

REFERENCE: P/25/41/FUL

APPLICANT: Pennant Walters Ltd Hirwaun House, Hirwaun Industrial Estate,
Aberdare, CF44 9UL

LOCATION: Land at Pwll Yr Lwrch (1.7km to east of Maesteg and 3km west of
Blaengarw) Maesteg

PROPOSAL: The installation of a 90m high anemometer mast for a temporary
period of up to three years

RECEIVED: 27 January 2025

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

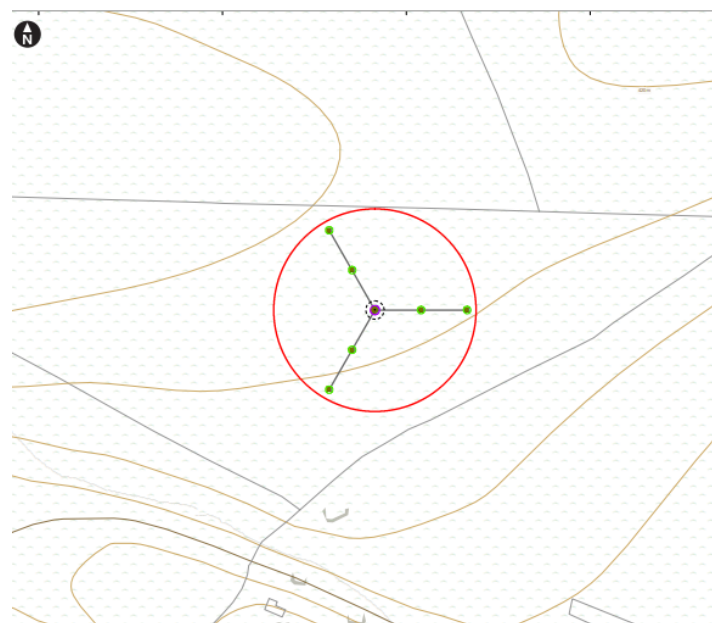
Full Planning Permission is sought for the installation of a 90m high anemometer mast for a temporary period of up to three years after which time the mast would be removed and the site restored to its current condition.

The mast would gather accurate wind resource data such as direction and speed to support the environmental impact assessment, turbine procurement process and inform output figures, as part of a wind farm development process.

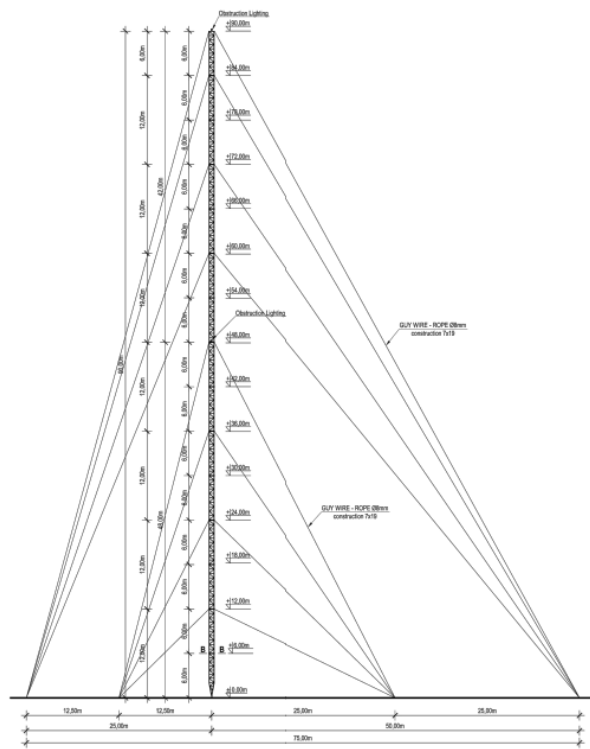
The development would comprise one triangular lattice mast supported by guy wires extending out from the mast, approximately 50m in each direction.

The mast would be constructed from aluminium alloy and have a matt, dull grey finish. It would be fitted with wind monitoring equipment to gather a range of meteorological data in order to provide a detailed understanding of the area's wind characteristics. Obstruction warning lighting is incorporated onto the masts at heights of 45m and 90m.

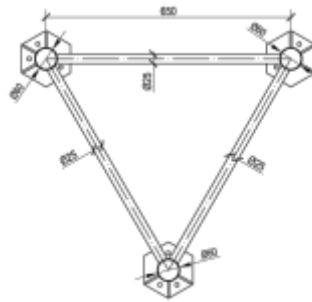
A standard post and wire fence would be constructed around the mast and guy wires to keep livestock away from the installation. The fence would be up to 1.2m high. Additionally, a 2m high palisade fence would be installed around the base of the mast to prevent unauthorised access.



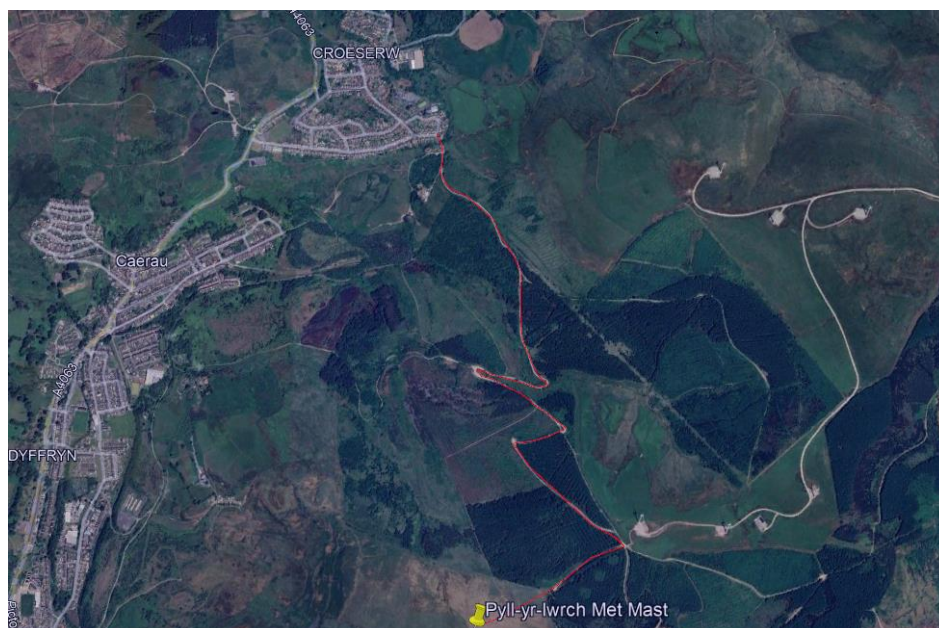
PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT PLAN



PROPOSED ELEVATION



CROSS SECTION OF LATTICE MAST



SITE ACCESS ROUTE

The Application was supported by:

- Planning, Green Infrastructure and Design & Access Statement
- Ecology Technical Report
- Landscape & Habitat Mitigation Note.
- Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
- Pwll yr Lwrch Ornithology Technical Note



**PHOTOGRAPHS OF AN EXISTING MAST LOCATED AT MYNYDD CARN Y CEFN
(ABOVE EBBW VALE AND BLAINA)**

The Application notes that typically, installation would take approximately one or two days depending on ground and weather conditions. One or two 4 x 4 vehicles with trailers would be required to deliver the mast sections, equipment and personnel to the site. These would access the site via existing farm tracks.

Construction would consist of the excavating and laying of ground anchors with the use of an excavator, assembly and lifting of the mast, and testing of the equipment. Anchors would be dug to a depth of 2m. The mast will be installed at ground level on a 1m² steel plate. A 13-tonne tracked excavator would be used for the groundworks. No concrete or permanent fixings are required.

It is noted that no new tracks, temporary or permanent, would be required for the installation of the mast and any potential disturbance would be negligible given the very short period of construction and the vehicle type and associated movements.

Once the mast is installed and operational, there would be no activity at the site other than for routine maintenance purposes. Measurement recordings would be accessed remotely.

The proposed structure would remain in situ for a period of 3 years after which the mast would be dismantled and removed from site once the temporary consent has expired or sufficient data has been collected, whichever is the sooner. It is anticipated that the mast would then be refurbished and used elsewhere.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal is located on agricultural land located below Mynydd Pwll yr Lwrch (previously Mynydd Bach) a 425m high hill which is situated to the east of Nanttyffyllon. Access to the site would be via public highway through Caerau and then Croeserw onto the gated Natural Resources Wales forestry and farm access track which runs from Bryn Coed.



LOCATION PLAN

The site comprises grazed marshy grassland located on an upland plateau and is enclosed by post and wire fencing. Land to the north and east contains significant areas of mature pine plantation forestry, known as Dunraven Forest.

The elevated site has extensive views across the surrounding countryside particularly to the south and east. Views to the west are generally shielded by Mynydd Pwll yr Lwrch.

The site would be located approximately 700m southwest from an existing wind turbine.



SITE VIEWED FROM THE END OF FORESTRY TRACK LOOKING SOUTH



VIEW TO THE NORTH



VIEW TO THE SOUTH



VIEW TO THE NORTHWEST

RELEVANT HISTORY

P/14/664/SOR – Screening request for proposed 1.25MW solar farm covering 3.45ha. It was found that the proposal would not have a significant effect on the environment by virtue of the site's location and the nature of the proposal and an Environmental Impact Assessment was required. 05/11/2014

PUBLICITY

The Application has been advertised by site notice and neighbours and consultees have been notified of the receipt of the Application.

The period allowed for response to consultations/publicity expired on 07/03/2025.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Maesteg Town Council: It was advised that Members wished to **not support** the application '*on the basis of it being a precursor to another wind farm which will encase the valley and continue to erode the surrounding environment both visually and mentally for the local residents. Members noted that there has to be a sustainable development plan for wind farms otherwise every mountain in Wales will have one with the energy being quickly exported out of the local economy. They also noted that the windfarm bases permanently alter the ground and sky with the amount of reinforced concrete needed to erect each windmill this ruins the habitat of wildlife on the mountains and those animals which take flight.*'

Heneb: Initially noted that the proposal would require archaeological mitigation and that an archaeological desk-based assessment should be prepared and submitted. An Assessment was prepared and forwarded to Heneb for observations. They raised no concerns with the report and its conclusions.

Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water: No comments made on the proposal.

Natural Resources Wales: Initially raised concerns with the lack of information regarding Ornithology. Following receipt of the Ornithology Technical Note, NRW advised they had no objection to the proposed development.

Highways Officer: No objection.

Ecology: Biodiversity mitigation and enhancement proposals considered acceptable.

Drainage Officer: No objections.

The Coal Authority: Site lies within the area defined as Development Low Risk Area and no specific comments made.

Councillor C L C Davies: Objects to the proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

Five objections were received from residents of Cavan Row, Bank Street, Mill View Estate and Heol ty Gwyn, Maesteg and Wesley Street, Caerau. Concerns raised in the objections include:

- Incorrect spelling of application location
- Insufficient consultation and survey work has been undertaken prior to lodgement of the application.
- Loss of nature in area since industrialisation
- Impact on birds and rare butterflies
- Visual impact of the mast
- Cumulative impact of mast and other infrastructure features on the landscape
- The use of existing tracks will result in disturbance to the ecology of the area
- No information provided on connections to power, data and lighting
- Impact of lighting on Air Traffic Regulations and dark sky
- Structural stability of mast during adverse weather conditions
- Impact on wellbeing of local residents
- Impacts on peat deposits
- Possible use of concrete in construction of mast
- Ecology report fails to mention the Spirit of Llynfi Woodland and The Scrapes (ponds)
- Impact on bats, buzzards and kites
- Possible impact on low flying military flights and overflights by the air ambulance
- Visual impact of proposed obstruction lighting
- Flicker effect of wind turbines
- Cumulative impact of wind farm developments

COMMENTS ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

The location appears to be known as '*Mynydd Pwll yr Iwrch*' and not '*Mynydd yr Lwrch*'. Despite this incorrect spelling, the Application has identified the site as being located 1.7km to the east of Maesteg and 3km west of Blaengarw. This provides sufficient description of the location of the proposed development for the purposes of this Application.

The Application has been made in order to establish the potential of the site for possible future windfarm development. The mast would gather wind resource data in order gain a detailed understanding of the wind resources at the sites. Whilst the data collected will inform the possible nature and scale of future wind farm, any perceived impacts associated with the wind farm development, would be considered as part of any future planning application for that development. Any future proposal is likely to require the Applicant to undertake formal pre-application publicity and consultation before applying for Planning Permission.

The effects of any future wind farm proposals would be considered in separate Planning or Developments of National Significance Applications.

The Applicant has advised that given the height of the mast, no assessment of effects on aircraft operations has been undertaken. They note that the mast would include obstruction warning lighting in any event, in order to identify the mast to any low flying aircraft.

The Applicant has confirmed that no concrete foundations or anchors will be required as part of the development.

While it is noted that while the site does closely adjoin an identified area of peat, the Welsh Government Unified Peat Map of Wales indicates that there is no peat present within the site itself.

The ‘*Spirit of Llynfi Community Woodland*’ is a NRW community woodland development located to the east of Maesteg on land previously occupied by the former Coegnant Colliery and Maesteg Washery. This woodland is not designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (**RLDP** 2024) or as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) by Natural Resources Wales. Furthermore, the other area identified in representations, ‘The Scrapes’ does not appear to be designated for any particular protection.

It is understood that no power connection will be required to the temporary mast and the facility would comprise fuel cells and batteries installed alongside the mast within the footprint of the mast site. The purpose of the ancillary infrastructure is to provide a power supply to the instrumentation and aviation lighting on the mast itself.

The Applicant will be required to erect the equipment in a manner that meets all building, engineering and health and safety regulations. For this reason, structural stability of the mast is not considered to be a material planning consideration.

No evidence has been presented that would indicate that the presence of a temporary mast in this location would have any adverse impact on the wellbeing of local residents.

The material issues raised in the objections received are addressed below in the Appraisal section of this report.

PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy and Guidance

National planning guidance in the form of Future Wales – the National Plan 2040 (February 2021) (**FW**) and Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) (**PPW**) are of relevance to the determination of this Application.

Paragraph 1.30 of PPW confirms that... *Development management is the positive and proactive approach to shaping, considering, determining and delivering development proposals through the process of deciding planning applications.*

All development decisions...should seek to contribute towards the making of sustainable places and improved well-being.” (Paragraph 2.2 of PPW refers) Para 2.3 states “*The planning system should create sustainable places which are attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy and friendly. Development proposals should create the conditions to bring people together, making them want to live, work and play in areas with a sense of place and well-being, creating prosperity for all.*

Para 2.7 states ‘Placemaking in development decisions happens at all levels and involves considerations at a global scale, including climate change, down to the very local level,

such as considering the amenity impact on neighbouring properties and people.'

PPW states at paragraphs 2.22 and 2.23 that the Planning system should *ensure that a post-Covid world has people's well-being at its heart* and that Planners play *a pivotal role...in shaping our society for the future, prioritising placemaking, decarbonisation and well-being.*

FW Policy 17 requires decision makers to give significant weight to meeting Wales' international commitments and the Government's target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030. Policy 18 is permissive of low carbon energy projects subject to Policy 17 and there being no unacceptable adverse impacts on, amongst other things, landscape, ecology, heritage assets and the living conditions of nearby residents.

Technical Advice Notes:

The Welsh Government has provided additional guidance in the form of Technical Advice Notes. The following are of relevance:

- Technical Advice Note 5 – Nature Conservation and Planning (2009).
- Technical Advice Note 12 - Design (2016)
- Technical Advice Note 18 – Transport (2007).

Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 imposes a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development in accordance with sustainable development principles to act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Section 5).

The well-being goals identified in the Act are:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

The duty has been considered in the assessment of this application.

The Socio-Economic Duty

The Socio-Economic Duty (under Part 1, Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010) which came in to force on 31 March 2021, has the overall aim of delivering better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage and whilst this is not a strategic decision, the duty has been considered in the assessment of this Application.

Local Policies

The Development Plan for the area comprises of the Bridgend Local Development Plan 2018-2033 (**RLDP**) which was formally adopted by the Council in March 2024 and within which the following policies are of relevance:

- Strategic Policy SP1: Regeneration and Sustainable Growth Strategy
- Strategic Policy SP3: Good Design and Sustainable Placemaking
- Strategic Policy SP4: Mitigating the Impact of Climate Change
- Strategic Policy SP5: Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

- Strategic Policy SP13: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development
- Strategic Policy SP17: Conservation and Enhancement of the Natural Environment
- Strategic Policy SP18: Conservation of the Historic Environment
- Policy ENT12: Development in Mineral Safeguarding Zones
- Policy DNP1: Development in the Countryside
- Policy DNP6: Biodiversity, Ecological Networks, Habitats and Species
- Policy DNP8; Green Infrastructure
- Policy DNP9: Natural Resource Protection and Public Health

APPRAISAL

The Application is referred to the Development Control Committee alongside Application P/25/43/FUL which has been lodged by the same Applicant for an identical metrological mast at Cynhordy, which is located approximately 3.2km south of the Application site. In order to ensure a full understanding of both proposals and to ensure consistent decision making, both Applications should be determined by the Development Control Committee.

Having regard to the above, the main issues to consider in this Application relate to the principle of development, impact on the visual amenity of the location, biodiversity, archaeological and transport impacts.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The planning system manages the development and use of land in the public interest, contributing to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and as stated in paragraph 1.2 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) (PPW).

The site is located outside of any settlement boundary as defined by Policy SF1 Settlement Hierarchy and Urban Management of the Replacement Local Development Plan (**RLDP**) and, therefore, is located in the countryside. Policy DNP1 Development in the Countryside of the RLDP sets a presumption against development in the countryside, except where it is for:

- 1) Agriculture and/or forestry purposes;
- 2) The winning and working of minerals;
- 3) Appropriate rural enterprises where a countryside location is necessary for the development;
- 4) The implementation of an appropriate rural enterprise/farm diversification project;
- 5) The expansion of an existing business (subject to other relevant policies in the plan);
- 6) Land reclamation purposes;
- 7) Transportation and/or utilities infrastructure to enable implementation of LDP allocations;
- 8) Renewable energy projects;
- 9) Affordable housing to meet locally identified need in accordance with COM5;
- 10) The suitable conversion of, and limited extension to, existing structurally sound rural buildings where the development is modest in scale and clearly subordinate to the original structure;
- 11) The direct replacement of an existing dwelling;
- 12) Outdoor recreational and sporting activities;

- 13) The provision of Gypsy, Traveller and Showperson sites in accordance with COM8; or
- 14) Education provision where a need has been identified by the Local Education Authority.

Countryside development must be of a sustainable form with prudent management of natural resources and respect for the cultural heritage of the area.

Policy DNP1 of the RLDP seeks to protect the integrity and openness of the countryside and prevent inappropriate forms of development. The proposed development seeks the installation of an anemometer mast for a temporary period (up to three years), in order to capture wind resource data at Pwll Yr Lwrch. The meteorological mast would gather accurate wind resource data such as direction and speed to support a future environmental impact assessment, turbine procurement process and inform output figures, as part of the wind farm development process. This would inform a proposed future wind farm. As such, the proposed development would broadly comply with Criterion 8 – Renewable Energy.

Policy SP13: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development of the RLDP states that renewable and low carbon development proposals which contribute to meeting national and local renewable and low carbon energy and energy efficiency targets will be permitted where:

- a) It can be demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impacts on the natural and historic environment or local communities (such as noise and air pollution) and that no other unacceptable cumulative impacts will arise;
- b) The proposal (inclusive of its associated infrastructure) has sought to minimise the landscape and visual impact through its design and micro-siting, particularly where in close proximity to homes and tourism receptors;
- c) Proposals make provision for the appropriate restoration and after-care of the land for its beneficial future re-use;
- d) The proposal can facilitate a connection to the grid network;
- e) There would not be an unacceptable impact on access and highway safety; and
- f) There would not be unacceptable impact on the amenity of residential properties of tourist accommodation.

Both Planning Policy Wales and Future Wales (The National Plan 2040) encourage all forms of renewable and low carbon energy development and advises that LPAs should seek to ensure their area's full potential for renewable and low carbon energy generation is maximised and renewable energy targets are achieved. This planning Application does not propose any wind turbines, simply an anemometer mast for a temporary period that would gather a range of meteorological information to support preparation of a potential, future wind turbine development at this location. This is considered to be in accordance with national and local planning policy. Any impact of a proposed future wind farm development would need to be assessed against Policy SP13 if/when a subsequent application is submitted.

It should also be noted that the site is located within Pre-Assessed Area 9 for Wind Energy (as shown on an associated map within Future Wales), of which there is a presumption in favour of large-scale wind energy development in this area, an acceptance of landscape change and a focus on maximising benefits and minimising impacts.

Strategic Policy SP4: Mitigating the Impact of Climate Change of the RLDP states that all development proposals must make a positive contribution towards tackling the causes of and adapting to the impacts of Climate Change. These actions include the encouragement of development of renewable and low/zero carbon energy generation. As a possible precursor to future renewable energy generation, the proposal is considered to be supported by Policy SP4.

The site is located within a Category 1 Sandstone Mineral Safeguarding Zone as defined by Policy ENT12 of the RLDP. Development proposals within mineral safeguarding zones, either permanent or temporary, will need to demonstrate that:

- 1) If permanent development, the mineral can be extracted prior to the development, and/or the mineral is present in such limited quantity or quality to make extraction of no or little value as a finite resource; and
- 2) In the case of residential development, the scale and location of the development e.g. limited infill/house extensions, would have no significant impact on the possible working of the resource; and
- 3) In the case of temporary development, it can be implemented, and the site restored within the timescale the mineral is likely to be required.

Due to the nature of the proposal, it's unlikely that the mineral safeguarded area will be affected.

Given the assessment above, it is considered that in principle, subject to satisfying the requirements of all other relevant policies of the RLDP, the proposed development would be acceptable.

Visual Impact

Policy SP3; Good Design and Sustainable Placemaking of the Replacement Local Development Plan highlights all development should contribute to creating high quality, attractive, sustainable places by, amongst others:

- Demonstrating alignment with the principles of Good Design
- Have a design of the highest quality possible, whilst respecting and enhancing local distinctiveness and landscape character.
- Be appropriate to its local context in terms of size, scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing, layout, form, mix and density;
- Safeguard and enhance biodiversity and integrated multi-functional green infrastructure networks;
- Respond to the climate emergency by:
 - i. Reducing energy demands and maximising opportunities for renewable or

- low carbon energy generation, incorporating resource efficient/adaptable buildings and layouts using sustainable design and construction techniques
- ii. Protecting and increasing the resilience of both ecosystems and communities to address the inevitable effects of climate change;

The proposal is not located within any of the Special Landscape Areas identified in the RLDP. It is proposed on elevated land which is identified as being suitable for wind energy as mapped within Future Wales Future Wales – the National Plan 2040. As such there is an overriding presumption in favour of large-scale wind energy development in this area, and an acceptance of landscape change subject to minimising impacts.

In the location proposed, the mast would be located at a considerable distance from any settlement area and well away from any rural dwellings. While it would be sited within an open field, due to the topography of the surrounding area, a significant portion of the mast would be effectively screened from views from residential properties in Maesteg and surrounding settlements.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the mast could be visible from a wide area, the mast is constructed using slim aluminium alloy and is of a lattice design, which will reduce the visual massing of the structure. Its grey colour and largely transparent appearance will assist in mitigating its visual impact. The mast itself is of a narrow triangular design with each side measuring 0.650m. It is also noted that the mast will be located on the site for up to 3-years, and that as such, any impact upon the landscape will be temporary.

In the location proposed, it is considered that the obstruction warning lighting, utilising low intensity illumination would not be visually harmful, and its provision should be balanced against the need for the structure to meet aviation safety requirements.

As such, it is considered that the siting, form, design and materials proposed will ensure that the mast would not have any harmful impact upon the character and amenity of the area in accordance with Policies SP3, SP13 and DNP1 of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2024).

Highway Safety

Policy SP5: Sustainable Transport and Accessibility of the RLDP states that new development must be located and designed in a way that minimises the need to travel, reduces dependency on the private car and enables sustainable access to local services. Development must be designed to provide safe and efficient access to the transport network, which includes the active travel, public transport and street networks. Active travel is to be encouraged and reliance on private car use should be reduced.

Construction and eventual decommissioning of the structure will require minimal vehicle movements over public highway to transport the mast which would arrive in dismantled sections, and other equipment over a short period of time. The Application notes that once operational, there would be no activity at the site other than for routine maintenance purposes. Wind measurement recordings would be accessed remotely.

Council's Highways Officer has reviewed the proposal and has advised that traffic generated by the installation and decommissioning of the mast will not have a material impact on the highway network.

For the above reasons, the proposal is considered to be acceptable from a highway safety perspective and in accordance with Policy SP5 of the Replacement Local Development

Plan.

Archaeological impacts

Policy SP18: Conservation of the Historic Environment of the RLDP states that development proposals must protect, conserve and where appropriate, preserve and enhance the significance of historic assets, including their settings. This includes archaeologically sensitive areas and archaeological remains.

Following initial concerns raised by Heneb – (the Trust of Welsh Archaeology) regarding the potential impacts of the development on identified historic assets including cairns of Bronze Age date, Medieval settlement and land management features along with evidence of early mineral extraction, the Applicant has provided an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (**ADBC**).

The report notes that the site itself does not contain any nationally designated (protected) historic assets, such as scheduled monuments or listed buildings.

The Executive Summary contained in the ADBC, notes:

'There have been two wide-scale past investigations within the Site/study area. In 2011-2012 a desktop and field survey by Trysor, funded by RCAHMS, identified 734 new sites across the Welsh Uplands and recommended further study of Mynydd Bach. In 1999-2000 a field visit by GGAT, part of the Deserted Rural Settlement Survey, examined four sites on the mountain, assessing whether they related to medieval transhumance, marginal settlement, or more recent activity. No below-ground investigations have been conducted within the Site/study area.'

Buried historic assets that may be affected by the proposals comprise:

- Bronze Age cairns. There are three Bronze Age cairns within 290m of the Site, a feature commonly located on high upland areas. Given their proximity and the Site's location on Pwll Yr Lwrch's summit, there is moderate potential for prehistoric remains, which would be of high significance.*
- Post-medieval up to late 20th century industrial remains. Pwll Yr Lwrch was extensively mined and quarried, shaping the 19th century industrial landscape of the South Wales coalfield. While no above-ground assets exist within the Site, below-ground remains of low to medium significance may still be present, contributing to a historically significant area that has largely avoided later development.*
- Medieval and post-medieval agricultural remains. The Site has historically remained rough moorland and grassland. Medieval to modern agricultural and transhumance remains are common in the study area. While no above-ground assets are recorded within the Site, below-ground finds may exist, as industrial activity often disrupted earlier field systems. Any remains would be of low to medium significance.*

The Site has low potential for Roman and early medieval archaeology, as no remains have been recorded within the study area, and evidence from these periods is scarce in the wider region. Roman period activity in upland Glamorgan is not well understood, and early medieval settlements were likely concentrated in the valleys.

The Site's archaeological survival is uncertain due to past quarrying and mining, which may have removed potential archaeology or left industrial remains. However, its long-standing pastoral use has likely minimised disturbance, helping to preserve any potential archaeology within the topsoil of 0.3mbgl. The proposed development will have minimal impact, with a mast on an above-ground platform and small-scale fencing. Though these features may disturb archaeology within their footprints, their

limited size reduces overall impact'

The ADBC concludes that the impacts from the proposed development are expected to be '*fairly limited*' given the placement of the mast and method of its construction. The predicted impact can be reduced by a mitigation strategy involving either archaeological fieldwork or mitigation by design. Henneb have reviewed the ADBC, and on the basis of the evidence provided, have not requested the imposition of any particular conditions in order to mitigate any effects on heritage assets.

As such, it is considered that given the relatively light touch nature of the temporary mast in terms of land disturbance, it is likely to have only a minimal impact on any archaeological remains. However, an advisory note is recommended to ensure that a watching brief is maintained during the course of construction. For this reason, it is considered that the development is unlikely to have any harmful impact upon historic assets in accordance with Policy SP18 of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2024).

Biodiversity

In assessing a planning application, the Local Planning Authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Planning Policy Wales 12 (PPW12) states in Section 6.4.4: *It is important that biodiversity and resilience considerations are taken into account at an early stage in both development plan preparation and when proposing or considering development proposals. It further goes on to state All reasonable steps must be taken to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems and these should be balanced with the wider economic and social needs of business and local communities. Where adverse effects on the environment cannot be avoided or mitigated, it will be necessary to refuse planning permission.*

Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning states *Biodiversity, conservation and enhancement is an integral part of planning for sustainable development. The planning system has an important part to play in nature conservation. The use and development of land can pose threats to the conservation of natural features and wildlife.*

Policy SP3 of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2024) requires development to Safeguard and enhance biodiversity and integrated multi-functional green infrastructure networks.

Policy DNP6 states *"All development proposals must provide a net benefit for biodiversity and improved ecosystem resilience, as demonstrated through planning application submissions. Features and elements of biodiversity or green infrastructure value should be retained on site, and enhanced or created where ever possible, by adopting best practice site design and green infrastructure principles. Development proposals must maintain, protect and enhance biodiversity and ecological networks / services. Particular importance must be given to maintaining and enhancing the connectivity of ecological networks which enable the dispersal and functioning of protected and priority species"*

Policy DNP8 requires new development proposals to integrate, protect and maintain existing green infrastructure assets and to enhance the extent, quality, connectivity and multi functionality of the green infrastructure network.

The application was supported by an Ecology Technical Report prepared by WSP (January 2025) for both the Pwll y Lwrch and Cynhordy sites. The report included a desk study, Phase 1 Habitat Survey, Protected and Notable Species Assessment and recommendations for Net Benefit for Biodiversity.

Habitat

The site was found to comprise dense sward dominated by purple-moor grass with rare rush species. The land is not a statutory designated site (i.e. Special Area of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Area (SPA) or Ramsar site (wetlands)). Fourteen non-statutory designated sites (Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINCs)) were identified within 2km of the Application site and are listed in the report.

Protected species

The report noted evidence of one record of bats within 1.7km of the site. However, these were all observed at some distance from the proposal. Furthermore, while there are records of other protected and notable species within 2km of the proposed mast, these are also well distant from the location and no signs or evidence of these species were noted on or surrounding the site.

Birds

The Ornithology Technical Note submitted provided results of bird surveys completed in the breeding season of 2025 between March and July. Target species are defined as ground-nesting wader species that have potential to breed on marsh/marshy grassland in upland Wales and include Curlew, Dunlin, Golden Plover, Lapwing and Redshank. No target species were observed during the vantage point or walkover surveys.

Birds observed did include notable birds of prey such as red kite, goshawk, peregrine and kestrel.

It was identified that the habitat on the site had potential suitability for nesting curlew. However, habitats on the site lacked suitability for nesting dunlin, golden plover and lapwing which select short, sparse vegetation typically close to standing water. Site habitats were also deemed to be unsuitable for redshank as they select sites with a mosaic of short and tall vegetation with wet area.

The proposed mast would introduce a structure to the site which has some potential to discourage breeding waders from the area as it could be used as a perch by avian predators. Buzzard, sparrowhawk, kestrel, raven and carrion crow were recorded at the site. These are potential predators of the Target Species and may already discourage breeding attempts. The Ornithology Note goes on to note that red fox and stoat were also recorded incidentally during vantage point surveys, and they may also be discouraging breeding, especially red fox which are the most common predator of curlew young.

Biodiversity net gain

In terms of Net Benefit for Biodiversity, initially, and as the Application was for a temporary consent and the works would involve minimal disturbance of the site, the Applicant proposed to reinstate lost habitats in three years' time. However, Council's Ecologist commented that *'This will not provide a net benefit to biodiversity, and all development must provide this, therefore, enhancements which provide a net benefit to biodiversity need to be included in the proposals. Furthermore, any habitats lost, even temporarily, should be mitigated and/or compensated for as part of the development, not just reinstated 3 years later. The report also mentions a species-rich wildflower mix – the applicant will need to identify and specify the exact mix to be used and this should be a native mix, appropriate for the site and species present.'*

In response, the Applicant submitted a Landscape & Habitat Mitigation Note which provides mitigation proposals for the area of disturbed ground (up to 20m radius) around the proposed mast. The mitigation will include plantings of common heather, bilberry, common dog-violet and devil's-bit-scabious. The Note also included details of maintenance and management of the area for a period of 5 years following the completion of planting and seeding operations. Council's Ecologist has now reviewed the proposals and found them to be acceptable.

On balance and subject to the implementation of the mitigation strategy, the proposed development is considered to be compliant with Policies SP3, DNP6, and DNP8 of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2024) and is therefore acceptable in terms of biodiversity.

CONCLUSION

The decision to recommend Planning permission has been taken in accordance with Section 38 of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which requires that, in determining a planning application the determination must be in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan comprises Future Wales - the National Plan 2040 and the Bridgend Local Development Plan (2024)

Having regard to the nature of the development and the objections raised, it is considered that the proposal represents an appropriate form of development that would not have an unacceptable impact on visual amenity, biodiversity, historic assets or highway and pedestrian safety and as such the proposal is recommended for approval. Accordingly, the proposed development is in accordance with Policies SP1, SP3, SP4, SP5, SP13, SP17, SP18, ENT12, DNP1, DNP6, DNP8 and DNP9 of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (2024).

It is further considered that the decision complies with Future Wales - the National Plan 2040 and the Council's well-being objectives and the sustainable development principle in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

RECOMMENDATION

(R02) That permission be GRANTED subject to the following condition(s):-

1. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

FIGURE 1 - SITE LOCATION PLAN

FIGURE 2 - SITE LAYOUT PLAN

FIGURE 3 - MET MAST SPECIFICATION

PLANNING, GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT - WSP JANUARY 2025

ECOLOGY TECHNICAL REPORT - WSP JANUARY 2025

LANDSCAPE & HABITAT MITIGATION NOTE - WSP 24 JULY 2025

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT - WSP JUNE 2025

PWLL YR LWRCH ORNITHOLOGY TECHNICAL NOTE - WSP 08 AUGUST 2025

Reason: To avoid doubt and confusion as to the nature and extent of the approved development.

2. The mast hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition

within 3 years from the date of commissioning. The applicant shall inform the Local Planning Authority of the date of commissioning of the mast within 3 months of such date.

Reason: To enable the temporary period to be clarified and confirmed and then reassessed by the Local Planning Authority at the expiry of that period in order to avoid any doubt and confusion as to the nature and extent of the approved development.

3. The development shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the Landscape & Habitat Mitigation proposals as outlined in the Landscape & Habitat Mitigation Note prepared by WSP and dated 24 July 2025. The biodiversity proposals shall be maintained in accordance with the aftercare Maintenance & Management measures listed in the Note for a minimum period of 5 years.

Reason To safeguard the character and appearance of the area and enhance biodiversity in accordance with Policy SP3 and DNP6 of the Bridgend Local Development Plan (2024) and Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12), February 2024).

4. * THE FOLLOWING ARE ADVISORY NOTES NOT CONDITIONS

a) The decision to recommend Planning permission has been taken in accordance with Section 38 of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which requires that, in determining a planning application the determination must be in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan comprises Future Wales - the National Plan 2040 and the Bridgend Local Development Plan (2024)

It is considered that the proposal represents an appropriate form of development that would have an unacceptable impact on visual amenity, biodiversity, historic assets or highway and pedestrian safety and as such the proposal is recommended for approval. Accordingly, the proposed development is in accordance with Policies SP1, SP3, SP4, SP5, SP13, SP17, SP18, ENT12, DNP1, DNP6, DNP8 and DNP9 of the Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (2024).

It is further considered that the decision complies with Future Wales - the National Plan 2040 and the Council's well-being objectives and the sustainable development principle in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

b)Archaeological informative

Where construction work reveals the presence of any historic assets particularly including any archaeological remains, all work shall cease on the site and Heneb shall be contacted immediately. This will enable the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established in advance of development or other disruptive works.

Heneb can be contacted at:-
planning@heneb.org.uk or
phone: 01792 655208

JANINE NIGHTINGALE
CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES

Background Papers

None