Trecwn Green Energy Hub early engagement: Neighbour meeting

Time: 6.30-8.30pm
Date: Thursday, 10 November 2022
Location: Depot Office, Admiralty Park, The Valley, Trecwn

Introduction:
Following three public exhibitions (24-26 October) and a webinar (9 November) on the emerging proposals for Trecwn Green Energy Hub, immediate neighbours[1] near the electrolyser site were invited to an independently facilitated meeting. Ward member, Cllr Delme Harries was also invited.

This meeting was arranged to help the project team better understand local issues and opportunities, respond to outstanding queries that could be answered at this stage in the project and discuss next steps, which include the potential to create a Community Liaison Group to enable neighbours to meet at key stages throughout the project.

A few residents living close to the solar and wind farm sites also expressed an interest in attending the meeting and the invitation was extended to them. The invite was also shared on social media by a local resident and a number of people turned up on spec and space was found to accommodate them in the meeting. The venue was chosen based on residents who had indicated they would be attending; with the additional attendees the venue was very full but space was made so that everyone could participate.

The meeting, independently facilitated by PLANED, was attended by 32 residents, Cllr Delme Harries - ward member for the site, and Mícheál Ó Broin – senior project manager for Statkraft.

Cris Tomos from PLANED invited attendees to write thoughts and comments on post-it notes and put them on the flip chart board during the presentation.

Presentation:
The meeting started with a presentation from Mícheál Ó Broin for those who had not attended one of the other engagement events or reviewed the information on the project webpage.

The presentation given was the same as the one used during the webinar on 9 November and can be viewed on the project page.

[1] The invitation was sent to 56 properties in close proximity to the electrolyser site including those on Barham Road and Admiralty Way.

Discussion:
During the presentation, questions were asked by attendees, which have been collated into themes in this report to avoid duplication. A transcript of all post-its can be found in Appendix One.

The draft report was circulated to attendees for review before it is finalised, so any omissions or inaccuracies could be addressed. The project team has also taken some time to address outstanding queries where possible at this stage on the project and has provided addendums to the draft originally circulated for review.

Wider issues

Comment: Stating there is a 'climate emergency' is a contentious statement!
Response: A climate emergency has been declared by Welsh Government.

Question: Will the project (in Norwegian ownership) receive subsidies from the UK government?
Response: There is a price stabilisation mechanism being devised by UK Government to encourage development of low carbon hydrogen in the UK. This would provide projects with a guaranteed price for 15 years. If the sales price is greater than the guaranteed price the project would pay the difference back, and if the sales price is lower than the guaranteed price the project would be paid the difference.

Question: Have you considered other industrial areas in Pembrokeshire? There are other brownfield sites with road and train access outside residential areas and close to industry end users.
Response: We have a number of sites across Britain that we are looking to develop. The Trecwn project is the first project we have publicly announced.

Addendum: The unique nature of the site is what attracted Statkraft to Trecwn. It has a spur line off the Fishguard to Swansea line, a road connection to the A40 and is a brownfield site with history of industrial use. The onsite caverns are also unique to this site and we are investigating if they can be renovated for use as hydrogen storage (at a future stage).

Comments:

- Current energy issues and climate damage. Need to drive down carbon footprint and this project will tick boxes for Pembrokeshire County Council.

Hydrogen

Question: Will people be able to buy the hydrogen produced?
Response: If it was supplied as fuel, it would most likely be sold to a fuel station rather than individuals.

Question: Are there any plans for domestic supply?
Response: Not for this project.

Question: If hydrogen has been in existence for so long, why aren't we using it now?
Response: The process of making hydrogen has historically involved using fossil fuels such as natural gas, which meant that it was quite a carbon intensive process and directly using natural gas was a better alternative.

Question: Will you be storing hydrogen as gas or liquid?
Response: Gas.

Question: What pressure will hydrogen be stored at?
Response: It will be at a mix of high and medium pressure - medium pressure about 30bar and high somewhere around 300 to 400bar. The exact ratio between high and medium pressure is being investigated.

Question: Do you need a license to operate the facility?
Response: In addition to the planning permission, we would need a hazardous consents licence and an environmental licence.

Question: Will the compressors be loud and noisy?
Response: The compressors can be encased to reduce noise. We're looking into options and the noise assessment being carried out will help inform the design.

Question: What is the blast radius? Is the distance from houses enough?
Response: Initial research suggests it is and we'll be carrying out more thorough investigations as the project progresses.

Question: Why can't you develop at the northern end of the site where there are very few houses?
Response: We have looked at the northern end of the site, but our initial designs indicate that the valley is too narrow at this end to accommodate the spacing required between components.

Addendum: Following community feedback, we are looking at two possible options within the Valley site for the green hydrogen production facility. We will continue to assess this as the design progresses and environmental studies and surveys are carried out.

Question: It will affect house prices and knock up to 30% off property values/reduce value by a 7th. How will residents be compensated?
Response: We do not offer compensation to nearby houses. The site itself is identified in the local plans for industrial uses. It is in a strategic employment area, so we believe the proposals for Trecwn Green Energy Hub are appropriate for The Valley. Previous planning consents include a biomass

facility.

Question: Is Dŵr Cymru providing water to the site? Could you operate on the existing supply of water to residents?
Response: The facility won't be operational until residents are on mains supply so we would not have an impact on water supply. The water for the hydrogen facility will come from the reservoir, there is more than enough water within the onsite reservoirs to supply the hydrogen site.

Question: How will it be transported out of the site? How many movements a day?
Response: It will be transported in tankers with gas cylinders, similar to those you will see moving other fuels around. Up to 15 tankers a day are currently anticipated but we will know more as the project develops.

Question: Who will use the hydrogen? Anything locally to benefit from the investment?
Response: Discussions are underway with a number of potential end users, including HGV and bus companies looking to introduce hydrogen vehicles to their fleets.

This response was disputed by some residents based on their local knowledge of bus companies.

Question: There is a ferry service in Scotland that uses hydrogen. Could the ferry terminal be a hydrogen user?
Response: They are a potential end user.

Question: What is the business case? Will you only go ahead if companies express an interest in the hydrogen produced?
Response: We would need to have end users before going ahead but there are a number of companies already interested.

Residents asked for more information about these companies, but further information could not be provided at this stage due to commercial confidentiality.

Question: If you are considering options to use the underground caverns as storage, could hydrogen production take over the whole site?
Response: Potential to use the caverns is very much at a very early stage of research and there are currently no plans beyond the proposals currently being discussed.

Question: There are other industries already using hydrogen. Could it be used to supply industry for fertiliser etc if plans for trains and trucks don't work out?
Response: We see this as an ideal hub for transport but lots of industries are investing in decarbonisation, so there could be other options. We expect it to have local use, within about a 50miles radius of the site.

Question: What's the worst-case scenario in hydrogen transportation?
Response: As with any chemical or fuel tanker transportation carries risks, however hydrogen tankers have been developed with rigorous safety standards that mitigate risk alongside a range of other safety measures.

Addendum: Hydrogen tankers are purpose built using materials able to hold hydrogen at pressure, and these are already in use within the chemical industry and operating within the UK.

Question: What's the risk rate for hydrogen? Will fire engines be supplied? It would take quite a long time for them to get here!
Response: The fire service will be a consultee and we'll need to speak to them as the plans develop. Safety is a key part of the design for a hydrogen electrolyser and how the facility meets those the requirements will need to be demonstrated in the planning application.

Question: What waste will be produced? Understand that oxygen is a by-product but what about the water, when the last bit is left, what will be in there and how will it be treated?
Response: There may be a small amount of wastewater produced from the electrolysis process. This water would need to be treated. We are still working on the detailed designs for this and will have more information on this topic next year.

Question: What happens on days when the wind turbines and solar panels don't generate enough energy to power the electrolyser?
Response: There will be a small amount of electricity taken from grid to ensure that the hydrogen facility can operate and keep the equipment in standby mode. The facility's storage design will include a buffer to reduce the likelihood of this occurrence.

Question: What will happen to the excess solar and wind? Will it go into the grid?
Response: No, we would have to curtail this energy. However, we do not expect this to happen very often as wind and solar generating profiles typically complement each other.

Question: Could you lose one of the turbines and take the extra needed from the grid?
Response: That wouldn't be possible on this site.

Addendum: The use of locally generated green energy is a part of keeping the price of our green hydrogen low for end users, helping to accelerate decarbonisation. The electricity grid in Pembrokeshire is quite weak and if we were to use a grid import connection instead of a turbine at Trecwn this would require significant and costly grid upgrades.

Question: Will the facility be manned 24/7? Will HGV movements be 24/7?
Response: We anticipate that the facility will be monitored 24/7 and that HGV movements will be required 24/7 to meet demand.

Question: Will you own the transport coming in and going out?
Response: It is unlikely we would own the transport coming and going from site. We would have a contractual relationship with an experienced haulage company to transport the hydrogen by road.

Comments from residents:

- Re impact on property values - the solar array would be on some 230 acres of prime agricultural land, which lies outside of the designated Trecwn strategic site, part of the Haven Waterway Enterprise Zone.
- Cost of hydrogen vehicles isn't economically viable. Only two companies in the country currently making them at a starting price of £60k.
- If Pembrokeshire County Council replace/convert buses to hydrogen, the cost will fall on local people.
- Trains are going electric and money is being put into that and not hydrogen.
- We only get three trains a day and don't believe they will be hydrogen – or capable of transporting hydrogen, so it will all need to be moved by road.
- If there is a fire with hydrogen, it disperses quickly.
- Sceptical about how hydrogen can be used locally as potential industries in the area at 60+miles away (rather than the 50miles radius suggested.
- Don't understand why this site has been selected when there is nothing industrial here.
- There's only one hydrogen powered train at the moment, produced at an exorbitant cost.
- MOD retro fitting diesel trains.
- Should have sorted end users before putting the plans into the public domain.
- Other industrial proposals have been granted planning permission on the site, which haven't been developed and there's every chance this will be the case for this project.

<u>Wind/solar</u>

Comment: the wind turbines and solar panels are outside The Valley site and will have a major impact on local residents and property values. There are already solar panels in the field across the road already and this proposal will put solar panels on three sides of my house, destroying my home!
Response: We're looking at the location of the solar panels and the area indicated on the location plan represents the whole area being considered. We don't propose to put solar panels on the whole of that area and will be

avoiding best and most versatile land.

Addendum: While the maps provided as part of the early engagement are indicative, the feedback received has allowed us to make revisions to the layout of the solar panels. The extent of the solar has modified and reduced and is available to view in scoping report.

Question: What size will the solar panels be and how many panels per acre?
Response: What we have shown on the map is the widest extent of coverage of the panels. This did not include any on the ground surveys. In reality, the overall coverage of the solar will be approximately half of the area shown.

Addendum: As procurement of the project components won't take place unless the project is consented, the exact size of an individual panel cannot be confirmed yet.

Question: Could the solar panels be moved into The Valley?
Response: The topography of The Valley means it is in shadow for large proportions of the day, so not suitable for solar arrays.

Question: The north side of The Valley is south facing, largely scrubland and would be nearer the electrolyser – why can't you put the solar panels there rather than on agricultural land?
Response: The proposed site provides a faster and more cost-effective solution. The alternative site suggested would not be economically viable.

Question: Will there be 7ft fence around the solar panels?
Response: It is usual practice to have a fence around solar panels – chain link or stronger. More information will be available as the project progresses.

Comment: Statkraft recently had a solar project turned down as it as on best and most versatile land.
Response: Correct, each project is judged on its own merit. On this project we are avoiding grade 3a land (which is considered best and most versatile land) with our solar panels.

Residents countered that it is still prized agricultural land and lies outside the designated area for industrial development.

Question: The wind turbines will be visible from a wide distance. Are you in discussions with Pembrokeshire County Council and the National Park Authority?
Response: Yes, we'll be speaking to the County Council and National Park Authority along with a wide variety of other stakeholders. Photo montages showing the proposals from a range of viewpoints will be available during the next stage of consultation.

Question: How will you bring in the turbines?
Response: They'll come in sections and will be delivered through the estate road.

Question: Why do the turbines need to be so close to the project? Couldn't they be further afield?
Response: We carried out a wider search of areas that would be suitable for wind turbines. The area we selected was the most suitable and would also reduce the costs of developing the site.

Comments from residents:

- Would like to see what the solar panels will look like.
- With food shortages, solar panels shouldn't be put on agricultural land.
- Putting sheep to graze isn't appropriate for good quality agricultural land
- The turbines would stand higher than the nearest natural feature, Dinas Mountain, at blade tip, and would be visible from as far afield as the Preselis, Plumstone Mountain, Strumble Head, Wolfcastle and beyond. They would dominate the landscape.

<u>Environment</u>

Question: Have the SSSIs in the area been taken into consideration? They aren't shown on the location plan.
Response: They will be assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment. We have a plan showing the SSSIs and all the other constraints that will be taken into consideration as the project develops.

Comment: Noise from wind turbines and buzz from generator and solar panels will cause harm to my child's health
Response: Noise will be considered as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment and mitigation measures adopted where appropriate.

Question: Could you fell trees in the plantation area and put development there instead? Should be considered!
Response: There would be financial and ecological impacts associated with clearing a wooded area for development.

Question: With 15 lorries a day going down a private road, will you be responsible for the upkeep? It's recently been re-laid and we need to know how it will be maintained. Will there be any traffic controls? There is no footpath and it will be dangerous for residents
Response: We will look into possibilities.

Question: What would happen to people living in the bungalows with large HGVS travelling down the road?
Response: Ffos Las is suitable for HGV traffic and although the road is not the

responsibility of Statkraft, we could discuss potential traffic calming measures and impose speed limits on any of the vehicles working on our project.

Addendum: Subsequent to this meeting, Valley Management Services have confirmed willingness to implement traffic calming or management on Ffos Las as part of the project.

Question: How will you address concerns about light pollution – in particular on the SSSIs in the area?
Response: This will be assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment and appropriate mitigation proposed as appropriate.

Question: What are the estimated fatalities on birds and bats from the wind turbines?
Response: We've started bird and bat surveys and there will be more surveys in the spring, after which we'll have a better understanding of potential impacts.

Comments from residents:
- People move to Pembrokeshire for the peaceful natural environment.
- It was suggested that the loss of ancient woodland should be considered if it means element of the project can be relocated to have less impact on local residents.

<u>Socio-economic</u>

Comment: I attended the webinar, and this isn't going to be a big employer!
Response: There will be 2-3 permanent jobs once the facility is operational. It is hoped that the facility will act a catalyst for further redevelopment of The Valley and generate more jobs.

Question: how much of The Valley is the project taking up? If it is only going to generate 3 jobs, what opportunities are there for other businesses to come to the site with more jobs?
Response: The electrolyser will take up a relatively small area of The Valley - only about 2 hectares of the entire Valley.

Question: If Statkraft is considering future expansion options, how could the site attract other businesses whilst it is keeping its options open?
Response: At this stage, Statkraft is only considering potential for future opportunities. Statkraft has no firm plans that would prevent other businesses interested in setting up or relocating to The Valley.

Comments from residents:
- Industrialisation of the area won't benefit local people.
- Pembrokeshire relies on tourism and farming.

Community Benefits Fund

Question: Query about the amount of the annual fund stated – could it be less than £73k?
Response: Based on the current project proposed, £73k will be the lowest annual amount for the Community Benefits Fund, once the Green Energy Hub is fully operational. It could go up to £80k.

Question: Could there be a reduction in electricity bills as a result?
Response: Not in this case, as electricity produced will power the electrolyser and will not go into the grid.

Question: Is the £73k Community Benefits Fund for Trecwn or will it be distributed further?
Response: The way the Fund is administered, its geographic reach and terms of reference will need to be defined as the project progresses.

Comments:
- The Community Benefits Fund should give more to those more directly impacted.
- If the Community Benefits Fund is available to everyone with a visual impact, it would be a wide reach.

Engagement/consultation

Comment: It isn't early engagement. You should have spoken to local residents before this stage.
Response: It is still at a very early stage in the planning process and there will be other opportunities to engage with the project team as the development progresses.

Comment: It doesn't matter about the impact on residents. If you get the go-ahead, you'll proceed regardless of what we say.
Response: the engagement/consultation isn't about the principle of development but what we can do to minimise impacts and maximise benefits for people living in the area.

Question: How is the engagement open and transparent if not everyone was invited to this meeting?
Response: We have held three public exhibitions, a webinar and put all the consultation material on the project webpage. The presentation was the same presentation given at the webinar, so everyone has had access to the same information. This meeting was an opportunity for immediate neighbours of The Valley to ask any additional questions and discuss the possibility of setting up a Community Liaison Group, with an invitee list extended to include people living close to the solar panels and wind turbines.

A number of attendees continue to feel this was not an appropriate approach. As such, we will discuss the suggested invitees and draft Terms of Reference for a Community Liaison Group and, if there is a general consensus that a Community Liaison Group is not an appropriate forum as it will be by invitation - albeit that the meeting notes will be shared on the project website - we will rethink this as a mechanism for engaging local residents moving forward.

Question: Why isn't anyone from Pembrokeshire County Council here? Where's our local ward member?
Response: This is an engagement organised by the developer and we wouldn't expect officers from Pembrokeshire County Council to be in attendance, but your ward Councillor Delme Harries is in attendance.

Question: Can PLANED facilitate the Community Liaison Group?
Response: Yes, that was the suggestion being put forward so the community and development team can meet at key stages throughout the project.

Question: Will you come back with responses to the queries raised?
Response: Yes, the Community Liaison will provide an opportunity for updates as key stages, prior to the statutory consultation.

Comments from residents:

- Think there should be representatives from the Local Authority at engagement events.
- There were mixed views about whether the meeting should have been extended to a wider audience and who should be invited to join the Community Liaison Group.
- Paul Davies MS should be invited

Next steps:
The next step for the project will be the submission of the scoping report to Planning and Environment Decision Wales (PEDW). Environmental Impact Assessments will be carried out and the results will inform the emerging proposals, along with discussions with neighbours, local communities, stakeholders and statutory consultees.

A Community Liaison Group, independently facilitated by PLANED will be established. Proposed invitee list and draft terms of reference will be circulated to attendees of the neighbour meeting for consideration before being finalised. It was suggested the first meeting will be in January/February 2023.

APPENDIX ONE

Post-it notes:

Proposals

- Location of the plant – better up the valley!!! Weigh up felling trees to safety of residents and families!!!
- Is Trecwn site realistically the most appropriate location for a site of this type over brownfield sites closer to the haven.
- This valley was self-contained – instead of connecting to the grid. Could you run on hydrogen generators – to tick over if production of wind or solar as at its lowest?

Environment

- Noise/pollution
- Noise levels
- Light pollution
- Possibly plant extra trees on Barham Road side of valley to shield noise/light pollution to adjacent properties
- Visual impacts
- Surrounding our homes by solar panels
- Impact of solar arrays on our pristine rural view
- Would like to see updated solar array proposal, now that some soil grading has been carried out
- 245 acres of prime farmland out of food production
- Water being used to create hydrogen. Barham Road residents having to pay for new DCWW supply as Depot infrastructure unfit to supply
- Consider water reservoir - used in past for water in event of fire
- Explosion risk
- Risk factors from electrolyser/fuel storage tank failure
- Proximity to houses in Barham Road. What is the blast radius if there was an explosion?
- My land is next to the railway line. I breed valuable horses. What protection will my stock have?
- What would happen to the wind turbines/solar panels if the business failed – who would be responsible for remaining

Community Benefits Fund

- The residents of Trecwn should benefit more than outstanding areas (the closer you are the higher the benefit). We will have the noise etc.
- Would the Club and Bat be opened again with community fund?

Transport

- Route to be taken by 15 lorries per day
- Heavy tanker traffic on Admiralty Road danger to residents. Is the rail line being developed?
- Maintenance of the road – currently a private road so will need to be

looked after – possibly look after Barham Road too to help keep people sweet…

Economy/investment

- Why only 2-3 full time jobs for such a big project?
- Only 3 jobs
- Would local contractors be used in the preparation of the site/sites?
- House prices ↓
- Property value from solar panels
- Impact on house prices must be considered, recognised and addressed? Ordinary people use the security in their homes as a core part of their finances
- Who is going to compensate residents for consequent loss of property values, increased insurance premiums, degraded quality of life in terms of degraded environment and so on?
- By putting this in the public domain you have affected all residents financially
- If a woodland area (plantation) has less impact on local people, then money needs to be committed to clearing woodland – this cannot be about the cheapest and most convenient option

Renewable energy

- The energy produced 'green' is going to be more some days than others – also you will not use all energy produced. What will happen to the energy? Will it be wasted or stored somewhere, or put back into the grid?
- Potential to expand away from the planned supply recipient into the public
- Will there be definite companies locally to use this facility?

Engagement/consultation

- Many more meetings with immediate residents are required!!
- Council and Parks need to be at these engagement meetings