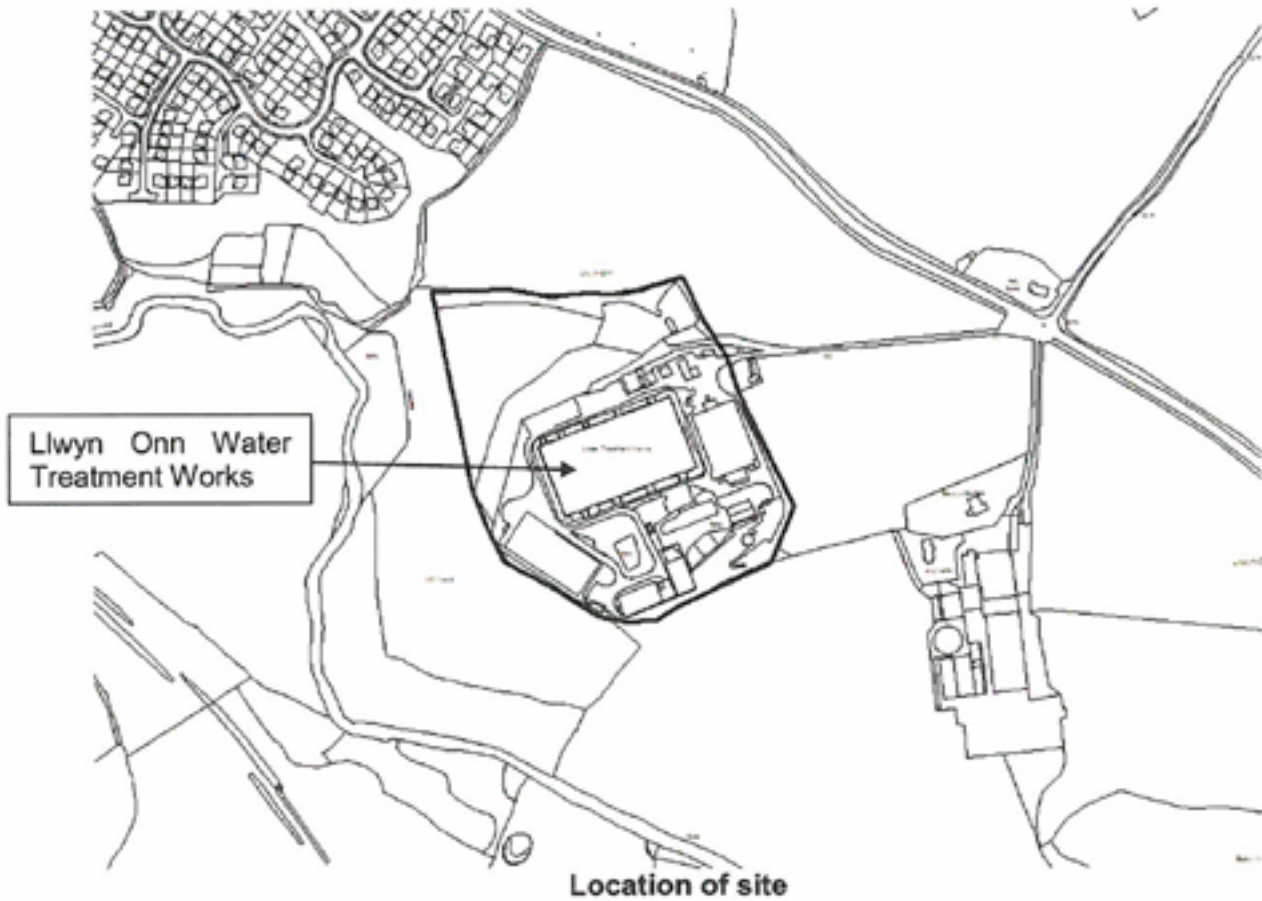
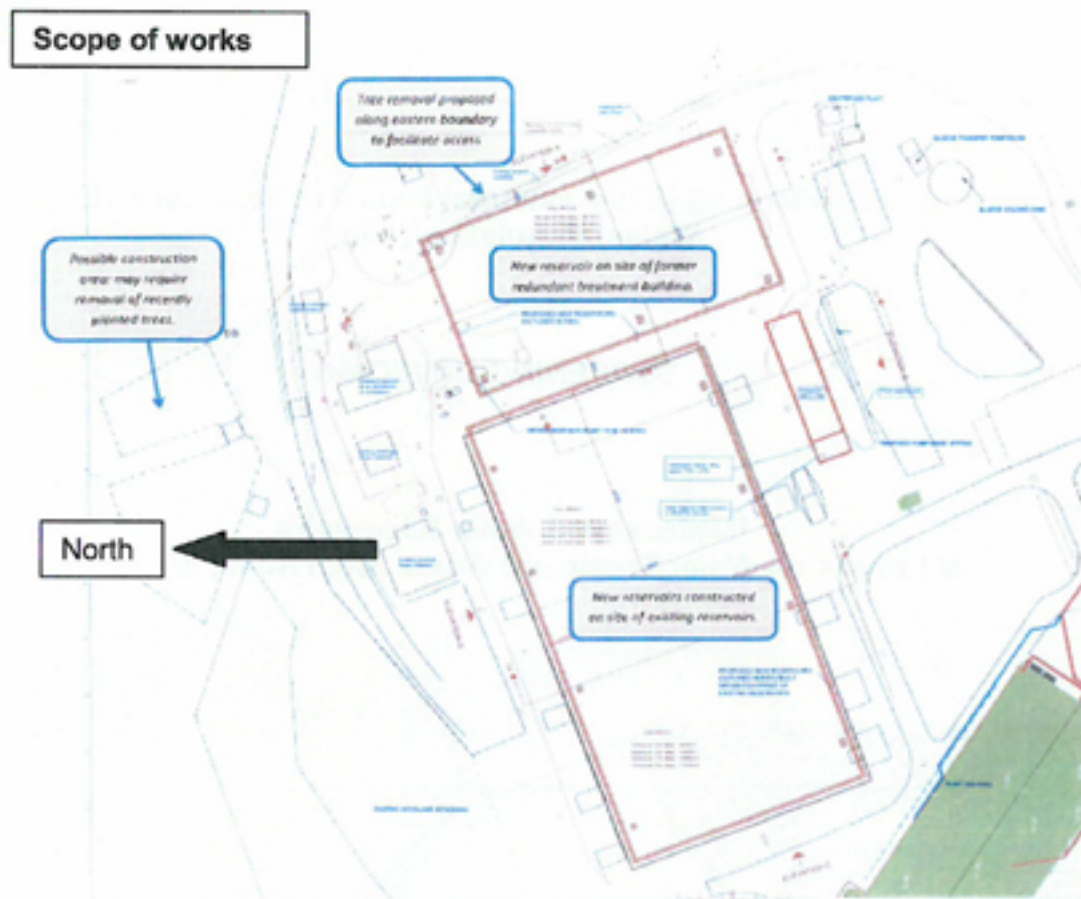


Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999

SCREENING OPINION

**Replacement Water Reservoirs
at Llwyn Onn Water Treatment Works, Cefn Road, Wrexham**





This opinion has been prepared for a proposal as submitted by Black & Vetch Ltd on behalf of Dee Valley Water under the reference of ENQ/2016/0029. See their letter dated 5.2.16.

The proposal falls within Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations as a development falling within as an urban development project under 10 (b) with a site involving an area greater than 0.5 hectares.

The total site area for this work is identified as 1.31ha.

EIA regulations

An EIA is not mandatory for Schedule 2 developments, but an opinion must be given to decide whether the project will have significant effects upon the environment which are of 'more than local importance'.

The general criteria for assessing significance is explained in relevant guidance, and the LPA must assess whether a Schedule 2 project is likely to have impacts that are 'more than local importance'. It is not sufficient that the development will have off site local impacts. More than local importance means effects beyond their immediate locality, which give rise to substantial national or regional controversy, which may conflict with national policy on important matters.

Schedule 3 of the Regulations raises certain selection criteria that must be taken into account:

- Characteristics of the development (it is more than local importance?)
- Location of development (is there a sensitive/vulnerable location involved?)
- Characteristics of potential impacts (would these be complicated or adverse?)

1. Characteristics of the Development

Based upon information supplied as part of the submission, the following points can be made:

- a. **Size** – The size of the site is 1.31ha – and the site is already occupied by existing reservoirs and a redundant treatment building. The new reservoirs (3No.) will occupy the same area as previously development, although a small easterly extension of the general footprint area will be required.

The detailed design of the reservoirs has yet to be confirmed, but each reservoir will be $2,700\text{m}^3 \times 3 = 8,100\text{m}^3$. Their height will be 75.2 OD, which is 0.8m higher than the current reservoirs, and this will be 4m lower than the current treatment building which is going to be removed. The appearance is proposed to be similar to the existing reservoirs.

- b. **Cumulative effect** – Site located within open countryside, within the same site area of existing water treatment works.

The site has been the subject of previous screening opinions. Screening opinion SO/2010/0028 considered a new building measuring 65m x 30m, and between 10-15m high to house clean/drinking water treatment facilities, and the operational area of this building was about 0.2ha, but was within an overall site area exceeding 5 ha. An EIA was not required.

A later screening opinion SO/2011/009 considered the construction of new clean/drinking water treatment building as well as ancillary pump house buildings. It was noted that the removal of the existing treatment building was not going to take place as part of the proposals, but it was noted that the ageing concrete treatment buildings had exceeded their design life. A recent application regarding the demolition for the existing treatment building has been submitted (P/2016/0084), and this confirmed that no prior notification is required.

It has also been confirmed that a new pipeline to pump water up to Bronwylfa Reservoir might also be required, and those works will need to be assessed as part of a further screening opinion – *see page 43 of ENQ/2016/0029 on Civica*.

- c. **Use of natural resources** – there is no use or loss of natural resources beyond that associated with standard construction practices. A small part of the site in the north west corner is within a minerals protection area, but this area is unaffected by the proposal.

- d **Production of waste** – The construction phase of the development is likely to generate waste, however this will be controlled by construction best practice measures.
- e **Pollution and nuisances** – There is likely to be (relatively) short term noise and disruption during construction phase, as well as emissions from construction vehicles, plant and machinery. Noise impacts from the operational stage will not be any more than present, and these will be local impacts to be considered as part of the planning application.
- f **Risk of accidents** – The development process will need to comply with Health and Safety legislation and the build elements will be subject to Building Regulations. Significant impacts unlikely

2. Location of the Development

- a. **Existing land use** – the development is entirely within the operational area of the existing Llwyn Onn Water Treatment Works facility, and existing land will be used. The area is located on unallocated land and it is within open countryside. Within the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011. Policies PS2, GDP1, EC1, and EC6 of the plan would apply to any development. The site is within a green barrier, and the land forming the treatment works are not used as agricultural land. The area is adjacent to a large Special Landscape Area; and for the area closest to the site, the area is called Mill Wood.

The site has no public access, and the area is fenced.

There will be no issues of congestion on local transport routes leading to the site which could be affected by the work. The area has been previously developed, and although some trees will need to be felled, the area will be contained.

The nearest public footpath is PROW Abenbury 15, and this is adjacent to a small section of the north west corner of the treatment works site, and some 155m from the existing reservoir.

The site is not bounded by existing houses or other development. The defined edge of Wrexham's settlement area adjoins a small part of the site at the north western edge, but it is 200m away for the reservoir which is to be replaced.

- b. **Abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources** – no exceptional or unique natural facilities will be lost or significantly affected by the development.
- c. **Absorption capacity bearing in mind the locality** – it is noted that:-
 - (i) the site is not a wetland;
 - (ii) it is not on the coast;
 - (iii) it does not relate to a mountain, forest area;
 - (iv) it is not within a park or nature reserve;

- (v) it does not sit within any European nature conservation designation, or buffer areas. The site is some 1.5km from nearest point of buffer area for Sontley Marsh (Mesotrophic Mire) which is a SSSI, but this is located upstream of the site. The site is close to River Clywedog, and this drains into the River Dee which is designated as a SAC, the development will not have issues for this special designation;
- (vi) the site is not close to any statutory or non-statutory wildlife sites. A habitat survey plan has been submitted (including Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Bat Survey). The bat survey has confirmed that likelihood of bats being found in present buildings is low. The Phase 1 Habitat Survey does not reveal any issues for ecology protection. The development will be mostly confined to the areas within the site that have low wildlife value. Sensitive design and ecological enhancement measures are possible
- (vii) It is close to a main populated area (Llwyn Onn Park in Wrexham), but this main area is 60m away from the nearest edge of the site, and 220m from the existing reservoir.
- (viii) The site is not within a landscape of historical, cultural or archaeological importance. A Landscape and Visual Assessment has been carried out. This has identified some potential receptors, i.e. users of the PRow network, users of local roads, local residents, local businesses and Llwyn Onn Hall hotel. These receptors are not considered to be significant. There is potential for views to and from high ground areas to the west of the site, but the AONB is a considerable distance from the site.

There is no archaeological site features, and around this area further interest is very limited. There is Llwyn Onn Mill (438) beyond NW corner of site and to the north there is Crossfield Field (243), and opposite the entrance approach road onto Cefn Road, there is Twmpath Mound (241).

There is a grade 2 listed building (Llwyn Onn Hall, Abenbury) to the north (377m from boundary of treatment works)

The site is within a green barrier area as designated by the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan. The scale of the development will only be slightly larger than the current reservoir.

The site is identified in Wrexham's LANDMAP Special Guidance as being within Welsh Maelor Landscape Character Area 13a, and the northern part of this area drains into the River Clywedog, and has a high proportion of land belonging to the estates of Erddig, Marchwiel, Bryn y grog and Cefn Park. This area is particularly valuable for nature conservation and informal recreation. In visual terms, the area has good views to the hills and over the Dee Valley from higher ground, and the landscape is undulating estate farmland with mosaic of farmland and trees. There are designed parks and gardens. There is a general abundance of well managed hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Buildings are traditional red brick farmsteadings but many barns now converted to residential uses. The area is generally has feeling of tranquillity and landscape quality affected by A483 and pylons to west.

The existing landscape will not be substantially altered by the development (other than the removal of a large leylandii hedge along the eastern boundary), but the impact of this work can be mitigated, and the impacts will only be temporary. Where the existing tree edge to the site is lost, and there is scope to develop a landscape strategy which will have a positive landscape effect.

There might be some long distant views from and towards Clwydian Range AONB. Some of the trees around the edge of the site help off-set the regular landform shape of the reservoirs, and until new landscaping becomes effective, this facility might become more noticeable within the landscape for an interim period.

3. Characteristics of the Potential Impacts

- a. **Extent of impact** – Landscape and visual effects are likely to be the primary issue for the scheme. Adverse effects given the scale and extent of the area are not considered significant, and will not require EIA in this instance – the landscape character will not change significantly, and this matter can be examined as part of the planning application.

Direct effects are limited to the site or the immediate area – principally caused by construction traffic along the local highway network. Once implemented the impacts will be very limited due to the nature of the development, and existing structural planting around the western edge of the site will be retained, and other areas can be reinforced to help local viewpoints.

No indirect impacts are expected by the nature of the proposal.

- b. **Transfrontier nature of impacts** – Not anticipated. The works will be entirely within the administrative area of Wrexham County Borough Council.
- c. **Magnitude and complexity of impacts** – there are no particular complexities with the proposed development based upon the current use of the site;
- d. **Probability of impacts** – the likely effect is clearly definable, and the probability of any other unknown effects occurring is low.
- e. **Duration, frequency and reversibility of impacts** – the effects will be limited to sensitive receptors during the construction stage. A phased construction operation is proposed. The new reservoirs will be constructed in sequence – starting with the new one to replace the redundant treatment building. When this becomes commissioned, work will start on the new one.

Some impacts will extend into the operation stage because replacement landscaping is required, but any effects are likely to be negligible in relation to the location. The structures can be decommissioned without major works or landscape changes, and any mitigation proposals for additional vegetation to screen the site will have benefits for a longer term.

Conclusion: The site will not give rise to environmental impacts of more than local significance.

It is hereby certified that based upon the above assessment and the information known as part of the application, no significant environment impacts of more than local importance are identified that would justify a decision to require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Signed: 

Date: 22 March 2016

Lawrence Isted

Head of Community Wellbeing and Development, Wrexham County Borough Council

