

**NORTH WALES WINDFARM OVERHEAD LINES EXAMINATION  
DEADLINE 3 SUBMISSION – DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

ATTACHMENT 3 OF 4

IN RELATION TO LAND USE, LAND TAKE AND LAND MANAGEMENT IMPACTS  
HEARING, 1ST OCTOBER

- Summary of presentation from Ian Weaver, Principal Planning Officer, on behalf of  
Councillor Alice Jones

- Examples of planning applications where Denbighshire County Council have  
requested Agricultural Land Quality information in order to assess implications on  
Best and Most Versatile land

- Summary of presentation from Ian Weaver, Principal Planning Officer, on behalf of Councillor Alice Jones

Councillor Jones had apologised for being unable to attend and make representations at the Hearing, but had prepared a 3 page statement for consideration by the Examiners (submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on September 24th).

The statement referred to two main points.

- The Council's concerns over the absence of information in the SPMANweb application on the grade of agricultural land affected by the overhead line, which made it impossible to assess whether there was conflict, and the extent of potential conflict, with Planning Policy Wales 7, Section 4.10 relating to the use of Best and Most Versatile Land (BMV). If Grade 3a land was affected then the proposals involved the loss of BMV land, which PPW 4.10 recognises as a finite resource and sets tests in the assessment of development proposals. There appeared to be no investigation of whether previously developed land or land in lower grades is unavailable.

- The need to ensure the safety of agricultural workers and contractors is not underestimated, and that due regard be had to the increased health and safety dangers from the presence of overhead lines. It was requested that these concerns be accorded weight in the balancing of matters, and in support of the case for undergrounding the line.

- Examples of planning applications where Denbighshire County Council have requested Agricultural Land Quality information in order to assess implications on Best and Most Versatile land (BMV)

In terms of approach to the consideration of significant applications -

Officers of the County Council are aware of the contents of Planning Policy Wales 4.10 and that there are areas of agricultural land in the County which are likely to fall within the definition of Best and Most Versatile land (i.e. Grades 1, 2, and 3a in the DEFRA agricultural land classification system). Dependent on the nature / scale of a particular development proposal, where there is potential loss of BMV agricultural land and conflict with PPW 4.10, if an application does not contain adequate information on the quality of agricultural land to confirm whether BMV is present, and does not demonstrate whether the tests in PPW 4.10 establishing overriding need and whether lower grade land options have been investigated, Officers will request that information in order to address compliance or conflict with PPW.

The most recent example of a request for agricultural land quality information prior to determination of an application was in relation to the proposal for a crematorium on land close to the termination of the overhead line, on Glascoed Road, St Asaph. This was dealt with under Denbighshire planning application code no.31/2013/1069. The applicants undertook a land quality survey, which concluded the site was likely to be Grade 3a land, and they provided a limited commentary on alternative sites investigated. This helped to inform consideration of the application by the County Council, which ultimately refused permission on two grounds - one being conflict with PPW 4.10 (the use of BMV land and the failure to demonstrate adequate investigation of alternative sites on lower grade land). At the subsequent appeal, the appellants provided a detailed assessment of alternative sites to allow the Planning Inspector to consider whether the PPW tests were met.

Other application where Officers have sought agricultural land quality information -

Lleweni, Bodfari holiday lodge development application ref – 30/2008/0187

Land quality information was requested in the course of considering the application. This confirmed the development involved Grade 2 / 3a land. Planning consent was refused on a number of grounds, including use of high quality agricultural land. The subsequent appeal was dismissed including on loss of high grade agricultural land.