

EN010137: Mona Offshore Wind

Cefn Meiriadog Community Council MNOW-SP036

Views of the Community Council on how the application should be examined.

The main concern of Cefn Meiriadog Community Council is that the Examination should reflect the nature, scale and context of the application in relation to the community in which it is proposed to site it. Cefn Meiriadog is a very small rural community with a population of under 400 people, while the application is for the construction of a very large piece of infrastructure taking place in a situation of other projects of similar scale being constructed or proposed for that same very small rural area.

(1) Even taken on its own, the large scale of the proposed substation and its associated infrastructure will have very substantial effects on the rural landscape, and therefore on the community living within it.

(2) More importantly, however, it is not an exaggeration to say that the cumulative impacts of the Mona proposal taken with other existing, ongoing and pending developments may be considered a terminal threat to the community's essential character. This once overwhelmingly rural and agricultural character was and is the prime reason residents have chosen to live here, many for generations. This has been turned upside down within little more than a decade, as with three existing large substations and five large-scale projects currently in development (Awel y Môr, Mona, National Grid extension, MaresConnect substation, St Asaph Solar Farm), the scale of the cumulative effect is something previously unimaginable for residents, especially since each development in turn, including Mona, is inevitably located in a progressively more highly visible location. The accompanying large pylons and gantries have a substantial and irreversible impact in themselves.

(3) Proportionality, therefore, is key. Firstly, in terms of its essential rural character, loss of its agricultural land, and the size and density of its population, the scale of proposed and existing infrastructure, and in particular the scale of the Mona proposal, is wholly out of proportion to the community in which it is being sited. Secondly, and equally disproportionately, the community of Cefn Meiriadog is being made to bear the entire burden of the impact of these very major developments, where other communities remain unaffected or minimally affected by them. In summary, the cumulative effects of all the projects mentioned above falling on one community penalise Cefn Meiriadog in a highly disproportionate way.

(4) National Grid. There is concern that the decisions resulting in the overwhelming cumulative effects and highly disproportionate burden currently

falling entirely on the single small community of Cefn Meiriadog are apparently taken by National Grid based on commercial considerations, with no discussion of or consultation on the implications for or impacts on the community of its decisions to require Mona and others to connect to Cefn Meiriadog/Bodelwyddan. It is to be hoped that the Examination looks at this aspect of the application.

(5) A strategic approach to the siting of grid connection infrastructure facilities, access routes, congruence with existing built projects, substations, brownfield land where available, etc, is required if the community of Cefn Meiriadog is not to suffer from a profound change to its essential rural character and indeed to its existence given that the proposals will make it a less attractive place to live in, to send children to school in, and to spend leisure time in.

It goes without saying that with the lack of a strategic and coordinated approach currently applying to Mona and other projects, mitigations such as additional landscaping, partial lowering/burial of substations, tree screening, etc., should be fundamental to each individual project, including this one. However Cefn Meiriadog Community Council requests that the application be examined in a way that fully reflects its potential to have very far-reaching and irreversible effects, as outlined above, on the residents of the small community having to host it, with a means of taking into account in particular the cumulative effects of the proposed project and their disproportionate burden on the community of Cefn Meiriadog .

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