

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014-2015

**DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
COMMITTEE
5 FEBRUARY 2015**

**REPORT OF:
SERVICE DIRECTOR
PLANNING**

	Agenda Item No. 10
<p>APPLICATION NO: 14/1506 - HIGH HEAD MICRO-HYDRO SCHEME WITH ASSOCIATED BUILDINGS AND WORKS, LAND EAST OF ABERCERDIN ROAD ADJACENT TO OGWR FACH RIVER, EVANSTOWN - OBSERVATIONS REQUESTED BY ADJACENT PLANNING AUTHORITY: BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL.</p>	

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To recommend observations on the above planning application which is to be determined by Bridgend County Borough Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

To raise no objection to the proposal, subject to the recommended conditions and to forward the observations of this Authority to Bridgend County Borough Council.

It is recommended to raise no objection as impacts on Rhondda Cynon Taf in respect of highway safety and the landscape and visual impacts are considered to be acceptable, subject to conditions.

3. BACKGROUND

APPLICATION DETAILS

This is a full application made to Bridgend County Borough Council for the development of a hydro power scheme which straddles the administrative boundary with Rhondda Cynon Taf. The part in Rhondda Cynon Taf is also presented to this Committee 14/1430/10 for consideration.

The full details of the proposed hydro power scheme are included in the report of 14/1430. The part of the development within the administrative boundary of Bridgend includes 810m length of the overall length of 870m of 450mm pipeline, the turbine house, discharge point back to the watercourse and the link to the electricity network. The pipeline would be buried for its entire length. The turbine house would measure 5m x 4m x 2m high and constructed of reinforced concrete which would be clad externally with

horizontally laid timber panels. The turbine house is proposed to be sited within an existing embankment and excavated soils used to cover the roof to form a green roof. The connection to the national grid would follow the public highway and involve a buried service cable from the turbine house to the existing substation on the corner of Coronation Road and Abercerdin Road, Evanstown.

Access for construction purposes is proposed along the existing footpath (with the necessary footpath closures and diversions) and from the Dan Y Bryn housing estate, Evanstown. Storage for plant and materials will occur adjacent to the proposed turbine house.

The application is accompanied by similar documents which accompanied application Ref 14/1430.

SITE DETAILS

The proposed hydro power scheme covers an area of 0.40 hectares and lies between 10 to 60m west of the Cwm Ogwr Fach which forms the boundary of Rhondda Cynon Taf. It consists mainly of a 2m wide corridor of land adjacent to an existing footpath, comprising of an area of rough grassland and scrub. The proposed turbine house would be sited at the southern most part of the application site on similar habitat. One willow and one alder tree would be removed to construct the turbine house. All disturbed areas would be reinstated using the disturbed soils and reseeded where an appropriate grass seed mix where appropriate.

Access to the site is presently obtained from the existing footpath and the public highway within the Dan Y Bryn residential area.

SITE HISTORY

As the application is within a neighbouring authority, this is unknown.

PUBLICITY

No publicity has been undertaken by Rhondda Cynon Taf as part of this consultation, although consultation was undertaken in respect of application 14/1430.

CONSULTATION

No separate consultation has been undertaken by Rhondda Cynon Taf as part of this consultation, as it is considered that all necessary consultation was undertaken in respect of 14/1430.

POLICY CONTEXT

The relevant development plan is the Bridgend Local Development Plan. National Policy consists of the relevant chapters of Planning Policy Wales. PPW Technical Advice Note (TAN) 6 Planning for Sustainable Rural

Communities and PPW Technical Advice Note (TAN) 8: Planning for Renewable Energy.

REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION

The main issues for Rhondda Cynon Taf are considered to be the impact on the highway network within the County Borough, and the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed hydro scheme.

The impact in respect of the highway network would be limited as the construction phase would occur over a 10 week period only and involve a limited number of vehicular movements of four 4 wheel drive vehicles and 2 cars per day. Movement within the site would occur via the existing footpath (with the necessary footpath closures and diversions). The access points to the site would utilise the existing access to the unofficial car park to the north of the B4564 within Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Dan Y Bryn housing estate, Evanstown. It is considered that the proposal is acceptable in respect of highway impacts subject to a condition requiring a construction management plan to secure the management of vehicular and pedestrian access and details of the storage of plant and materials and parking facilities.

In respect of landscape and visual impact, the impacts would be limited to the change in the appearance of the water course, the appearance of the proposed turbine house and the disturbance of the ground for the pipeline route and construction areas. However, views of the site from Rhondda Cynon Taf will be limited to the adjacent footpaths and glimpsed views from the public highway in close proximity to the site. The stretch of watercourse is located within a confined well vegetated channel, the turbine house is fairly well integrated into the existing landscape, and conditions can be imposed to secure adequate restoration and long term management details of the hydro power scheme. It is therefore considered that the landscape and visual impact will not be significant.

OTHER ISSUES

There are not considered to be any further significant issues for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough.

CONCLUSION

Given the above it is considered that the highway, visual and landscape impacts of the proposal on Rhondda Cynon Taf are acceptable subject to the conditions as recommended below.

RECOMMENDATION

It is therefore recommended that no objection is raised to the proposal, subject to conditions requiring a Construction Traffic Management Plan, adequate restoration details and long term management for the hydro power scheme. These conditions are also recommended to be imposed in respect of application 14/1430 and have been forwarded to Bridgend for their information and/or comment.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

as amended by

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

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REPORT

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OFFICER TO CONTACT

**MS D BOWHAY
(Tel. No. 01443 494743)**

See Relevant Application File