to note that not all planning applications are submitted to the Council. Any scheme for renewable energy that generates above 10 Megawatts is called a 'Development of National Significance (DNS)'. These schemes are submitted to Welsh Government to be decided by an independent Planning Inspector. All of these schemes as currently presented to Welsh Government will be DNS so the deciding body will not be Blaenau Gwent. However the Council will be formally consulted on any subsequent planning applications.
- 1.5 This report is to make Members aware of the locations and scale of each project that the Council may be formally consulted on in the near future. It will also enable Members to answer any queries from constituents as these schemes are public.

## 2.0 Background & Context

- 2.1 Below is a map which identifies the location of each site, a brief description of each site and what the proposal may include.

2.2



### 2.3 Manmoel Wind Farm

The site is situated mostly within the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC) area, although its south-western corner lies within the Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC)

local authority boundary. The southern half of the site is in one of the Future Wales - Pre-assessed Areas (FWPAA). The site lies within registered Commons Land.

The draft proposal includes:

- up to 5 turbines of up to 180m maximum tip height and associated crane hardstandings;
- transformers housed adjacent to or in turbines;
- onsite access tracks plus underground cable runs alongside;
- an onsite sub-station building;
- construction compound(s); borrow pits; and
- access into the site boundary.

#### Mynydd Carn y Cefn

2.4 The site lies within the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council administrative area and its boundary is located approximately 500m from the western edge of Abertillery. The eastern section of the site is separated from the town's western boundary by a 200-300m buffer of mature trees. The Site is accessed from a forestry haul road which is taken off the A4046 Aberbeeg Road.

The proposed development site comprises a mix of semi-improved and unimproved grassland which forms the southern end of a forked upland ridge between the Ebbw Fawr valley and the Ebbw Fach valley. The site is split by a forestry haul road, woodland and an operational solar farm.

The draft proposal includes:

- up to eight wind turbines with heights to blade tip in a range of between 170-180m and a combined maximum rated output of up to 48MW of electrical power;
- substation and transformer housing;
- temporary construction compound;
- temporary site offices;
- crane pads and cabling; and
- access track construction.

#### Abertillery Wind Farm

2.5 The proposed wind farm site is located between the valley towns of Abertillery and Abersychan to the immediate west and east of

the site. The site covers approximately 385 ha and is largely comprised of dry heath and is grazed by sheep. The site is registered as common land and incorporates parts of Common Land Unit 16 Gwastad Common and Common Land Unit 17 Llanhilleth Common. A number of public rights of way (PRoW) including footpaths and bridleways cross the site. The site is also classified as Open Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2005.

The draft proposal includes:

- Up to seven wind turbines up to a maximum tip height of 180m, and associated infrastructure including transformers, foundations, crane pads and laydown/storage areas;
- Underground cables;
- Onsite substation/control building;
- Energy storage equipment;
- Site entrance and access track from the main road;
- Internal access roads;
- Permanent anemometer mast;
- Borrow pits (where technically feasible);
- Habitat Management Area;
- One or more temporary construction compounds; and
- Off-site works to facilitate the transport of abnormal loads

### Mynydd Llanhilleth

2.6 The site is located to the south-east of Abertillery and to the east of Llanhilleth and has a *developable* site area of approximately 193 hectares. The site spans across two Local Planning Authorities with the majority falling within Torfaen County Borough (TCBC) and the remainder of the site (to the west) being located within Blaenau Gwent. Access into the site is proposed from the existing road through the common coming from a north westerly direction from Talywain.

The draft proposal includes:

- Up to 12 wind turbines, anticipated to be 4–6MW each with an indicative height of up to 180m to tip together with external transformer housing;
- Turbine foundations, crane pads and laydown areas;
- An electrical substation and control building;

- Underground power cables linking the turbines and the on-site substation;
- Construction of access tracks off main access corridor;
- Permanent anemometer mast for wind turbine performance monitoring;
- Construction enabling works; and
- A temporary construction and storage compound

### **3.0 Recommendation**

3.1 Members note the content of this report.

\*\*\*\*\*