

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (Site Inspections)

1 July 2020

Present: Councillor R Owens (Chair)

Councillor P Baker, Councillor Mrs D Clements, Councillor K Doolin, Councillor P Harries, Dr M Havard, Mrs J James, Councillor M James, Mr G Jones, Councillor P Kidney, Councillor PJ Morgan, Dr RM Plummer, Councillor M Williams and Councillor A Wilcox.

[Councillor S Yelland joined the meeting during the presentation]

(Virtual Site Inspection: 10.00 a.m. – 11.00 a.m.)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Evans, Dr R Heath-Davies and Mrs S Hoss.

2. NP/20/0222/FUL Installation of underground electricity cables (including below ground jointing bays and one above ground link pillar) and underground fibre optic cables; temporary construction compound and construction haul roads. – Linear site extending from the intertidal sand flats at Freshwater West to Neath Farm, Rhoscrowther, Pembroke, Pembrokeshire

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and reminded them that the purpose of the virtual site inspection that day was purely to enable Members to acquaint themselves with the application site and its surroundings. No decision would be made until the planning application was considered at a future meeting of the Development Management Committee.

It was reported that this project proposed a subsea and underground electricity interconnector linking the power markets in Ireland and Great Britain. Greenlink (the applicant) would provide a new grid connection between County Wexford (Ireland) and National Grid's Pembroke substation. The power would be able to flow in either direction, depending on supply and demand in each country.

The Planning Officer advised that he had invited the agent to attend the meeting that day, but she was unavailable. However, the agent would be present when the application was considered by the Committee and would be happy to answer any questions.

The officer then proceeded to provide an overview of the application and



advised that the applicant had provided a series of 360° viewpoints along the route of the cable which he proceeded to show. These were supplemented by photographs and panoramic views which he had taken on site. He explained that the cable would be laid by a mixture of underground horizontal directional drilling and trench cut and fill, with the initial section between mean low water and the landfall compound to be done using underground drilling as this area was particularly sensitive in landscape terms. While work was ongoing, 3-5 days at the most, the compound would be surrounded by fencing to protect it from the public.

The only permanent structure above ground in the National Park would be a link pillar, approximately 1.3m high and coloured green, where the marine cable joined to the land cable. This would be located as close to the field boundary as possible. Members asked whether this would need any fencing for security or protection, and the officer replied that none had been requested as part of the application, however he would check with the agent prior to the DM Committee. He also agreed to find out if any markers would be required where the cable crossed roads, etc, as was the case with the high pressure gas pipeline that ran across the County.

The officer went on to explain that as this project linked to the National Grid, the cables would continue underground to a converter station close to the Pembroke Substation, however this was located within Pembrokeshire County Council's (PCC) planning jurisdiction. The Director of Planning and Park Direction advised that meetings had been held jointly between the applicant, PCC and officers of the National Park Authority over the last four years, and they continued to liaise closely. The applicant also required permissions from Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales and they had been kept informed of progress with the application. However the officer confirmed that the decision regarding this application would be made by the National Park Authority, not Welsh Government.

Members also asked about re-instatement of the trench fill sections and were advised that the preference was to allow natural seeding to take place in order to protect the natural biodiversity of the area. It was also questioned whether the existing wire fencing could be replaced with a Pembrokeshire Hedgebank, however officers didn't believe that this would be appropriate in such an open landscape.

As well as showing the wider landscape, the Officer's photographs had been annotated to point out a number of features, including the war memorial, which was approximately 130 metres away from the nearest point of the proposed development. However as this part of the route would be delivered via underground drilling there would be no long term impact on its setting. There would also be views of the route from public



footpath 37/3, however it was anticipated there would be a limited and short-lived impact.

Finally Members asked about signage, as they considered good communication with the local community, AMs and MP was very important. The officer advised that neighbouring properties had been consulted as part of the planning process, however due to the short-term nature of the work, signage would cause greater visual impact and was considered inappropriate.

Thanking the officer for a clear and helpful presentation, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending the site visit and closed the meeting.

