



The Planning Inspectorate Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Application for Development Consent for the Wrexham Energy Centre
Case Ref: EN010055

Examining Authority's Note of Unaccompanied Inspection of Sites

Inspection 4: Isycoed and Wrexham Industrial Estate: Acoustic Background 23 and 24 November 2016

Background

The Examining Authority (ExA) undertook its first Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI) to support its examination of an application for development consent for the proposed Wrexham Energy Centre (the application) on 27 September 2016, during which a contribution to the acoustic background from existing activities on the Wrexham Industrial Estate was observed at various receptor locations in Isycoed. The variability of this background over time was raised during oral submissions to Issue Specific Hearings (ISHs) and an Open Floor Hearing (OFH) held on 28 September 2016. On this basis, the ExA decided to observe the acoustic background from individual receptor locations within Isycoed after sunset, following the conclusion of the OFH on 28 September 2016 in a second unaccompanied site inspection (USI). A note of that inspection has been published [EV-014].

Similarly, the ExA undertook its second Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI) on 22 November 2016 [EV-025], during which a substantial contribution to the acoustic background from existing activities on the Wrexham Industrial Estate was observed on land subject to Compulsory Acquisition proposals for the gas connection alignment. At ASI Location 1, Cae Brynner Farm (the Edwards' land) and at ASI Location 2, Oak Road, Isycoed (the Ellis' land) the background was of the nature of blended noise from multiple sources and processes with no tonal elements arising from individual sources. A directional component apparently emanating from the Kellogg's plant was discernible. A bakery odour was also discernible. At ASI location 3, Lower Oak Farm (the Done's land), the industrial contribution to the acoustic background was less evident. It was of the nature of blended noise from multiple sources and processes with no tonal or directional elements. The wind was from the west / south west and the inspection locations were down-wind from the Wrexham Industrial Estate.

The contribution of activities on Wrexham Industrial Estate to the acoustic background and the potential for significant reductions to this having occurred was again raised in Deadline 4 written representations [REP4-001] and in oral submissions to the ISH held on 23 November 2015.

On this basis, the ExA decided to observe the acoustic background from individual receptor locations within Isycoed, following the conclusion of the ISHs on 23 and 24 November 2016 in a fourth unaccompanied site inspection (USI).

The fourth USI is recorded in this note, the purpose of which is to inform the applicant, interested parties and other persons of actions taken by the ExA.

One further USI will be required to observe the application site and setting from landscape and visual impact receptor locations following autumn leaf-fall. Given the late retention of leaf by most trees this autumn, the ExA has decided to return in early January to carry out this inspection at a time when there should be no remaining leaf cover. Acoustic background observations will also be made during this inspection. A note will be published once this final inspection is complete. This will bring the unaccompanied site inspection programme to a close.

Particulars of the Inspection

The fourth unaccompanied site inspection was undertaken by the ExA, Examining Inspector Mr Rynd Smith LLB MA MRTPI FRSA. Steffan Jones, Case Officer from the Planning Inspectorate was in attendance.

The purpose of the inspection was to observe background noise at three main locations:

- at multiple receptor locations on the B5130 in Isycoed, from the village hall to the Briggs residence (referred to below as 'Isycoed');
- adjacent to the boundary of the Kellogg's plant on Bryn Lane ('Bryn Lane'); and
- adjacent to Redwither Tower, Redwither Business Centre and the Hoya Lens building on Abbey Road, Wrexham Industrial Estate ('Abbey Road').

Observations were made on two separate occasions, on 23 November 2016 (Occasion 1) and 24 November 2016 (Occasion 2).

A car was used on both occasions to move between the main locations. The inspections within each main location were undertaken on foot.

Observations were made without any instrumentation and aimed to provide a general impression only. The ExA will not use the observations for any formal assessment of acoustic background.

Occasion 1

On the first occasion on the afternoon of 23 November 2016, the ExA made observations as follows:

- in Isycoed from 14-42 to 14-49;
- at Bryn Lane from 15-00 to 15-05; and
- at Abbey Road from 15-10 to 15-20.

Weather conditions were dry. There was a light breeze from the north east throughout this occasion.

There was no discernible contribution to the acoustic background due to noise emissions from the Wrexham Industrial Estate at locations in Isycoed and nor was there any discernible odour. Traffic noise was discernible and to the extent that its direction could be ascertained appeared to be from the A534 Wrexham to Holt road. The north easterly wind direction could have been expected to limit the transmission of noise and odour from Wrexham Industrial Estate to these locations and to assist in the perception of traffic noise from the A534.

Industrial background noise was evident adjacent to the Kellogg's plant. This was of the nature of blended noise from multiple sources and processes, but did have a directional component indicating that the Kellogg's plant was likely to be a significant source. No individual peaks or troughs were apparent and there were no instances of noise with particular percussive or tonal components. Individual heavy goods vehicle movements were also perceived as individual events, above the background. There was no discernible odour. The north easterly wind direction could have been expected to limit the transmission of noise and odour from Wrexham Industrial Estate to this location.

Industrial and construction-related background noise was evident from locations on Abbey Road. This was of the nature of blended noise from multiple sources and processes, but did have a directional component indicating that the Kellogg's plant was likely to be a significant source. Individual peaks and troughs were apparent and there was a distinct tonal characteristic to elements of the noise. Individual noise events due to heavy goods and construction vehicle movements were also evident above the background. A baking odour was observed. The north easterly wind direction could have been expected to support the transmission of noise and odour from the Kellogg's plant to this location.

Occasion 2

On the second occasion after nightfall on 24 November 2016, the ExA made observations:

- in Isycoed from 17-17 to 17-26;
- at Bryn Lane from 17-28 to 17-33; and
- at Abbey Road from 17-38 to 17-41.

Weather conditions were dry. There was a very light breeze from the north east throughout this occasion.

There was no discernible contribution to the acoustic background due to noise emissions from the Wrexham Industrial Estate at locations in Isycoed and nor was there any discernible odour. Local foreground traffic noise was strongly evident, as the inspection coincided with the end of the working day in several premises on Wrexham Industrial Estate. The north easterly wind direction could have been expected to limit the transmission of noise from Wrexham Industrial Estate to these locations.

Industrial background noise was strongly evident adjacent to the Kellogg's plant. This was mainly formed of a directional component indicating that the Kellogg's plant was the primary source. The noise was mechanical in character, but there were no instances of noise with particular percussive or tonal components. Traffic noise from Bryn Lane was also perceived above the background. There was no discernible odour. The north easterly wind direction could have been expected to limit the transmission of noise from Wrexham Industrial Estate to this location.

Industrial background noise was evident from locations on Abbey Road. This was of the nature of blended noise from multiple sources and processes, but did have a directional component indicating that the Kellogg's plant was likely to be a significant source. Individual peaks and troughs were not apparent, but again there was a distinct tonal characteristic to an element of the noise. Local traffic noise was also evident above the background. No odour was observed. The north easterly wind direction could have been expected to support the transmission of noise from the Kellogg's plant to this location.