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Your Ref:

Our Ref: EN010014

Date: 2 July 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

**Planning Act 2008 (as amended) – Section 88 and the Infrastructure
Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (as amended) – Rules 4 and 6**

**Application by SP MANWEB for an Order Granting Development Consent for
the North Wales Wind Farms Connection**

**Notice of Preliminary Meeting, availability of relevant representations and
appointment of the Examining Authority**

The Secretary of State has appointed me to act as the lead member of a panel who will be the Examining Authority (ExA) to carry out an examination of the above proposal by SP MANWEB (**see Annex A**).

This letter is an invitation to the Preliminary Meeting to discuss the examination procedure and contains a number of supporting annexes. We would like to thank those of you who submitted relevant representations. These representations have assisted us when preparing our proposals regarding how to examine this application.

Date of meeting: Tuesday 28 July 2015

Seating available from: 9.30am

Meeting begins: 10.00am

Venue: Denbigh Town Hall, Crown Lane, Denbigh
Denbighshire LL16 3TB

Os hoffech gwneud cyfraniadau drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yn ystod y Cyfarfod Rhagarweiniol dylech nodi ni o'ch dymuniad i wneud hyn gan fydd cyfieithydd ar gael. Hefyd, mae croeso i chi gwneud sylwadau ysgrifenedig yn y Gymraeg.

The purpose of the Preliminary Meeting is to enable views to be put to us about the way in which the proposal is to be examined. It is important to appreciate that this meeting deals only with procedure, and not the merits of the proposal. The merits of the proposal will only be considered once the examination starts after the Preliminary Meeting has closed.

The Planning Inspectorate will send you a copy of our procedural decision explaining how the proposal is to be examined as soon as practicable after the meeting.

We wish to run a fair, efficient and effective meeting so that all relevant views can be heard. As such, we strongly encourage groups of individuals who have similar views on the procedure to choose one representative to speak for the group.

The agenda for the meeting is in **Annex B**. This has been set following our initial assessment of the principal issues arising on the proposal. That assessment is set out in **Annex C**. As a result of this assessment we wish to hear at the meeting from the Applicant, interested parties, statutory parties and local authorities where they consider changes may be needed to the draft timetable set out in **Annex D**.

Up to date information about the project and the examination can be obtained from:

<http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/NWWFConnection>

This is the address from which we will make copies of all future communications and examination documents available to the public.

Further information is given in Advice Note 8.4, which is available on the National Infrastructure Planning website (<http://bitly.com/1DWa7q7>).

Attending the Preliminary Meeting

If you wish to attend the Preliminary Meeting please write, email or telephone the Planning Inspectorate, using the address and contact details set out at the front of this letter marking correspondence for the attention of Nicholas Coombes, Case Manager. We need to receive your confirmation **by noon, on Tuesday 21 July 2015**.

It will help the management of the meeting and benefit everyone if you also:

- Tell us whether you wish to speak at the meeting and on which agenda items, listing points you wish to make; and
- Inform us if you wish to speak in Welsh at the meeting; and
- Notify us of any special needs you may have (eg Disabled access, hearing loop etc)

The Preliminary Meeting provides a useful introduction to the examination process. We will use it to make procedural decisions that will affect everyone participating in the examination. The meeting provides you with an opportunity to have your say about procedural issues before these decisions are finalised. If you intend to play an active part in the examination or you have questions about procedure it is useful to attend the meeting. However, please note that you are not required to attend the Preliminary Meeting in order to participate in the examination. If you are an interested party you

will still be able to make written representations and participate in any hearings that are arranged. Should you no longer wish to be an interested party and do not wish to be involved in the examination process, you can notify the case manager of this in writing.

After the Preliminary Meeting

Shortly after the Preliminary Meeting you will be sent a letter setting out the timetable for the examination. The audio recording and a note of the meeting will also be published on the project page of the National Infrastructure Planning website.

Interested parties have the right to request an open floor hearing and those persons affected by any request for compulsory acquisition or temporary possession of their land or rights may request a compulsory acquisition hearing. Any other issue specific hearings are at the discretion of the ExA and will be arranged if we feel that consideration of oral representations would ensure an issue is adequately considered. Our examination will comprise consideration of written representations about the proposal and any oral representations made at the hearings, in addition to consideration of the project documents, policy and legal positions, site inspections and any other matters we consider to be relevant and important.

All relevant and important matters will be taken into account when we make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, who will take the final decision in this case.

Procedural decisions made by the ExA under ss 88(3), 89(3) and 93(1) of the Planning Act 2008

We have made some preliminary procedural decisions. These include the setting of deadlines for the agreement and submission of Statements of Common Ground (SoCG); the notification by statutory parties, or a local authority without direct responsibility in the proposed development area, of the wish to be considered an interested party; an invitation to two 'Other persons' to attend the Preliminary Meeting and to participate in the Examination; and a request for the applicant to provide a schedule of impacts and mitigation. These procedural decisions are set out at **Annex F** and in the timetable at **Annex D**.

Your status in the examination

This letter has been sent to you because you (or the body you represent) fall within one of the categories in s88(3) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA 2008).

If you are not an interested party or a prescribed consultee (i.e. body specified in the relevant regulations supporting the PA 2008), you have received this letter because we wish to invite you to the Preliminary Meeting as an 'Other person' because it appeared to us that the examination could be informed by your participation. 'Other persons' have a reference number beginning with NWWFC-OP.

If you have made a "relevant representation" or have a legal interest in the land affected by the proposal (reference numbers beginning with 100 or NWWFC-AFP), you have a formal status as an interested party in the examination process.

Interested parties will receive notifications from the Planning Inspectorate about the examination throughout the process and may make written and oral submissions regarding the proposal.

If you are a prescribed consultee (i.e. body specified in the relevant regulations supporting the PA 2008) but have not made a relevant representation (reference number beginning with NWWFC-SP) you will not automatically be an interested party. However, following the Preliminary Meeting, you will have a further opportunity to notify the Planning Inspectorate that you wish to be treated as an interested party.

If you are not sure whether you are an interested party, please contact the case manager using the details at the top of this letter. Information regarding the formal status of interested parties and how you can get involved in the process is set out in the Planning Inspectorate Advice Note 8 on the National Infrastructure Planning website (<http://bit.ly/1zdsVW5>).

Award of costs

We also draw your attention to the possibility of the award of costs against interested parties who behave unreasonably. You should be aware of the relevant cost guidance that applies to National Infrastructure Projects. The "Awards of costs; examinations of applications for development consent orders" is available on the National Infrastructure Planning website (<http://bit.ly/1ODUUFi>).

Management of Information

The Planning Inspectorate has a commitment to transparency. Therefore, all information submitted for this Project (if accepted) and any record of advice which has been provided is recorded on the National Infrastructure Planning website together with the name of the person or organisation who asked for the advice. The privacy of any other personal information has been protected in accordance with the Planning Inspectorate's Information Charter.

We look forward to working with all parties in the examination of this Application.

Yours faithfully

Lillian Harrison

Dr Lillian Harrison
Lead Member of the Panel of Examining Inspectors

Annexes

- A** Notice of appointment of Examining Authority
- B** Agenda for the Preliminary Meeting
- C** Initial assessment of principal issues
- D** Draft timetable for examination of the Application
- E** Availability of Examination Documents
- F** Procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority

Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (as amended) – Rule 4

Application by SP MANWEB for an Order Granting Development Consent for the North Wales Wind Farms Connection

Notice of appointment of Examining Authority

On 19 June 2015 a panel of examining inspectors was appointed to hold the examination of the above application under Section 65 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended).

The panel of examining inspectors are:

- Lillian Harrison BSc MSc PhD MRTPI MCIWM (lead member)
- John Lloyd-Jones OBE
- Jo Dowling BA MPHIL MRTPI

Pauleen Lane

**Dr Pauleen Lane CBE FICE MBA
Group Manager, National Infrastructure
On behalf of the Secretary of State**

Agenda for the Preliminary Meeting

Date of meeting:	Tuesday 28 July 2015
Seating available from:	9.30am
Meeting begins:	10.00am
Venue:	Denbigh Town Hall, Crown Lane, Denbigh Denbighshire LL16 3TB

Welcome and introductions
Examining Authority's remarks about the examination process
Draft timetable for the examination – see Annex D
<p>Deadlines for submission of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements of Common Ground • Comments on Relevant Representations • All Written Representations • Local Impact Reports • Responses to ExA's written questions • Notifications relating to hearings
Break (if needed)
<p>Hearings and accompanied site inspection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of accompanied site inspection to application site and surrounding area • Date of issue specific hearings on the Development Consent Order • Date reserved for open floor hearings • Time period reserved for issue specific hearings • Time period reserved for compulsory acquisition hearings
Initial assessment of principal issues
Any other business
Close of Preliminary Meeting

Please note: Please register and be available from the start and throughout the meeting. The ExA will conclude the meeting as soon as all relevant contributions have been made. If there are any additional matters to be dealt with or submissions take a considerable amount of time the ExA may change the order of the agenda items.

Initial assessment of principal issues

This is the initial assessment of the issues arising from consideration by the Examining Authority of the application documents and relevant representations received. It is not a comprehensive or exclusive list of all relevant matters; regard will be had to all important and relevant matters in reaching a recommendation after the examination is concluded.

The policy and consenting requirements and documents associated with the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) are an integral part of the examination and are therefore not necessarily set out as separate principal issues. In addition, it should be noted that a number of these principal issues set out below have an interrelationship and overlap and these will be reflected in the examination.

Principal Issue	Brief Amplification
Nature of Development and Relationship with the wind farms at Clocaenog; Brenig; Derwydd Bach and Nant Bach as well as the electricity sub-station at St Asaph and the new collector station at Clocaenog Forest.	Relationship between parties involved in the development; scope of proposals; sequencing and agreements between the wind farm developers and the applicant; other projects in the locality including construction and/or enhancement work required to the collector station and sub-station, diversion of other overhead power lines and timetables; in-combination effects. The reliability and productivity of the proposed technology compared to alternatives.
Landscape and Visual Impact	The scale and size of the wood pole lines and cables including limits of deviation; size, location and design of terminal pole; proximity to the nearest AONBs and locally designated landscape areas, methodology used for consideration of impacts; impacts upon community receptors, tourism and public footpaths including the North Wales Pilgrims Way and mitigation measures proposed in relation to landscape and visual impacts.
Heritage	Impacts upon nearby listed buildings. Mechanism for ensuring that any heritage interests that are discovered during the construction are identified recorded and preserved in situ if necessary.
Biodiversity and geological conservation	Impacts upon European and nationally protected species including otters, badgers, bats, great crested newts and dormice; impacts on historic woodlands and hedgerows, locally designated wildlife sites and geological conservation sites; mitigation measures proposed in relation to biodiversity and geological conservation interests.
Flood Risk	Impacts from the construction of the Development upon the flood plain of the River Elwy.

Construction Phase	Routing and timing of HGV movements; location and impacts arising from temporary construction compound(s); noise and dust emissions associated with the construction phase; significance of impacts and proposed mitigation; proposals for dealing with any contaminated land (should it be encountered); location and timescales of piling; mitigation for construction impacts; impacts upon Public Rights of Way (PRoW) during construction.
Operational Phase	Lighting of towers and marking of wires for wire conspicuity; health effects from the high voltage overhead transmission wires; cumulative impacts with other developments including other electricity infrastructure and other development at Groesffordd Marli; community benefits from the development.
Decommissioning	Operational life of the wind farms; the decommissioning programme for the Development.
Socio-economic	Impacts upon local businesses and tourism; long-term impacts upon agriculture and the farming community; local employment opportunities during construction phase.
Land-use and Land-take for the Development	Agricultural land uses; the width of the land-take that would be required.
Content of DCO	Relevant definitions, disapplication of legislative provisions; discharging requirements; nature of requirements; detailing management plans; position on agreement of protective provisions; audit trail for DCO revisions; other permissions and licences that would be required and tailpieces.
Monitoring, mitigation and management plans	Mechanism for the agreement and implementation of monitoring, mitigation and management plans throughout the life of the project including the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), Piling Method Statement; Outline Ecological Management Plan (EcMP); Outline Landscape Management Plan; Hedgerow Management Plan and Traffic Management Plan.
Compulsory Acquisition (CA) and other land matters	Nature, extent and scope of rights and powers sought by CA (including access for maintenance); temporary possession powers; project funding and guarantees for compensation; Crown Land; Statutory Undertakers Land; human rights and consideration of alternatives to CA (including modifications to the scheme); Section 122/123/127/135/136/138 tests of the Planning Act (PA) 2008; Book of Reference.

Draft timetable for examination of the application

The Examining Authority's (ExA) is under a duty to complete the examination of the application by the end of the period of 6 months beginning with the day after the close of the preliminary meeting.

The ExA's examination of the application takes the form of consideration of all application documents, relevant and written representations. The ExA will also consider oral representations made at the hearings.

Item	Matters	Due Dates
1	Preliminary Meeting	Tuesday 28 July 2015
2	Issue by ExA of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination timetable • ExA's written questions (on website) 	As soon as practicable following the Preliminary Meeting
3	<p>Deadline 1</p> <p>Deadline for receipt of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on relevant representations • Written representations (WRs) by all interested parties • Local Impact Reports from any local authorities • Statements of Common Ground requested by the ExA • Responses to ExA's first written questions • Notification of wish to make oral representations at the issue specific hearings • Notification of wish to speak at an open floor hearing • Notification of wish to speak at a compulsory acquisition hearing • Notification of wish to attend the accompanied site inspection, suggested locations and justifications • Notification by statutory parties of wish to be considered an interested party 	Tuesday 1 September 2015 at noon

4	<p>Deadline 2</p> <p>Deadline for receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on WRs • Comments on Local Impact Reports • Comments on responses to ExA's first written questions • Revised draft DCO from applicant 	<p>Thursday 17 September 2015 at noon</p>
5	Accompanied site inspection (if required)	<p>Tuesday 22 September 2015</p>
6	Open floor hearing	<p>Wednesday 23 September 2015</p>
7	Compulsory acquisition hearing (including, if required, s127 of the Planning Act 2008 issues)	<p>Thursday 24 and Friday 25 September 2015</p>
8	Issue specific hearings (including, if required, landscape, biodiversity and construction issues)	<p>Tuesday 29 September to Thursday 1 October 2015</p>
9	Issue specific hearing on draft DCO	<p>Friday 2 October 2015</p>
10	<p>Deadline 3</p> <p>Deadline for receipt of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-hearing documents • Applicant's revised draft DCO • Any further information requested by the ExA 	<p>Monday 12 October 2015 at noon</p>
11	<p>Deadline 4</p> <p>Deadline for receipt of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on the applicant's revised draft DCO • Comments on any further information requested by the ExA 	<p>Friday 23 October 2015 at noon</p>

12	Issue specific and/or compulsory acquisition hearings (if required)	Tuesday 3 to Wednesday 4 November 2015
13	Deadline 5 Deadline for receipt of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-hearing documents • Any further information requested by the ExA 	Thursday 12 November 2015 at noon
14	Publication of ExA's consultation draft DCO (and RIES if required)	Monday 23 November 2015
15	Deadline 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on ExA's consultation draft DCO (and RIES if required) • Any further information requested by the ExA 	Monday 14 December 2015 at noon
16	Deadline 7 Deadline for receipt of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to comments on the ExA's consultation draft DCO (and RIES if required) • Comments on any further information requested by the ExA 	Monday 4 January 2016 at noon
17	The ExA is under a duty to complete the examination of the application by the end of the period of 6 months beginning with the day after the close of the Preliminary Meeting.	Thursday 28 January 2016

Publication Dates

All information received will be published on the project website as soon as practicable after the deadline for submissions.

<http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/NWWFConnection>

Hearing Agendas

Please note that we will aim to publish a detailed draft agenda for each hearing on the project website at least 5 working days in advance of the hearing date; but the actual agenda on the day of each hearing may be subjected to change at the discretion of the ExA.

Report on the Implications for European Sites (RIES)

Where the applicant has provided a No Significant Effects Report or a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Report with the DCO application, the ExA may decide to issue a RIES during the examination. The RIES is a factual account of the information and evidence provided to the ExA on HRA matters during the examination up to the date of the publication of the RIES, for the purposes of enabling the Secretary of State, as competent authority, to undertake their HRA. It is not the ExA's opinion on HRA matters. Comments on the RIES will be invited by the ExA and any received will be taken into account as part of the ExA's Recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change.

Availability of Examination Documents

SP MANWEB, the applicant, has provided a copy of the application documents as submitted to the Planning inspectorate for inspection and copying at Denbigh and St Asaph One Stop Shops.

All application documents including relevant representations and application documents are available on the National Infrastructure Planning website:

<http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/NWWFConnection>

Documents can be viewed electronically at the following locations.

Electronic Deposit Locations:

Library/ Address		Opening Hours	
Denbigh Library Hall Square Denbigh LL16 3NU		Monday – 9.30am-7pm Tuesday – 9.30am-5pm Wednesday – 9.30am-5pm Thursday – 1pm-5pm Friday – 9.30am-5pm Saturday – 9.30am-12.30pm Sunday - closed	
St Asaph Library The Roe St Asaph LL17 0LU		Monday – 9.30am-4.30pm Tuesday – 1pm-4.30pm Wednesday – 9.30am-4.30pm Thursday – closed Friday – 9.30am-4pm Saturday – closed Sunday – closed	
Printing Costs	B&W printing	B&W copying	Colour printing
A4	15p	10p	35p
A3	N/A	15p	N/A
Link to all council library locations:			
https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/libraries-and-archives/libraries-and-archives.aspx			
http://www.conwy.gov.uk/sectionextra.asp?catid=6579			

Procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority (ExA)

The ExA has made the following procedural decisions under Section 89(3) of the Planning Act 2008:

1. Statements of Common Ground (SoCG)

In relation to some of the principal issues identified in Annex C, the ExA would be assisted by the preparation of SoCGs between the applicant and certain interested parties. The draft timetable for the examination therefore provides a deadline for submission of SoCGs.

The aim of a SoCG is to agree factual information and to inform the ExA and all other parties by identifying where there is agreement and where the differences lie at an early stage in the examination process. It should provide a focus and save time by identifying matters which are not in dispute or need not be the subject of further evidence. It can also usefully state where and why there may be disagreement about the interpretation and relevance of the information. The reasons for the differences and interpretation of the implications of a difference can then be expanded in the evidence. Unless otherwise stated or agreed, the SoCG should be agreed between the applicant and the other relevant interested party or parties, and submitted by the applicant. This list is not exhaustive and the examination may benefit from SoCG between the Applicant and other parties, and on other issues, as the examination proceeds.

A. Wind Farm Developers

RWE NPower Renewables Ltd/RWE Innogy UK
Brenig Wind Ltd
Vattenfall UK
Tegni Cymru Cyf

Including: Timing of construction, operation and decommissioning of the wind farms and other possible projects; legislative requirements for the connector, contractual relationships between parties.

B. Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

Including: Drainage and flood risk matters; impacts upon European Sites; Sites of Special Scientific Interest and European and nationally protected species; landscape and visual amenity assessment methods and impacts; contaminated land; risks to groundwater; disapplication of legislative provisions and the role of NRW in the CEMP and OEcMP.

C. Conwy County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council

Including: Footpaths, road closures and temporary stopping up of roads, noise and emissions during construction; impacts from HGVs, piling impacts and mitigation required for construction impacts upon community receptors. Impacts upon locally designated wildlife sites, important hedgerows and tourism. Proximity to the nearest AONBs and impacts upon them.

D. Welsh Government

Including: Description of the integral development.

E. Snowdonia National Park Authority

Including: Impacts upon the National Park.

F. North Wales Wildlife Trust

Including: Methodology used for assessing impacts upon locally designated wildlife sites and significance of habitat losses.

G. CADW

Including: Impacts on nearby listed heritage assets and draft requirements for a heritage 'watching brief' during construction.

H. Public Health England, Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards (Wales) and the Local Health Board for North Wales (Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board)

Including: Impacts upon health from Electro Magnetic Fields (EMFs), noise and vibration during piling and other construction activities and aerial emissions.

I. Civil Aviation Authority and the Ministry of Defence

Including: Aviation safety

J. Ramblers Association and Cefn Meiriadog and Glasgoed Road Residents and Users Group.

Including: Impacts upon the long distance footpath, the North Wales Pilgrims Way.

The SoCGs should cover the following topics where relevant:

- Methodology for environmental impact assessment including assessment of cumulative effects
- Data collection methods
- Baseline data
- Data/statistical analysis, approach to modelling and presentation of results (including forecast methodologies)
- Full expression of expert judgements and assumptions
- Identification and sensitivity of relevant features and quantification of potential impact
- Likely effects (direct and indirect) on special interest features of sites designated or notified for any nature conservation purpose
- Feasible and deliverable mitigation and method for securing such mitigation within the DCO

2. Schedule of Mitigation Required.

The ExA wishes to receive from the applicant a schedule of all impacts requiring mitigation together with an explanation for each impact identifying where that mitigation is secured in the draft DCO.

3. Invitation to Other Persons.

Under s88(3) of the PA2008 and Rule 6(1) of the Examination Procedure Rules, the ExA is able to invite Other Persons to attend the hearings and participate in the Examination. The ExA has decided to invite the following to become Other Persons: -

- Mr M Williams
- The Ministry of Defence

Advice may be given about applying for an order granting development consent or making representations about an application (or a proposed application). This communication does not however constitute legal advice upon which you can rely and you should obtain your own legal advice and professional advice as required.

A record of the advice which is provided will be recorded on the Planning Inspectorate website together with the name of the person or organisation who asked for the advice. The privacy of any other personal information will be protected in accordance with our Information Charter which you should view before sending information to the Planning Inspectorate.