

MR & KM Hussey

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The Planning Inspectorate
National Infrastructure Planning
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PINS Reference EN010137 Mona Offshore Wind Farm
Affected Party Numbers MNOW-S57019 & MNOW-S57018

CLOSING STATEMENT

Introduction

This closing statement sums up the case of Martyn and Margaret Hussey, affected parties residents in the rural community of Cefn Meiriadog. It is structured in a way that reflects the main topics and compliments information that we have already submitted during the examination process. We do not intend to repeat the information in detail, instead, this closing statement updates our position in light of the applicant's submissions and information presented to the examination along with further comments regarding Deadline 6 submissions and our most recent meeting with the applicant on 8th January 2025.

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1.0 Noise

At the onset of this examination process we raised concerns regarding the significant and detrimental impacts that this development will have on our quality of life and wellbeing due to the noise impacts during the lengthy 4 year construction period around the onshore substation area.

We have questioned the modelling assumptions, outputs, assessment criteria and lack of realistic worst case scenarios. The applicant has insisted that the approach adopted to be

appropriate and robust, frequently referencing that this had been accepted by the relevant planning authority, which, in our case is Denbighshire County Council (DCC). Unfortunately we do not have confidence that DCC have acted in our interests in this matter due to resource issues, having to utilise outside consultants whilst not looking at individual issues. A fact perhaps demonstrated by the applicant acknowledging errors in the modelling assessment following the site visit half way through the examination, which was not identified by the council.

1.1 Modelling Predictions

Despite the applicant publishing a Construction Noise and Vibration Clarification Note REP4-045, we further questioned at Deadline 5 the accuracy of the distance used in the modelling software in relation to substation activities and our property, namely:

200mts in the model

184mts listed as the distance in Landscape and Visual

177mts when the onshore substation platform was pegged out (site visit)

At Deadline 6 Response the applicant stated that:

'The Applicant acknowledges the varying distances presented in relation to the Onshore Substation. However, as noted in Table 1-1 of Construction Noise and Vibration Clarification Note (REP4 -045), the distances to each construction activity are presented as an approximation. The Applicant also notes that the start and end points of each of the distance quoted are likely to be different and therefore would account for variances identified'

Additionally we questioned the apparent higher predicted noise impact on a property 170mts further away than our property in respect of the establishment of Access and Temporary Construction Compounds to which the Applicant responded at Deadline 6 that:

'The applicant confirms that the impacts as reported in REP4-045 for the Access and Temporary Construction Compounds at ##### and Tyddyn Meredydd are correct. The distances reported in Table 1-1 of Construction Noise and Vibration Clarification Note (REP4 -045) for this activity are those to the nearest Temporary Construction Compound. However, construction plant is likely to be sited across the wider substation area during the compound set up activity. Therefore, the construction noise modelling has reflected this by placing construction plant across the wider substation area in order to predict the worst case construction impact. This approach has resulted in construction noise predictions at ##### from this activity being greater than that at Tyddyn Meredydd, due to the proximate construction activities.'

These responses highlight to us that realistic worst case scenarios have not been used for noise impact assessment as the applicant has stated and therefore the true impacts underestimated.

In relation to the onshore substation we have always assumed that plant and equipment would need to operate outside the footprint of the platform, a fact that has now been confirmed by the applicant at our meeting on 8th January 2025. Since the edge of the platform as pegged out is 177mts from our property and that plant and equipment will operate outside the platform perimeter, aligned with the applicants response (above) then using 200mts as an approximation is clearly not a worst case scenario, it surely must be the

case that the closest distance that plant and equipment will operate should be used and not some approximation that is clearly further away.

In relation to the Temporary Construction Compounds, the fact that construction plant will operate across the wider substation area highlights 2 issues, firstly, this again demonstrates that realistic worst case scenarios have not been adopted as plant and equipment will be closer in reality than the 400mts used in the modelling for our property, Secondly, it appears physically difficult if construction plant is operating across the wider area that it gets closer to ##### without getting even closer to ourselves. The only way construction equipment would be closer to ##### is if it were in the very South West corner of the wider substation area and travelled to and from via the Eastern edge only, something which would seem unlikely.

The applicant acknowledged at our meeting back in November 2024 that there will be periods where noise levels will be loud and intrusive, further acknowledged in their subsequent Deadline 6 response that *'we will experience high impacts, equivalent to average daytime construction noise levels exceeding 65dB(A) during short term transient works'*. Because of our unique position within the onshore work area in and around the onshore substation we consider it highly probable that instances of loud and intrusive noises will impact us for prolonged periods over the entirety of the 4 year construction phase, it should also be noted that this excludes the 24hour working periods that will be undertaken at the substation site or the equipment that would be required to operate at the substation site for prolonged periods, the likes of generators for security lighting, pumps for dewatering etc.

The applicant has indicated that it expects measures to be adopted in attempts to minimise noise disturbance but the use of non-obligatory words, may be, where practical, where feasible, where appropriate, leaves a get out of jail card for the applicant and due to the topography of our property in relation to the substation is unlikely to offer much help, bearing in mind that the noise levels predicted are averages and our assertion that realistic worst case distances have not been used.

1.2 Assessment Criteria

We have constantly challenged the suitability and adequacy of the criteria applied by the applicant. The methodology used and insistence that change in noise environment is not a valid criteria, which, whilst it may be suitable for urban areas is not a pragmatic approach. One has to reason if the applicant would use their assessment criteria to a quiet or silent retreat and say that if carrying out construction nearby that its insignificant as it doesn't exceed 65Db (A). Whilst we are not a silent retreat we maintain that change in ambient noise levels as a result of the construction activity is an important factor in this quiet rural area and should not be disregarded.

The applicant has not considered the noise impacts on our enjoyment of outside space (curtilage), instead only considering impacts 1m from the property façade. The outside space of our property is a critical factor in our health and wellbeing and one of the factors as to why we moved to this area and property.

Having said that we disagree with the methodology used, never the less we would like to highlight the applicants Deadline 6 response to us where they have reiterated the definition

of Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL) and how this is used to determine how health and quality of life on residents may change.

The noise causes a material change in behaviour and/or attitude, e.g. avoiding certain activities during periods of intrusion, where there is no alternative ventilation, having to keep windows closed most of the time because of the noise. Potential for sleep disturbance resulting in difficulty in getting to sleep, premature awakening and difficulty getting back to sleep. Quality of life diminished due to change in acoustic character of the area.

This last sentence actually highlights the point about change in ambient noise levels being an important factor.

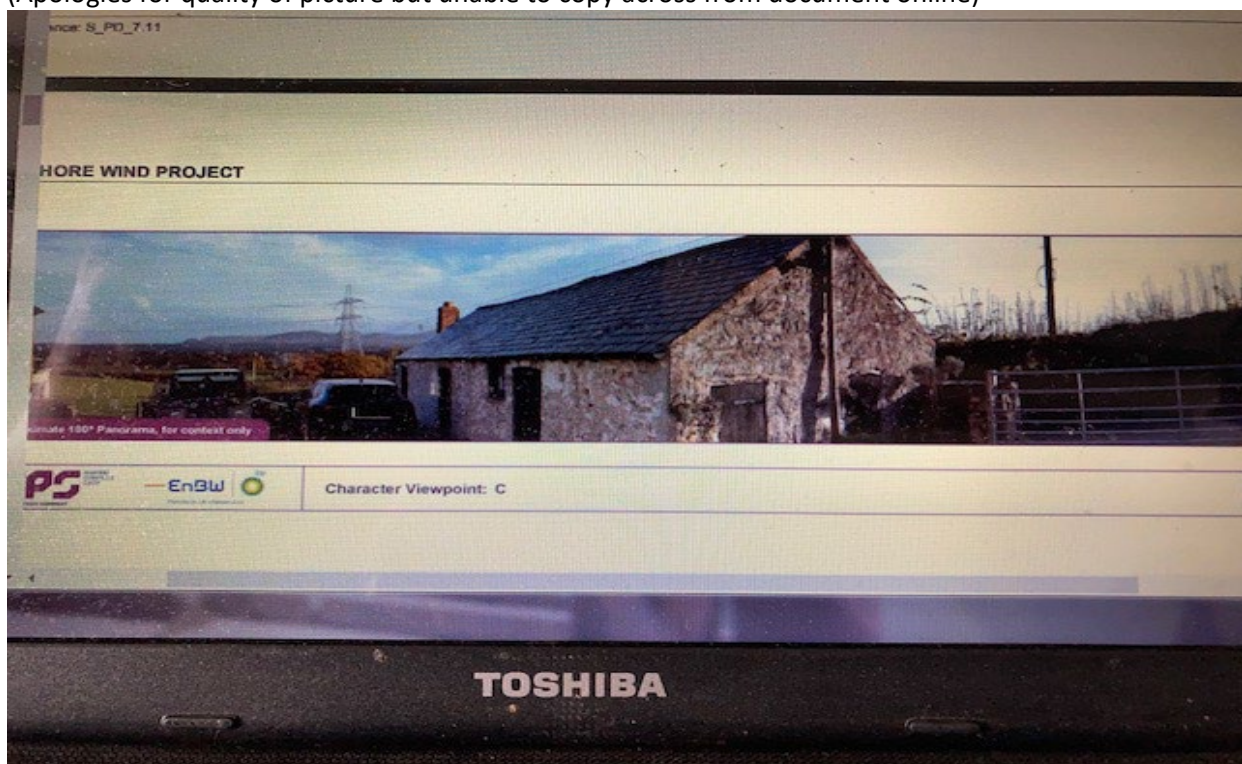
It is inconceivable that we will not hit any of these criteria, so the judgement by the applicant that we will not be significantly impacted, 6 days a week (being retired we have no escape/respite), over a prolonged 4 year period is unjustifiable.

2.0 Visual Impacts

Although we have raised on a number of occasions that the photographs taken from our property do not provide a true, accurate and honest evaluation of the reality in relation to the visual impacts from this development, the applicant has and continues to maintain that the photographs taken from our property do present an accurate representation of the views from that location. This we simply cannot and do not accept as they present a very much biased and selective view and in no way show the real views from our principal ground floor living space or any of the areas of our North Eastern Curtilage.

Below is the photograph that the applicant insists is representative, taken from our South west corner, deliberately showing one of our outbuildings. For those who visited our property during the site visit (examiners and applicant representatives) know that this is not a true representation.

(Apologies for quality of picture but unable to copy across from document online)



It has taken quite some time and many questions for the applicant to finally acknowledge the height of the proposed substation structure above current ground levels and to acknowledge that its full height will not be screened in our views, even with mitigations

In addition to the utilisation of a biased view from our property the applicant has been inaccurate in its use of photomontage imagery as to how are view towards the substation might look.

Below is photomontage showing the mitigation (tree planting) below our property that the applicant says it has a high level of confidence in its accuracy.



Of note is that the broad swathe of trees are shown over the area where the applicant will install its underground cables. Whilst it is not yet confirmed if the cables in this area will be installed using Trenchless or Open Trenched, the applicant has confirmed that there should be no planting over underground cables, unless installed using Trenchless technique and then only short rooted planting, hedgerow not trees. This in reality means there will be a wide corridor where no planting is undertaken as it would seem unrealistic to plant 30m – 40m wide hedgerows along its length, which would offer little or no screening in any case. Although not clearly visible on this image is that there are High Voltage Scottish Power overhead lines where this photomontage appears to show tree cover, clearly this will not be feasible.

We do not share the applicants high degree of confidence in the accuracy and the result is that we will have a permanent view of the substation, clearly visible, dominating our view, a large contrast and change in character. The insistence that we would not experience a degree of harm over and above substantial is purely a judgement on the applicant's part and one which we disagree with.

3.0 National Objectives

Throughout this process, hearings and documentation the applicant has stressed as to how this scheme adheres to National Policies and the Drive for Net Zero. Whilst we accept that this development could help in reducing the reliance on fossil fuels this should not be at any price to the communities and people it seeks to serve and whilst quoting throughout its documentation various National Policies, against the clear and obvious overall aims of National Policy it fails.

Although we have said before, we do not apologise for highlighting that this development completely fails in respect that it is a:

Non Integrated design,

Non Coordinated approach

No consideration of holistic development

Outdated point to point radial connection not fit for the 21st century.

The result is that this development overall will be more costly, passed on to us all, with greater impacts on the environment, social and the community.

Despite saying that they have consulted as to cable routes, substation site, it has been obvious from the very beginning that it was all about cost and environmental and community impacts were much less important. At the very first public awareness session one of the representatives let slip the route the onshore cables would take, during various site surveys one of the contractors already knew the onshore substation location and later on another contractor knew that the design would involve Gas Insulated Switchgear. All this was in advance of the public consultation feedback or notification to the examination, so decisions had already been taken and perhaps you can understand our scepticism about this process and its fairness.

The final Investment decision by BP/EnBW will be about Return on Investment and pay back years and not about Net Zero, it will be about future anticipated profits and not about how it might impact the local environment, communities or people. This development should not be considered by examiners and Secretary of State as purely about Net Zero.

4.0 Examination Process

We acknowledge the engagement with ourselves that the applicant has afforded and the respect examiners have shown. It is abundantly clear that despite senior BP management advising us to engage with the DCO examination, this examination is not wholly appropriate to consider the significant impacts on individuals like ourselves (something which senior management would have been well aware), even though we are virtually surrounded by the onshore construction activities and as agreed by the applicant, a unique case. Due to our classification within this process we do not qualify for any technical, legal or professional help which has left us having to spend huge amounts of time and some amount of our monies in going through and trying to understand the myriad of documents and 1000's of pages. We recognise this is likely to be out of scope of the examination and certainly the secretary of state will say it's a matter for the developer and ourselves but if there was any way that in the future unique cases impacting individuals, a mechanism could be adopted that considers the impacts on individuals differently, it might save others having to be subjected to this stress and anxiety and offer a fairer system.

5.0 Cumulative Impacts

5.1 Noise

We do not agree with the applicant's position that cumulative noise impacts have been adequately considered for our property, nor for other residents around the onshore substation site. At Deadline 6 the applicant reiterated that;
'The applicant has applied a proportionate approach to its cumulative construction noise assessment, focussing on the closest common residential receptors to the projects considered. The applicant refers to the most recent Statements of Common Ground with Denbighshire County Council and Conwy County Borough Council, which confirm that the methodology that the applicant has applied to assess construction noise impacts, including cumulative impacts and effects is a matter which has been agreed'.

Firstly this reliance on County Council agreement who have had to utilise outside contractor, aided by the applicant, does not offer us any confidence that they have considered the cumulative impacts on our property.

Secondly, the examples used by the applicant as to realistic worst case, which although we listed in our Deadline 5 submission are worthy of summarising:

Awel Y Môr, no cumulative impacts considered for cabling works around the National Grid substation or for those receptors like ourselves who will be exposed to Awel Y Mor cabling works and Mona cabling and substation works.

St Asaph Solar – Operational phase only

National Grid – Operational phase only.

These cumulative noise impacts assessments do not consider worst case scenarios for residents like ourselves who will be exposed to Mona construction works, Awel y Môr cabling works, National Grid extension works and overhead line reconfiguration, along with St Asaph Solar, IGP solar/battery and almost certainly Mares Interconnector, who although delayed in formal application still intend to be operational by 2030.

5.2 Visual and Traffic

The assessment of cumulative impacts during construction have not been realistically assessed for our property. We will clearly see, hear and be impacted by Mona, National Grid, IGP battery storage, Awel y Môr, St Asaph Solar construction and traffic activities.

5.3 Noise Monitoring

The applicant again confirmed at our meeting on 8th January 2025 that noise monitoring should be installed at our property, even though in their Deadline 6 response they have not committed to this, and would be subject to actioning if appropriate by Denbighshire County Council and the applicant's liaison officer. Although this might be welcomed we do have reservations about how this might work in practice, particularly given the resource issues that exist with the council.

The situation in this vicinity will be complicated with numerous large scale developments and construction activity ongoing at the same time, any and all of which will impact on noise experienced at our property. If a breach in noise levels was noted then who or how will responsibility and action be taken, one can certainly envisage that each development might blame the other party.

The applicant has now stated that a noise limit of 45dB(A) will apply between the hours of 0600-0700 and likely to involve no go areas near our property. Again the complication with other schemes might apply but it would be helpful, aid all involved and surely cannot be

beyond the realms of practicality, that any noise equipment installed for monitoring flags up an immediate alarm should there be any breach. We should not be in a position that on a day to day basis is it subjective or rely on the council to be reviewing data on some kind of weekly/monthly basis, particularly given the known resource concerns and that by the time anything might be done any harm has already occurred.

6.0 Proportionality

The sheer scale of the onshore substation and its land uptake is extremely large in consideration to those substations that currently exist in this area. One would expect as technology improves that the scale of substations would get smaller but apparently not in this case. We understand that examiners at the most recent hearings have requested more information from the applicant regarding this issue but we would like to make the following comment.

We are aware of other solar/battery schemes, including one from the developers own sister company with agreements to connect to the National Grid at Bodelwyddan but as yet have not publicly identified the lands required, we are also aware of an example in East Anglia where large area of lands earmarked for mitigation and screening were subsequently used for battery storage after DCO approval granted.

If the applicant can justify the scale of the proposed substation and is adamant that the further large acreage is wholly required for mitigation and screening then, should examiners recommend and approval be granted that a condition is applied that the substation and the lands cannot be used for any other development.

7.0 Summary and Conclusion

We would like to thank the applicant's representatives in this examination for the engagement with ourselves and their acknowledgement of the predicament we face. We only hope that the message can be suitably portrayed to the ultimate decision makers at BP/EnBW as to how this development will unfairly have significant impact on our quality of life and well-being over it many years of construction. It is simply unfair and unjust that we as individuals should bear the detrimental impacts for the benefit and profitability of BP/EnBW.

We would also like to thank you as examiners and your case team, for the respect and indeed patience that you have afforded us and understand that your role in this examination is difficult, given the political pressures of expediting all and any energy scheme whilst assessing the perceived benefits against economic, environmental and community impact.

This has been a relatively short examination process but we believe at this current time, the application should be recommended to be refused on the grounds that:

True realistic worst case scenarios in terms of noise and visual impacts have not been properly addressed. The applicant has not demonstrated a pragmatic and fair approach by adopting a selective method in their application.

True realistic worst case scenarios in terms of cumulative impacts combined with the numerous other major developments, all constructing over a similar time frame have been downplayed and not thoroughly examined.

It is apparent that whilst environmental. Social and community impacts may have been considered, these have been unfairly outweighed and prioritised by cost.

The proportionality of the onshore substation infrastructure and site is over the top and not justified.

This development offers zero coordination, a non-holistic approach as required by National Policy, only offering an outdated, unsuitable point to point radial connection.

Let's not get kidded by the applicant wanting us to believe that this is about Net Zero, it is a business opportunity and about Return on Investment and pay back years, not about Net Zero, it will be about future anticipated profits and not about how it might impact the local environment, communities or people. This development should not be considered by examiners and Secretary of State as purely about Net Zero.

Finally, whilst perhaps outside the scope of this examination, the sheer number of piece meal major schemes that are planned for this area highlight a clear lack of any strategic approach to energy infrastructures, it is critical, as others have pointed out, that Governments, both UK and Welsh, take ownership and responsibility instead of being subservient, reliant on large PLC's like National Grid, dictating, who have no real interest in the environment or communities like Cefn Meiriadog but only how best to maximise profits for the benefit of its shareholders.