

20 March 2015
Ref – 37121P005/NP/tjism

Swansea Council
Civic Centre
Oystermouth Road
Swansea
SA1 3SN

For the attention of Lynne Davies

Dear Ms Davies

Proposed Gas Fuelled Capacity Mechanism Embedded Power Plant at Titanium Road, Timet, near Swansea: Request for a Formal Screening Opinion under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 as amended.

1. Introduction

I write on behalf of Viridis 178 Limited (the applicant) to request a formal Screening Opinion under Regulation 5 of the *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 as amended* on whether a proposal for the development of a gas fuelled capacity mechanism power plant at Titanium Road, Timet, near Swansea requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

2. The Proposed Development

2.1 Site Location

The proposed site is located adjacent to the existing Waunarlyydd Substation as well as the existing Green Frog Power 214 Limited STOR compound on land allocated for the future extension of Westfield Industrial Park on the western side of Swansea. The site is approximately (~) 0.57 hectares (ha) in area. The approximate national grid reference for the centre of the site is SS606963. A site location plan is attached.

The proposed development site is located some 70 m from the Afon Lian to the north of the site and is currently surrounded by open fields to the west and south, whilst a more wooded area lies to the north separating the site from the Afon Lian. The site is accessed via the existing access road to the Western Power owned and operated substation from Titanium Road, which provides access on to the highways network, specifically the A483 in Fforest-fach.

2.2 Description of the Proposed Development

Viridis 178 Limited is seeking to develop an embedded small scale gas fuelled Capacity Mechanism power plant adjacent to its existing STOR compound and the existing Waunarlyydd Substation. Such power plants form the central column of the Government's Energy Policy and will provide back-up energy supplies during potential energy blackout periods.

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Viridis 178 Limited has a contract to supply electrical power via the recent capacity mechanism auction. These plants will operate on a short-term basis meeting peak capacity within the electrical distribution network. They are expected to operate for up to 1,200 hours per year, but when called by the National Grid, they have to reach maximum power output within 2 minutes and supply electricity for the duration of the call period.

The proposed development will see the installation of a series of gas fired spark ignition engines, resulting in a total installed capacity of approximately 95MW thermal input. Engines offer a number of advantages over other combustion techniques for this type of application including short duration to full power output, high levels of availability, reliability, optimum engine and high generation efficiency, and the possibility to match the electrical requirements with the number of operational engines. Each engine will burn natural gas, which will be transported to site via underground HDPE pipes from the local gas distribution system with the resultant electricity being exported via a transfer to the main electrical distribution grid.

The proposed development will comprise a secure compound in which will be sited containerised generating and other high-voltage equipment including transformers, capacitors, switchgear, etc. The proposed compound will be enclosed by a 2.4 m high anti cut-and-climb security fence. The generators are connected in series and will be housed in bespoke acoustic containers. Each engine is connected to an electrical generator. Each unit will also have an air blast cooler, silencer, and stack mounted on top of the engine container. The containers will be designed to minimise the noise levels emitted by the engines. A proposed site plan is attached.

3. Environmental Assessment

This request for a Screening Option is submitted to Swansea Council under the procedures set out in Part II of the *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 as amended* (hereafter referred to as 'the Regulations').

The proposed development is **not** categorised as any of the activities under Schedule 1 of the Regulations, for which the submission of an EIA is mandatory. As such, it is appropriate to consider the proposed development in the context of paragraph 3(a) (industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water) under Schedule 2 of the Regulations. The thresholds outlined determine whether a development falls within Schedule 2 of the Regulations whereby an EIA **may** be required if the development has the potential to generate significant effects.

For this development, the applicable thresholds to be taken into account when determining if the proposals fall within Schedule 2 are defined as follows:

- ▶ The area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare.

In respect of the above, the proposed development area is 0.57 ha and therefore falls within the realms of this threshold. As such, the next step is to consider whether the proposals constitute EIA development.

In coming to a decision on the need for an EIA, the Council will need to decide whether the proposed development is likely to have any significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location. Specifically, the Regulations require that such proposals be assessed against three broad criteria, namely:

- ▶ The characteristics of the proposed development, e.g. its size, use of natural resources, quantities of pollution and waste generated;

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- ▶ The sensitivity of the receiving environment; and
- ▶ The characteristics and significance of potential effects (magnitude and duration).

The remainder of this letter considers these criteria in more detail.

4. Criteria for Screening Development

4.1 Characteristics of the Proposed Development

(a) The Size of the Proposed Development

As identified above, the proposed development site covers an area of 0.57 ha and the maximum height of the facility would be 2.4 m. As such, the proposed development is considered to be limited in size and scale and thus does not warrant the preparation of an EIA.

(b) Cumulation with Other Development

No other developments are currently proposed within the site, and as such, it is considered that there will be no cumulative effects associated with the operation of the proposed development. Notwithstanding this, the proposed site does fall within a proposed area allocated for mixed commercial, employment and residential use as identified in the Pre-Deposit Draft of the emerging Swansea Local Development Plan; an area which is being promoted by Persimmon Homes (West Wales) Ltd as the Waunarlwydd / Fforestfach Strategy Development Area. Nevertheless, the proposed site falls within the proposed employment areas and is not in close proximity to any residential uses or other sensitive receptors. It is therefore proposed to carry out appropriate air quality and noise assessments as part of any planning application.

(c) The Use of Natural Resources

The construction of the proposed facility will not require the importation of significant quantities of natural resources.

(d) The Production of Waste

Construction activities associated with the proposed development will result in the generation of limited arisings. The approach adopted will be to retain as much of this material on-site.

(e) Pollution and Nuisances

The nature of the proposed development means that it is not predicted to give rise to any increased pollution or nuisance. Notwithstanding this, air quality effects arising from the development would be considered as part of any planning application and covered by the Environmental Permit application made to Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

In terms of nuisance and especially noise, due to the operational nature of the proposed development, it is not anticipated that the facility would give rise to any significant adverse noise effects. As with air quality though, noise effects arising from the development would be considered as part of any planning application and covered by the Environmental Permit application made to NRW.

(f) Risk of Accidents, having regard in particular to Substances or Technologies to be Used

No untested technologies or unusually hazardous substances will be used during construction of the proposed facility. Furthermore, the use of any potential pollutants will be

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appropriately managed in accordance with best practice and NRW guidance. An Environmental Permit is expected to be required for the proposed facility.

4.2 Location of the Proposed Development

(a) The Existing Land Use

As noted above, the proposed development is to be located adjacent to the existing Waunarlyydd Substation and the existing Green Frog Power 214 Limited STOR compound, with the Afon Lian to the north of the site separated by a wooded area.

The site does not fall within any statutory landscape or ecological designations. Due to the nature and scale of the proposed development and its immediate surroundings, it is considered unlikely that it would have any significant adverse effects on any landscape or ecological designations. Notwithstanding this, any planning application would be supported by assessments of potential effects (both direct and indirect) on ecology and flood risk.

(b) The Relative Abundance, Quality and Regenerative Capacity of Natural Resources in the Area

It is anticipated that no exceptional or unique natural features will be lost or significantly affected by the proposed development.

(c) The Absorption of the Natural Environment, Paying Particular attention to the following areas:

- ▶ Wetlands – no wetlands will be directly affected by the proposals;
- ▶ Coastal Zones – no coastal zones will be affected by the proposals;
- ▶ Mountain and forest areas – no mountain or forest areas will be affected by the proposals;
- ▶ Nature reserves and parks – no nature reserves and parks will be affected by the proposals;
- ▶ Areas classified or protected under Member States legislation, areas designated by Member States pursuant to Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds and Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora – no sites designated under Council Directive 79/409/EEC or Council Directive 92/43/EEC (SPAs and SACs) will be affected by the proposals;
- ▶ Areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in Community Legislation have already been exceeded – no areas in which the environmental quality standards laid down in Community Legislation will be affected by the proposals;
- ▶ Densely Populated Areas – no densely populated areas will be affected by the proposed development; and
- ▶ Landscapes of Historical, Cultural or Archaeological Significance - no landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance will be affected by the proposals.

4.3 Characteristics of the Potential Impact

- ▶ The extent of the impact (geographical area and the size of the population): It is anticipated that the extent of impact will be limited to the 0.57 ha development site and its immediate vicinity only. Notwithstanding this, an air quality assessment will accompany the planning application to demonstrate that the proposed development would not have any significant adverse effects on the wider area's air quality;

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- ▶ The trans-frontier nature of the project: The proposed development is entirely in the administrative area of Swansea Council;
- ▶ The magnitude and complexity of the impact: Due to the scale and nature of the proposed development and the fact that the proposed development would take place adjacent to the existing substation and STOR compound, the magnitude of impacts are considered to be moderate and limited;
- ▶ The probability of the impact: The proposed works will result in effects that are limited to the proposed ~0.57 ha development site and its immediate vicinity only. The probability of this impact is certain;
- ▶ The duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact: Disturbance to sensitive receptors during the construction phase will be localised and temporary in duration. Once operational, whilst any negative effects arising from the scheme will be permanent, due to the scale and nature of the proposed development, it is predicted that these would not be significant in EIA terms.

5. Conclusions

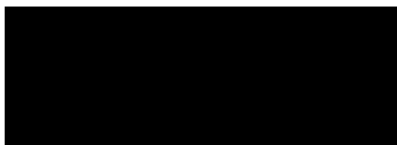
In summary, it is predicted that the proposed development will be of a nature and scale that would not result in any significant adverse environmental effects on the surrounding area. In this context, it is considered that the proposed development of a gas felled capacity mechanism embedded power plant at Timet, near Swansea does **not** require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment under the provisions of the *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 as amended*.

Notwithstanding this, as noted above, due to the nature of the proposed development, it is considered appropriate to incorporate environmental appraisals to support the planning application with a particular focus on ecology, air quality, noise, and flood risk.

We trust we have provided sufficient information within this letter for the Planning Authority to formulate its Screening Opinion but should you require any additional information or should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours faithfully



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Enc: Site Location Plan
Proposed Site Plan

C: David Sheppard – GF Energy Ltd