

Our Ref: 2658-02/JM

19 February 2024

Planning Department
Wrexham County Borough Council
Guildhall
Wrexham
LL11 1AY

Dear Sir / Madam,

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A FIBRE OPTIC CABLE AND HYDRANT CONNECTION PIPE (AMENDED ROUTE OF PERMISSION REFERENCE P/2023/0409) FOR THE APPROVED LEGACY BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM FACILITY (PLANNING REF: P/2023/0175) OFF BRONWYLFA ROAD, WREXHAM

Introduction

We hereby apply, on behalf of HD639LEG Ltd (hereafter referred to as 'the Applicant' or 'Pelagic Energy'), for planning permission in respect of the above development (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development'). The planning application has been submitted electronically via the Planning Portal (ref: PP-12817379) and comprises:

- This cover letter;
- Planning Application Forms and Certificates;
- Planning Application Drawings:
 - Location Plan (drawing no: 2658-02-24);
 - Statutory Plan (drawing no: 2658-02-25);
 - General Arrangement (drawing no: 2658-02-26);
 - Existing Site Plan (drawing no: 2658-02-27);
- Legacy BESS Services RAMS, prepared by Avian Ecology; and
- The fee of £460 which has been paid via Wrexham Council's online payment service using a credit / debit card.

Context to the Proposed Development

Consent was granted on 24th July 2023 for the Legacy Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) facility on land to the north of the National Grid Substation off Bronwylfa Road (ref: P/2023/0175). The BESS facility is capable of storing excess electricity from the grid at times of surplus supply in the system and exporting it back to the grid at times of high demand / reduced generation capacity.

Subsequently, a standalone planning application was submitted for a fibre optic cable and hydrant pipe between the BESS site and nearby utilities connection points to the south at Bronwylfa Road (ref: P/2023/0409). This application was approved by Wrexham Council on 4th September 2023.

Whilst the Applicant had previously consulted with National Grid on the appropriate route through the substation for laying these services, National Grid have since requested that the route is amended slightly for safety reasons, due to the requirement to keep an appropriate distance from the operational assets of the substation.

The amended services route would sit outside of the consented services site boundary and therefore requires planning permission. Accordingly, this application has been submitted to secure permission for a small amendment to the services connections route.

The Proposed Development

The existing site of the Proposed Development is shown on drawing 2658-02-27, and the location is shown on drawing 2658-02-24. The proposed services (fibre optic cable and hydrant pipe) are indicatively shown on drawing 2658-02-26 (the precise position within the redline boundary would be determined through further assessment). As discussed previously, the proposed route shown is an amendment to the route approved under P/2023/0409.

A description of each element of these services is provided below.

Fibre Optic Cable

The BESS facility requires a fibre optic connection to enable remote operation of the site. Connection to the network will be via a point at Bronwylfa Road to the south, as shown on the consented drawings of P/2023/0409. The proposed fibre optic cable amendment comprises a c.132m section around the north side of the substation from the internal substation access road.

The cable would be installed within a PVC duct which would be laid within a mechanically dug trench, approx. c.300m deep and c.300m wide. The trench would be dug entirely beneath the existing hardstanding of the substation, which would be reinstated after.

Hydrant Pipe

The BESS facility requires a connection to a hydrant water source in case of fire emergency. As with the proposed fibre optic cable, a c.132m water hydrant pipe section is proposed to be re-routed from that consented under P/2023/0409 via the north of the substation.

The hydrant connection pipe measures approx. c.90mm diameter and would be laid within the same/an adjacent trench as the fibre optic cable and sit entirely beneath the existing hardstanding of the substation.

Planning and Environmental Issues

The proposed amended fibre optic cable and hydrant pipe would sit entirely beneath the existing hardstanding of the substation. The planning considerations for installing such services here have previously been considered acceptable through the consented services application P/2023/0409.

The fibre optic cable and hydrant pipe would run entirely beneath the existing hardstanding and so there would be no above ground visual element and no ecological impacts would occur. The site is

within Flood Zone 1 and so not at risk of flooding and regardless, no change in permeable surfacing would occur.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures

Wrexham Council have previously conditioned an Amphibian Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) for the works relating to the consented services application P/2023/0409. A RAMS document was submitted to and subsequently approved by Wrexham Council through the discharge of condition 3 of P/2023/0409 (discharge of condition ref: P/2023/0717). The measures set out within this RAMS document would be equally applicable to the amended services route construction works. Accordingly, this RAMS document has been re-submitted in support of the amended services application.

Summary and Conclusions

This planning application is for an amended section of the fibre optic cable and hydrant connection pipe to that approved under P/2023/0409. These services will support the consented Legacy BESS facility (P/2023/0175). The amended route is necessary for safety reasons and it would sit entirely under the existing hardstanding of the substation. The amended services route would have no greater impact than the currently consented route.

Based on the foregoing, it is recommended that the award of planning permission for the Proposed Development is fully justified, and thus should be granted.

We trust that the content of this letter and the application documentation are self-explanatory. However, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at should you have any queries or require any further information.

Yours faithfully

Jonathan Maginness

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Senior Consultant on behalf of Axis

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