Rhyd y Groes Wind Farm - Repower

Key Issues –
The EIA was coordinated by Natural Power Consultants for a wind farm repowering proposal and hence includes the environmental studies relating to:
- Decommissioning of the existing 22 operational turbines and associated infrastructure (not being utilised for the proposed wind farm); and
- Construction of 13 new wind turbines and associated works/infrastructure.

Main specific issues relating to the proposed development were:
- **Change in Baseline:** The site originally consisted of 24 turbines; however two were decommissioned whilst the repowering project was being developed, which meant a change in baseline conditions.
- **Presence of constraints:** aviation restrictions, noise restrictions due to conditions associated with adjacent wind farms, presence of Conservation Area and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Coastal Path, presence of ornithology and bats requiring mitigation.
- **Change in Guidance:** Scottish Natural Heritage submitted new guidance on visuals during the development process and agreement was sought with the Local Planning Authority and Natural Resources Wales on the methodology for visualisations.

Purpose of the project
With national planning policy encouraging repowering of existing older wind farms there is an opportunity to capitalise on making existing sites more productive and efficient, but also to produce more considered and cohesive site layouts. The project seeks to increase the installed capacity at the site from 6.6 MW to 11.7 MW using modern turbines that will achieve a higher capacity factor.

Description of the project
The proposed repowering proposal is located at Rhos Goch, near Cemaes in Anglesey, North Wales, and is being developed by TPG Wind Ltd. (a joint venture between Eurus, and E.ON Climate and Renewables UK).

The site currently accommodates the existing Rhyd y Groes Wind Farm consisting of 22 x 300 kW Bonus turbines, with a tip height of 46 m. The repower project proposes the development of 13 turbines with a tip height of 79 m (9 turbines) and 70 m (4 turbines) with an expected capacity of up to 900 kW and an operational life of 25 years.
Lessons learnt

- **Early Engagement:**
  Importance of early and extensive engagement with consultees and the local community to feed into the site layout and proposed maximum turbine tip height. Presence of a Welsh language speaker at public exhibition events was considered beneficial, along with bilingual material.

- **Establishment of Baseline:**
  The consent for the existing Rhyd y Groes Wind Farm did not stipulate any condition relating to the lifespan of the wind farm or requirement for a decommissioning plan. Therefore, the existing wind farm could be maintained in perpetuity as part of the existing consent, and should be considered as part of the baseline. Consequently, the results of the assessment presented should be considered against the baseline of an existing wind farm and not against a baseline where no wind farm exists or where the existing wind farm will be decommissioned by a certain date.

- **Design Day:**
  Natural Power coordinated a design day where specialist consultants fed into the refinement of the design that complemented the constraints on site.

Lessons learnt cont. –

- **Cumulative Assessment:**
  A key part of the assessment is agreement on cumulative scope with consultees. The Local Planning Authority requested inclusion of non-wind farm projects in the scope, such as a biomass plant, tidal project, grid line and a nuclear power station, in addition to wind farm projects. Natural Power submitted a scope for the cumulative assessment which varied depending on which receptor was being assessed.

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