



**PARC CENEDLAETHOL BANNAU BRYCHEINIOG
BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK**

David Cross
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Unit 5
Triangle Business Park
Pentrebach
Merthyr Tydfil
CF48 4TQ

Date: 7 January 2021
Officer: Donna Bowhay
Your Ref:
Our Ref: 20/19095/FRI

Dear Sirs,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012

Proposal: "Construction a 9ML 2-cell reservoir and associated engineering, access and landscaping works"
Address: Pengarnddu Service Reservoir, Pengarnddu Industrial Estate, Dowlais Top, Merthyr Tydfil CF48 2TA

Thank you for your consultation received 5 October 2020 regarding the above and I apologise for the delay in responding.

Details of the application

The application site, is located at the existing covered Pengarnddu Service Reservoir, Pengarnddu Industrial Estate, Merthyr Tydfil. The development proposals for the site, comprise a new covered service reservoir and valve house with associated pumps, pipework (overflow and washout), mains water connections (inlet and outlet), kiosks for electrical equipment, sustainable drainage system, an internal access road, landscape proposals and a perimeter security fence.

The site lies approximately 1.9km from the southern boundary of the National Park.

A Landscape and Visual Assessment accompanies the application. The Study Area extends to a 2.5km radius from the site and to refine the assessment, a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been generated within the Study Area, which represents the theoretical area from which any part of the proposed development may be seen. The ZTV extends northwards and eastwards across Merthyr Common, including land within Brecon Beacons National Park.

Viewpoint 6 at GR- 306893,211003 represents users of Open Access Land at Castell-y-nos within the Brecon Beacons National Park, looking south east. From this viewpoint the foreground is formed by limestone rock formations and wider moorland of Merthyr Common, beyond which the site is seen in the distance, in the immediate context of Pengarnddu Industrial Estate, and wind turbines therein, together with powerlines and telecommunications infrastructure. The southern reaches of Merthyr Common and The Valleys, beyond, form the wider backdrop.

The LVIA states that during construction, vegetation clearance would be limited and occur only where necessary; those landscape elements to be retained, such as trees and shrubs, would be protected during construction and areas of landscape that are temporarily disturbed during construction, including areas of grassland, would be restored on completion. The proposed development would largely comprise covered infrastructure, with careful profiling and seeding of surrounding earthworks to integrate the proposals with the contextual open, moorland landscape. Whilst the roof of the service reservoir would be covered with gravel this would form a recessive element and would not be readily noticeable where it occurs in distant views of the proposed development. Kiosks would be coloured green, in response to vegetation within the landscape. Industrial-looking metal palisade fencing at the site perimeter would be avoided, instead new fencing would comprise more visually permeable green wire mesh, to limit intrusion within the landscape and visual amenity.

In terms of potential impacts, the LVIA states that vegetation clearance would be limited, resulting in minimal disruption to landscape and visual amenity. Construction activities associated with the proposed development, more generally, such as the movement of plant and vehicles, earthworks and the creation of material stockpiles, would introduce temporary elements within the landscape. These activities would generally be seen in the context of Pengarnddu Industrial Estate together with power and telecommunications infrastructure, such that landscape character and quality, and visual amenity, would not be notably altered. Overall, considering the nature of construction activities, particularly their very transient characteristics, the magnitude of landscape and visual impacts is considered to be low adverse, and, taking into account sensitivities, the overall significance of landscape and visual effects during construction is considered to be moderate adverse.

During the operational phase, the LVIA states that the proposed development would largely comprise covered infrastructure, with limited above ground components including small kiosks and site perimeter fencing. The profiling and acid grassland seeding of earthworks, and appropriate management thereafter (low frequency cutting), would integrate the proposals with the surrounding open moorland landscape. Kiosks would be coloured green, in response to vegetation within the landscape, and industrial-looking metal palisade fencing would be avoided - instead more visually permeable green wire mesh fencing would be used, to limit intrusion within the landscape. As a result, there would be only minor change to baseline landscape character. Overall, the magnitude of landscape impact is considered to be low adverse. Taking into account medium landscape sensitivity, the overall significance of landscape effect is considered to be minor adverse.

In terms of the impacts to visual amenity from Viewpoint 6: Open Access Land at Castell-y-nos, Brecon Beacons National Park, looking south east - the LVIA states that the proposed development would form a very minor, distant element in a broad panorama, set within the immediate context of Pengarnddu Industrial Estate, and wind turbines, together with powerlines and telecommunications infrastructure. The change in view would be barely noticeable. As a result, the magnitude of visual impact is considered to be negligible adverse. Taking into account high visual sensitivity, the overall significance of visual effect is considered to be negligible adverse.

LVIA Conclusions

The landscape and visual implications of the proposed development have been considered through landscape and visual impact assessment. The site falls within the setting of the Brecon Beacons National Park. The proposed development responds to this context through careful siting and design, such that the proposals would be well integrated with the site locality and would result in minor alteration to local landscape character and views, overall.

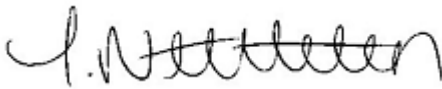
NRW, in their comments are of the opinion there would be no adverse landscape or visual impacts on the National Park. The proposed development lies approximately 1.9km from the boundary of Brecon Beacons National Park, within upland moorland that extends northwards across Merthyr Common towards the National Park. Given the distance from the National Park and the low-lying nature of the development, it would be scarcely visible from high ground within the park. The submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment prepared by Mott Macdonald, revision 01, dated July 2020, concludes negligible adverse effects from Viewpoint

6, Castell-y-nos, within the National Park. The viewpoint appears to be just outside the ZTV, however we do not anticipate adverse visual effects at this distance. We are of the opinion there would be no adverse landscape or visual impacts on the National Park. We note the reservoir roof would be gravel covered. We recommend a dark-coloured gravel finish to the reservoir roof surface to minimise any potential adverse visual effects from high ground.

Consideration

The conclusions of the submitted LVIA are agreed – that there would be no adverse landscape or visual impacts on the National Park, subject to appropriate conditions being imposed to secure the mitigation measures proposed in terms of protecting retained vegetation, and the proposed subdued colour of the proposed reservoir roof, kiosks and the security fencing. No objections are raised to the proposed development.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Nettleton', written in a cursive style.

Tracy Nettleton
Planning and Heritage Manager

Yr ydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg. Bydd unrhyw ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg yn cael ei ateb yn y Gymraeg a ni fydd unrhyw gyswllt trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi yn y mater sy'n cael ei drin.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in the matter being dealt with.