Penderfyniadau Cynllunio ac Amgylchedd Cymru
Planning & Environment Decisions Wales

Adroddiad

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Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion Cymru

Dyddiad: 27/10/22

Report

by Declan K Beggan BSc (Hons), MSc, DipMan, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Date: 27/10/22

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

SECTION 62D

The Developments of National Significance (Wales) Regulations 2016

Application by Rhoscrowther Wind Farm Limited

Land off Refinery Road, Hundleton, Pembrokeshire, SA71 5SJ

Cyf ffeil/File ref: DNS/3261355

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ABBREVATIONS

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
ASIDHOL	Assessment of Significance of Impact of Development on Historic Landscape Area
BMV	Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land
CEMP	Construction and Environmental Management Plan
CPRW	Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
DNS	Development of National Significance
DRP	Decommissioning and Restoration Plan
ECEP	Ecological Conservation & Enhancement Plan
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FW	Future Wales The National Plan 2040
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
HWEZ	Haven Waterway Enterprise Zone
HPS	Highways Position Statement
LCA	Landscape Character Area
LSVIA	Landscape, Seascape, Visual Impact Assessment
LIR	Local Impact Report
LPA	Local Planning Authority
MHW	Milford Haven Waterway (Moryd Aberdaugleddau) Landscape Of Outstanding Historic Interest
MOD	Ministry of Defence
NPSPG	Pembrokeshire National Park Authority Supplementary Planning Guidance
NRW	Natural Resources Wales

PCNPA	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
PCNPLDP	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan 2
PCNT	Pembrokeshire Coast National Trail
PCC	Pembrokeshire County Council
PEDW	Planning and Environment Decisions Wales
PPW	Planning Policy Wales 11
RVAA	Residential Visual Amenity Assessment
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SPZ	Simplified Planning Zone
TAN	Technical Advice Note
The 2017 Regs	Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017
The Act	The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
'The Habitats Regulations'	The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
VSSA	Visual And Sensory Aspect Area
WG	Welsh Government
WBFG Act	The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Report DNS/3261355

DNS Application Ref: DNS/3261355

Site address: Land off Refinery Road, Hundleton, Pembrokeshire, SA71 5SJ

- The application, dated 1 October 2021, was made under section 62D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015).
- The application is made by Rhoscrowther Wind Farm Limited.
- The application was confirmed as valid on 22 November 2021.
- A site visit was carried out on 27 September 2022.
- The development proposed is described as the "Construction and operation of three (3) wind turbines. Turbine 1 with a maximum tip height of 126.5 metres and turbines 2 and 3 with maximum tip height of 135 metres together with ancillary development comprising substation compound, electricity transformers, control building, new site entrances, access tracks, crane hardstanding, temporary construction compound and associated works. The 3 turbines will have a total installed capacity of not less than 10MW".

Secondary Consent Applications

- No secondary consent applications are being made.

Summary of Recommendation: That planning permission be refused.

Procedural Matters

1. Within the meaning of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (the 2017 Regs), the proposed development is EIA development. Accordingly, the application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES). On 22 November 2021, the ES submitted with the application was confirmed by Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) as containing the level of information identified in Schedule 4 of the 2017 Regs, and therefore complete; on the same date PEDW gave official notice of acceptance of the application under Article 15(2) of the Development of National Significance (DNS) Procedure Order. The application was publicised in line with the DNS regulations and interested parties were asked to submit representations.

2. As a result of representations received in response to the application the applicant and the Local Planning Authority (LPA) were requested to provide further information. The information sought included material relating to ecology, heritage assets, landscape and visual effects, and conditions. As result of the consultation responses, on 21 January 2022, PEDW received a proposal to vary the application, made under Article 27 of The Developments of National Significance (Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016 ('the 2016 Order'). The proposal was to reduce the height of turbine 1 by 8.5 metres from 135 metres to tip to 126.5 metres to tip. This would not constitute a substantial change in the nature of the development and its submission was thus acceptable.

3. The application was subsequently suspended until 2 May 2022 to allow sufficient time for publicity and consultation on the requested further information and the variation to the

scheme. The responses received resulted in the application being suspended for a further period up to 12 August 2022 to allow for the submission of additional information. The information sought clarity in regard to previously submitted information related to the description of the development as amended, ecology matters, landscape and visual impacts, clarity on the development plan/planning guidance as related to Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA) and conditions suggested by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Separately, the applicant submitted additional information in regard to bird and bat surveys and this was subject to consultation at the same time as the above.

4. On the back of the above re-consultation, in a letter dated 5 August 2022 the applicant referred to responding to Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC), and further submissions made, in particular those by Cadw and NRW. The applicant was advised that these matters need to be addressed in the relevant hearing statement and it must be made clear that this is additional evidence and the nature of such evidence. Other parties were advised that should they choose to, they would be given the opportunity to respond to any additional information at the relevant hearing session.

5. Having considered the representations made to the submitted DNS application, and on the basis of my reading of the ES and other submitted documents, I decided that it was necessary to hold three hearing sessions on the following matters:

- Landscape character and visual amenity;
- Setting of heritage assets; and,
- Ecology; socio economic and other benefits; and planning conditions.

6. Those invited to take part in the hearing sessions were asked to provide hearing statements. Statements were submitted by the applicant, Angle Community Council, a local resident, the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (Pembrokeshire Branch and the Brecon and Radnor Branch), Friends of Decuman, and Cllr S Alderman.

7. I undertook an accompanied site visit which included the site and its immediate and wider surroundings, in addition to private properties. I also carried out unaccompanied site visits including public rights of way and several more distant vantage points.

8. In the event the planning permission is granted a set of suggested draft conditions was submitted by PCC in its Local Impact Report (LIR) and further amended by the applicant, as agreed with the PCC.

9. The proposal as originally submitted was described as the “Construction and operation of three (3) wind turbines with maximum tip height of 135 metres together with ancillary development comprising substation compound, electricity transformers, control building, new site entrances, access tracks, crane hardstanding, temporary construction compound and associated works. The 3 turbines will have a total installed capacity of 12.9 MW”.

10. Following the submission of the variation to the scheme, the description of the proposal was revised to “Construction and operation of three (3) wind turbines. Turbine 1 with a maximum tip height of 126.5 m and turbines 2 and 3 with maximum tip height of 135 m together with ancillary development comprising substation compound, electricity transformers, control building, new site entrances, access tracks, crane hardstanding, temporary construction compound and associated works. The 3 turbines will have a total installed capacity of 12.9 MW”.

11. Prior to the hearing sessions the applicant suggested that the description of the proposal be amended to read as per the banner heading on page 1. In short, the amended description seeks to ensure that the proposed development would generate electricity at the current minimum threshold for DNS development, whilst removing the upper limit to electricity being generated. The applicant argues that as technology improves there may well be the potential for generating more electricity with turbines within the submitted dimensions and therefore it would be inappropriate to set an upper limit as stated in their original submission. I sought the views of PCC and other parties at the first hearing session who raised no objections or concerns.

12. Bearing the above in mind I have accepted the change in description; in doing so, I am satisfied that such information does not materially alter the scheme and has not prejudiced interested parties' who have engaged with the process.

13. As a consequence of the potential impact on European designated sites this report includes a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) report attached as Annex B. For reasons explained later in this report, the proposal is not likely to have any significant effect on any European designated site and, as such, no further action is required under the Habitats Regulations.

14. Relevant documents submitted after the application was made are identified at Annex D.

Site and Surroundings

15. The site occupies an area of approximately 11 hectares on land near to the village of Rhoscrowther, 9 km west of Pembroke town and 4 km east of Angle village. The site is within countryside to the south of the Haven Waterway in an area characterised by undulating farmland, dotted with farmsteads and occasional buildings sited alone or grouped in small clusters. It is located on the slopes of a shallow valley between two gently rolling low ridgelines that run east/west with the ridgeline to the north rising to approximately 63 m AOD and that to the south rising to approximately 59 m AOD. A stream passing through the site drains into the sea in Angle Bay approximately 1.3 km to the west. There are some small ponds and a small patch of broadleaved woodland and marshy areas associated with this stream, but the rest of the site is a mix of improved grassland and arable land within a semi-regular pattern of small and medium sized fields bounded mainly by hedgerows.

16. The former Cheveralton Landfill Site, which closed in 1995, is located within the eastern half of the overall site and has since reverted back to agricultural use.

17. The Valero Oil Refinery (the refinery) is located to the north of the site on rising land. It is a large industrial complex which includes six stacks up to 169 m high, with buildings, a multitude of tanks, pipework, gantries and other structures including extensive car parking. There are solar farms at Hoplass and Wogaston Farms to the southeast of the site and slightly further afield to the northeast is Pembroke Power Station (the power station) and electricity transmission lines. To the west of the site on the shores of Angle Bay are the remains of the former BP Oil Storage site. Both the site and the refinery lie within the Haven Waterway Enterprise Zone (HWEZ).

18. The site lies close to the boundary of the PCNP. The boundary runs in a north-south direction a short distance to the west of the site, encompassing the eastern margins of

Angle Bay and continuing south and east to include the Angle Peninsula and Freshwater West. The nearest turbine would be located approximately 750 m from the PCNP boundary to the west and 1.5 km to the south.

19. There are no dwellings within the site. There are sporadic dwellings, including farmsteads, in the surrounding area including a cluster of properties at Wallaston Green and on the lane which runs to the south of the site. As a result of an incident at the refinery in the early 1990s most of the residents moved out of Rhoscrowther village and many of the properties have been demolished. It is understood that only one dwelling in Rhoscrowther remains occupied.

20. There are no public rights of way across the site. However, there is a network of rural roads in the surrounding area which includes the B4320, the main road between Pembroke and Angle, and the minor roads to the north and south of the site boundary, the former also providing access to the refinery. Other public rights of way in the area include the Pembrokeshire Coast National Trail (PCNT) that is also part of the Wales Coastal Path.

Proposed Development

21. The proposed development consists of three wind turbines. Turbine 1 would be up to 69 metres to hub height, the blades would have a swept diameter of approximately 115 metres giving a maximum tip height of 126.5 metres. Turbines 2 and 3 would be up to 76.5 metres to hub height, the blades would have a swept diameter of approximately 117 metres giving a maximum tip height of 135 metres. The exact turbine model and specification would be subject to approval prior to construction. The total installed capacity of the turbines would be not less than 10 MW. The development will provide enough energy for approximately 9,450 homes. The development would have a 35 year operational life.

22. The turbines would be connected by underground electrical cables together with communication and low voltage cables. A hard-core track used for construction of the turbines and to provide access for maintenance would be constructed extending to approximately 1.3 km in length. In addition to the turbines, an electrical sub-station (48 metre x 25 metre) and a control building (9 metre x 9 metre) are proposed. The substation and control building would be located adjacent to the new western entrance. The applicant proposes a 50 metre micro-siting allowance for the turbines, access tracks and other infrastructure.

23. The turbines would be sited on the south facing slope of gently undulating land that descends westwards past Rhoscrowther to Angle Bay. Turbines 1 and 2 would be sited towards the top of the slope with turbine 3 being slightly lower. The agricultural land rises northwards to a gentle crest at about 63 metres AOD. The crest is marked by the minor road which separates the site from the refinery and leads to Rhoscrowther. Access to the turbine locations would be via two tracks leading from the minor road. The control building and substation would be located in close proximity to the site entrance and connection to the local grid would be on site into the existing overground power line.

Planning Policy

24. In February 2021 ‘Future Wales The National Plan 2040’ (FW) became part of the development plan. FW acknowledges the impacts of a climate emergency and an ecological emergency and identifies key priorities, risks and opportunities to achieve the sustainable management of natural resources, including sustaining and developing a

vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of communities. Policies 17 and 18 are particularly relevant.

25. Policy 17 refers to 'Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure' and states the WG's strong support for the principle of developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies and at all scales to meet future energy needs. It states that in determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy development, decision-makers *must give significant weight* (my emphasis) to the need to meet Wales' international commitments and our target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030 in order to combat the climate emergency. It also makes it clear that proposals should ensure there is no unacceptable detrimental impact on the surrounding natural environment.

26. Policy 18 – refers to 'Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments of National Significance' and states proposals for renewable and low carbon energy projects (including repowering) qualifying as Developments of National Significance will be permitted subject to policy 17 and certain criteria which refer, inter alia to matters such as proposals not having unacceptable adverse impacts on the surrounding landscape particularly the setting of national parks, built heritage assets, and the amenity impacts on the local community, no adverse impacts on designated sites of ecological importance and consideration of the cumulative impacts of existing and consented renewable energy schemes.

27. Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (PPW) states that DNS applications for onshore generating projects are to be considered under policies in FW. It goes on to state that the benefits of renewable and low carbon energy, as part of the overall commitment to tackle the climate emergency and increase energy security, is of paramount importance and that the planning system should, inter alia, maximise renewable and low carbon energy generation. PPW seeks to also protect and enhance landscape, heritage, habitats, and biodiversity.

28. PPW is supplemented by a suite of Technical Advice Notes (TANs) which provides topic specific detail. Of particular relevance to this application are TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009); TAN 12: Design (2016); TAN 23: Economic Development (2014); and TAN 24: The Historic Environment (2017).

29. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 includes a requirement on Welsh Ministers to reduce emissions in Wales by at least 80% by 2050. The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFG Act) is concerned with improving the economic, social, environment and cultural well-being of Wales.

30. Alongside FW, the development plan comprises the adopted 'Pembrokeshire County Council Local Development Plan Planning Pembrokeshire's Future up to 2021' (LDP). The LDP relates to the County of Pembrokeshire excluding the area of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (that is subject to its own LDP). The most relevant policies from the LDP are: SP 1 (Sustainable Development), SP 16 (The Countryside), GN.1 (General Development Policy), GN.4 (Resource Efficiency and Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy Proposals), GN.37 (Protection & Enhancement of Biodiversity), and GN.38 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment).

31. The development plan is supported by supplementary planning guidance (SPG) which have been adopted by PCC. Of particular note is 'Renewable Energy' adopted in October 2016. In addition, a joint draft SPG entitled 'Cumulative Impact of Wind Turbines on Landscape and Visual Amenity was issued for consultation on 7th January 2022 by PCC and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA); the draft SPG is expected to be presented to both relevant committees of PCC and PCNPA in late October/early November 2022.

Other Material Planning Considerations

32. As the site is not within the national park the planning policies of PCNPA cannot apply directly to the proposal. However, given the proximity of the national park to the site, it is material to note relevant policies in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan 2 (PCNPLDP) adopted in 2020, and the Authority's Renewable Energy SPG adopted May 2021. The most relevant policy of the PCNPLDP is Policy 1 'National Park Purposes and Duty (Strategy Policy)'. It states that development must be compatible with the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the park and the public understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities.

33. The site lies within the Haven Waterway Enterprise Zone (HWEZ) which was established in 2012 following an application to Welsh Government (WG) from PCC. The HWEZ seeks to promote energy related development within spatially defined areas and is also designated as a Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ), nonetheless it does not represent planning policy - development still needs to comply with the policies and criteria of the LDP.

34. National Policy Statement (EN-1) is a material consideration as it identifies the need for renewable energy schemes to achieve energy security and to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and capacity.

35. Other documents which refer to the urgent need and delivery of renewables include: Net Zero Wales - October 2021, including the Carbon Budget 2021 – 2025, Written Statement: Outcome of the Deep Dive into Renewable Energy - December 2021, The British Energy Security Strategy - April 2022, and Energy Generation in Wales 2019.

The Case for the Applicant

The Applicant's Case

36. Accompanying the submitted application is an ES with a 'Non-Technical Summary', which describes matters such as the site and its designations, the proposed development, the planning policy context, and the need for the project and its benefits. It also provides chapters that consider the scheme's effect on landscape, seascape and visual amenity, ecology, heritage, socio-economic, hydrology/hydrogeology, noise, aviation and telecommunication, transport, shadow flicker, and geology/soils.

37. A number of other documents have been submitted in support of the application including a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, and Pre-Application Consultation Report with Addendum. Subsequent submissions have also been made which provide further details in relation to matters such as ecology, heritage, suggested draft conditions, various topic specific addendums to the ES to reflect the variation to the scheme, and an updated statement on energy policy.

38. An overview of the evidence of particular relevance to the determination of the proposal is summarised as follows and is based on the scheme as varied and the applicant's most recent submissions:

Landscape, Seascape and Visual Amenity

39. Chapter 5 presents the findings of a landscape, seascape and visual impact assessment (LSVIA) that has assessed the likely significant effects of the development on the landscape, seascape and visual amenity of the site, immediate surroundings and study areas up to 11 km from the proposed wind turbines. The LSVIA analyses the extent and degree of visibility of the proposal using zones of theoretical visibility (ZTV's) and viewpoint analysis to identify the likely changes in views in the study area with receptors including settlements, visitor attractions, recreational routes and the local highway network. A Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) has also been undertaken to assess likely significant effects of the proposal on views from within the boundaries of properties local to the application site.

40. It is an inevitable consequence of large-scale modern wind turbine development that such structures cannot be fully screened by new landscaping and will inevitably have a significant impact upon the host landscape for several kilometres.

41. By locating the proposal adjacent to the oil refinery, there would be a close and complementary arrangement of these two energy developments, both functionally (clean energy contrasting with very large fossil fuel production) and visually, as closely associated but discrete sculptural elements and, in all views from the surrounding area, the proposal would be seen in conjunction with the taller chimneys and stacks on the oil refinery site. The surrounding relatively sparsely settled area, has landscapes and seascapes of mainly medium or low value and as a result there would not be any significant effects on landscape fabric or seascape character, significant adverse effects on landscape character, and visual amenity would be very limited in extent, and the proposal would not harm living conditions for residents around the site.

42. Although located close to the PCNP, the proposed wind turbines would not be visible from the majority of the park, and significant effects on landscape character and visual amenity within the park would be limited to a small area to the west and southwest of the site, which is already characterised by views of the nearby oil refinery. Subsequently, the proposal would not significantly affect the special qualities of the PCNP and would not have a significant adverse or beneficial effect on the ability of the park to fulfil its purposes.

43. Although not within a 'Priority Area for Wind' in the draft NDF (WG 2019), the application site is located within the HWEZ, where the overall vision is the creation of further investment in energy projects, the creation of green jobs, and the development and enhancement of existing jobs in the energy sector. The boundary of the HWEZ could have been drawn to the north of the site, immediately south of the Valero Oil Refinery but, by including this parcel of land in the HWEZ, it is considered the Welsh Government must consider this site capable of accommodating further energy development. Landscape change on and/or around this site would be an inevitable consequence of this designation.

44. Overall, the proposal would be located within an area designated for energy development, adjacent to an oil refinery and where the significant adverse effects on landscape

character and visual amenity would be very limited in extent, therefore it could be satisfactorily accommodated in this location.

Heritage

45. The proposed development has the potential to adversely affect the historic environment both during construction and for the operational life of the wind farm.

Construction Effects

46. Only one recorded asset would be affected by construction of the development. It is predicted that construction works in the vicinity of turbine T2 would adversely affect the sub-surface remains of an enclosure of possible iron age date. It is proposed that any adverse impacts can be reduced through micro-siting of T2 and its crane pad to avoid the enclosure; the associated access track would also be micro-sited or raised to allow for preservation of the enclosure. This is considered to be an adverse impact of slight magnitude on an asset of low importance and is not EIA significant.

47. There is also some potential for an effect on hitherto unrecorded remains, although the results of the archaeological evaluation and the relatively small areas of ground disturbance that would be entailed by the proposed works indicate only a very low potential. It is likely that any such remains would be of no more than low importance and therefore any effects on them would not be EIA significant.

48. The only other construction effect identified is the loss of a number of small sections of hedge banks as a result of the construction of access tracks. These constitute features of low importance, where the effect on them will be of a negligible magnitude, as the historic layout of the land will remain essentially unaffected. This effect is not EIA significant.

Operational Effects

49. Operation of the proposed wind farm would lead to some changes in the setting of historic assets in its vicinity which could affect the heritage significance of those assets. The assessment of effects on the setting of designated assets has been restricted to:

- The Church of St Decumanus, Rhoscrowther (Listed Building Grade I) with associated Church Hall (Grade II) and Churchyard Cross (Grade II);
- Eastington Manor House (Scheduled Monument, Listed Buildings Grade I and II);
- Wallaston Barrows (Scheduled Monument);
- Corston Beacon Barrow (Scheduled Monument);
- Angle Conservation Area; and,
- Milford Haven Waterway Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest

50. In terms of St Decumanus Church and associated structures, the predicted changes in setting resulting from the operation of the wind farm would have no impact on the significance of the Church Hall and Churchyard Cross. Visual change in the setting of the Church of St Decumanus would diminish the peaceful and secluded character of the immediate setting of the church, but only to a limited degree, and this is considered to be an adverse impact of no more than slight magnitude on the overall heritage significance of this asset. The evidential and historical value of the church, which it is considered constitutes the majority of its significance, would be unaffected, any impact being limited

to the aesthetic value of the church. The proposed development is time-limited, and all adverse impacts would be reversed on decommissioning of the wind farm with no permanent impact. As a Grade I listed building, the church is judged to be an asset of high importance, but the predicted impact is considered to be not EIA significant.

51. In terms of Eastington Manor House/associated buildings the submitted visualisations indicate the turbines would be seen in a tight cluster with perhaps two sets of blades visible above hedges and trees. The proposed development is seen in extremely oblique views and in no way illustrates the panoramic view southwards from the farmhouse or the equally open view west over Angle Bay from the tower house. It is these views that contribute to the significance of the asset and they would be unchanged by the presence of the wind farm. It would be possible to see Eastington Manor House in combination with the proposed wind farm in views looking east from Angle Bay, but the tower house is already entirely dominated by the presence of the oil refinery. The addition of the wind farm would not materially increase this sense of visual dominance over the tower. The proposed wind farm would have no impact on the heritage significance of Eastington Manor House.

52. In terms of Wallaston Barrows and Corston Beacon Round Barrow, in both cases when the turbines are viewed, they would appear as a tight cluster immediately in front of the existing stacks of the refinery. It is considered the presence of the turbines would not affect the ability to appreciate the ridge top/elevated sites chosen for the barrows and to experience the extensive views that these locations command. The contribution that setting makes to significance would be unaffected and it is concluded that there would be no impact on the heritage significance of the barrows.

Angle Conservation Area (CA)

53. Photomontages illustrate how the turbines would be seen on the skyline above Angle Bay, immediately to the south of the oil refinery. Further west within the village, any views towards the wind farm site are increasingly obstructed by buildings and vegetation, and long-range views towards the east are not otherwise part of the experience of the CA.

54. The presence of the wind farm in views to beyond Angle Bay would add more large modern structures to a part of the landscape already dominated by the equally tall structures of the oil refinery. It is considered this would not affect the ability to appreciate the relationship between Angle, its historic landing place on Angle Bay and the wider setting of Milford Haven. The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the CA would be unaffected. It is concluded that the historic character and appearance of CA would be preserved and the operation of the wind farm would have no impact on its heritage significance.

55. In terms of the Milford Haven Historic Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest (MHHL), the proposal would have an impact of slight magnitude on its character as a whole. The historic landscape is judged to be an asset of high importance, but the predicted impact is considered to be not EIA significant. Despite some change to some views, including those affecting designated features of national importance, the proposal would be seen within a context of considerable historical time-depth and surviving landscape and built features including the prominent naval fortifications and dominant industrial infrastructure along Milford Haven. The presence of the wind farm would not change the observer's capacity to understand and appreciate the landscape's historical meaning and significance and therefore will not materially reduce its overall value.

56. Overall, the submitted assessments have identified two designated assets that would be adversely affected i.e. the Church of St Decumanus and the MHHL, however adverse impacts on these two designated assets are entirely reversible and would be removed at the decommissioning stage.

Ecology

57. The ecological studies have been undertaken over a number of years and updated during the course of the examination period. Ecological baseline conditions were assessed through a combination of desk study and original field surveys. The scheme lies within 5 km of several internationally designated sites. Full consideration was given to this, and it was concluded that there would be no effect. The submitted 'shadow' Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) concludes that following mitigation, there would be no effect on the integrity of any internationally designated sites in view of their conservation objectives. In addition, effects on nationally designated sites within 3 km were also considered and determined to be non-significant.

58. The application submissions assess potential impacts of the construction, operational and decommissioning phases, with particular attention paid to species and habitats of high vulnerability to the proposed development.

59. A number of species and habitats that were recorded within the study area are subject to protection via legislation. Habitats included small areas of fen (swamp, flush), broadleaved woodland and unimproved grassland. Species included badger, a number of bats (e.g., Pipistrelles, Natterer's, Lesser horseshoe, Greater horseshoe) and a small number of birds (e.g., Yellowhammer, Linnet, Red kite, Kestrel).

60. Potential significant effects on these species and habitats have been assessed and mitigation measures are proposed. Significant effects considered included the potential for collision risk to bats and birds, removal of habitat and indirect effects on habitats.

61. Following the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures such as the submission and approval of an Ecological Conservation & Enhancement Plan and post construction bat monitoring, all identified significant effects would be reduced to non-significant. Appropriate site design, based on a variety of constraints mapping has meant that all areas of ecological interest have been avoided. The constraints identified included areas of semi-natural habitat, key bat flightline areas and the locations of protected mammal species.

Socio-Economic

62. The social and economic implications of the wind farm have been assessed to include effects on local business, tourism and employment. This is mainly through review of existing research and scientific papers and extrapolation to the proposed development.

63. Historic spend patterns would indicate that up to 30% of the capital cost of the proposed wind farm project could be awarded to suitable local and Welsh companies - including for direct and indirect economic effects, assuming a total project cost in October 2021 of approximately £8,385,000 this could equate to £650,000 for local economy and £2,431,650 for the Welsh economy. Proactive local sourcing of materials and labour will ensure that maximum benefits can be retained in the local areas in the vicinity of the proposed wind farm and minimise transportation.

64. A proportion of the total project costs will benefit the local area during construction in the form of direct employment, the use of local contractors for suitable elements of the work and tertiary benefits in the form of the provision of accommodation, meals and leisure activities for those employed on the site. Also, short-term jobs will be created during the construction phase; while long-term employment opportunities will arise for operational site management and maintenance, although this is on a much less significant scale compared to the impact at construction stage.

65. It is estimated that the proposed wind farm project would generate a minimum of 22 FTE (full time equivalent) jobs with 2 FTE jobs locally and 6 FTE jobs for Wales through development, construction and operation and maintenance stages over its lifetime (assuming 35 years). This estimate is based on figures at the lower end of the range for similar developments elsewhere in the UK, so can be regarded as conservative.

66. A number of studies indicate there is no clear evidence that wind farm developments positively or negatively affect levels of tourism. It is not considered likely that tourism and recreation in the vicinity of the site will be adversely affected by the proposal. However, the possible disruptions during the construction stage should be carefully managed so that the impact is minimised.

67. A 'Community Benefit Fund' for investment in local groups and projects will amount to £5,000 per MW per year (totalling an annual payment of some £61,000) and will be provided via the development. The fund, over a 35-year period, will see approximately £2,135,000 invested in the local area.

Shadow Flicker

68. In terms of shadow flicker, the analysis presents a worst-case shadow flicker scenario which indicates that one receptor (receptor 10) would receive shadow flicker effects for less than the reference limit of 30 minutes per day and 30 hours per year and would not require mitigation and all remaining assessed receptors (2, 3 and 11-14) could experience more than 30 minutes per day and more than 30 hours per year of shadow flicker. It should be noted that four of the assessed receptors are locations which represent nearby office buildings. A shutdown scheme would eliminate all shadow flicker effects throughout the year; this will be secured by planning condition. Eliminating shadow flicker effects means that the proposed wind farm would be below the recommended threshold limits for such an effect.

Noise

69. The submitted noise assessment was previously carried out for the site in 2013 for a similar design of proposed development with three turbines around the same location. This included conducting long term noise (and weather) monitoring at four locations (agreed with PCC) chosen to be representative of the nearest/most affected noise-sensitive properties to the site. Noise was not a decisive factor in the refusal of the earlier application with noise levels deemed to be acceptable and within appropriate guidelines. The results of the survey conducted in 2013 are still relevant as there have not been significant changes to roads and businesses in the area which would give reason to believe that the area has become quieter since 2013.

70. Ten 'noise-sensitive' receptor (NSR) locations have been used for the assessment, representing the nearest residential/noise-sensitive properties in all directions from the

proposed wind turbines. At these locations the relevant noise criteria are met at all NSRs and all wind speeds. It is therefore argued that noise from the proposed wind farm meets the local authority's noise impact criteria.

Aviation & Telecommunications

71. The effect of the proposed turbines is predominantly the blocking and/or reflection of radio signals from telecommunications infrastructure, television transmitters, radar installations and other navigation aids or by being a collision risk for aircraft.

72. In terms of terrestrial television reception. Modelling over a wide area from the site was undertaken for the relevant terrestrial television transmitters, with eighteen areas being reviewed in greater detail around the application site to assess the potential impact on television signals. The overall conclusion was that the risk of significant interference was low considering the interference modelling and review of coverage. Mitigation options have however been provided in the event that significant interference does materialise and is attributable to the proposal. The requirement for mitigation can be managed through an appropriate planning condition the result of which would result in no impact on any affected properties.

73. Wind turbines have the potential to cause a variety of effects on aviation and radar such as affecting the performance of radar, navigational aids and communication facilities through to physical collision. However, any impacts are not expected to be significant, and mitigation will not be required. Aviation lighting is likely to be requested by the MOD with respect to low flying operations. The requirement for lighting can be managed through an appropriate planning condition.

74. In terms of point-to-point links, consultation was completed with the relevant communication stakeholders. All but one confirmed they had no objection based on the current layout and/or provided the relevant link data. These links paths were plotted relative to the application site to determine whether the wind turbines may affect the identified communication links. This analysis identified no impacts. The Joint Radio Company (JRC) undertook their own assessment and the proposal cleared with respect to radio link infrastructure operated by Western Power Distribution South Wales (JEWA).

Geology & Soils

75. The ES at chapter 14 presents an assessment of the potential impacts regarding soils and geological environment with receptors identified as being the soils, superficial deposits and bedrock geology. Based on the findings of the impact assessment, mitigation measures are advised to reduce the potential of significant impacts. All impacts following mitigation are considered to have a negligible level of impact significance. No significant adverse impact upon the local soils and underlying geology is therefore considered to arise from the operation of the wind farm on the site.

Transport

76. The highest level of traffic generation will be associated with the construction phase. An assessment of the likely trip generation concluded that the highest flow of traffic would occur during month 4 and will correspond with the delivery of aggregate for access track construction and off-site batched concrete. This equates to approximately 56 movements per day (i.e., 28 inbound and 28 outbound trips). Traffic flows would fall off substantially over the remainder of the construction period.

77. Traffic generated during operation will be limited to around 1 vehicle per fortnight related to service engineers undertaking planned maintenance and inspections. At the end of the operational lifetime of the wind turbines, they may be decommissioned, and the site reinstated. This would involve similar access requirements as the construction phase though the number of HGV movements would be reduced as it is unlikely that the cast in situ turbine foundations would be removed. The potential impact of these levels of traffic on the road network is not considered significant when compared with the link capacities.

Overall Planning Balance

78. In terms of the overall balance planning the benefits of the proposed development include producing some 34,200 mwh of renewable energy (enough to power some 9,450 homes), its compliance with WG renewable energy targets such as Wales generating 70% of the electricity consumption from renewable energy by 2030 and the fact that FW places significant weight on the need to meet both Wales' international commitments and the national target.

79. In terms of impact on landscape and visual amenity it has to be accepted that modern wind turbines will have some adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity. In the context of the need for renewable energy generating development and the continuing urgency of that need, it is considered that the impacts upon landscape and visual amenity of this proposal have been minimised so as not to be unacceptable. The impact upon the historic assets is similarly slight. It is considered that any effects on historic assets has been minimised and is not unacceptable having given considerable importance and weight to the slight adverse impact upon the significance of the assets.

80. In the context of the residual effects on the landscape, visual amenity and the historic environment, it is argued the effects are fully reversible upon decommissioning of the development. The overall conclusion is that this proposal satisfies the policy tests of Policy 17 and Policy 18 of FW, and that planning permission should be granted.

Local Impact Report *(LIR)*

81. PCC's LIR presents its assessment on a number of matters. It also includes suggested planning conditions should permission be granted. The main points with likely impacts are summarised below.

Planning History

82. The site planning history is as follows:

- Installation of 5 wind turbines (59 m to hub height, 100 m to blade tip height) together with ancillary development of substation, control building, accesses and tracks, hard standing and associated works. Refused in January 2015 for two reasons relating to its significant adverse visual amenity and landscape character impact (including on the historic environment and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park), and the lack of an archaeological field evaluation in an area where important archaeological remains are likely to exist. The subsequent appeal was refused by WM's in April 2018 and Ministers who were of the view the proposed development would cause substantial harm to landscape character and visual amenity in respect of significant parts of the nearby PCNP, that it would cause substantial harm to the setting of St Decumanus Church, the cross shaft and the church hall and a limited adverse effect

on the setting of Eastington Manor, Wallaston Round Burrows and Corston Beacon Round Barrow.

83. With regard to applications for wind turbine development near the application site the following are identified: -
    - Planning permission was refused at appeal for 3 turbines (73m to blade tip, total output 2.25 MW) in August 2001 on land at Wogaston Farm (to the south-east of the appeal site);
    - Planning permission was refused at appeal in July 2014 for a single turbine (39 m to blade tip) at Broomhill Farm, Angle;
    - Planning permission was refused at appeal in August 2015 for the erection of 2 No. wind turbines (35.5 m to blade tip) on land south of the B4320 (to the south-east of the current site); and,
    - Planning permission was refused in September 2015 for the erection of one 100 kw wind turbine (24.5 m to hub, 35.5 m to blade tip) with associated infrastructure on land west of Wogaston Farm, Rhoscrowther.

84. Two other renewables schemes are identified: Planning permission was approved at appeal for a solar photovoltaic park (11 hectares; 5 MW) in April 2014 on land at Wogaston Farm, and for a solar photovoltaic park (19.4 hectares; 10 MW) in April 2014 on land at Hoplass Farm. Both have been implemented.

85. As part of a development for an electricity interconnector linking the existing electricity grids in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland (Greenlink), planning permissions were approved in August 2020 for the installation of underground electricity cables and underground fibre optic cables and associated works extending from land at Neath Farm to the South of the existing National Grid Substation associated with Pembroke Power Station and for the development of a converter station and upgraded permanent access road from Wallaston Cross to the converter station and associated works on land south of Pembroke Power Station/Lambeeth Farm.

86. The LIR highlights, for the avoidance of doubt, that at para. 5.6 of the ES Technical Summary it is stated “there is one permitted (but not yet built) renewable energy scheme (Blackberry Lane Solar Farm) which will be located to the east of Cosheston on the far east of the 11km study area. It will be located on the edge of the National Park and in the same landscape character area (LCA 25) as the Development”. This application was refused by the WM’s in October 2021.

Local Planning Policy

87. The LIR sets out the wording of the LDP policies that the Council considers to be of most relevance to the proposed development. Reference is also made to relevant SPG including those relating to renewable energy, biodiversity, and the historic environment. The suite of policies/SPG’s referred to in the LIR are reflected in the planning policy section of this report.

Landscape and Visual Effects

Effects on landscape fabric of the site itself

88. The construction phase includes some long-term loss of landscape fabric where entrances are made, and through the construction of tracks and turbine pads (negative

long-term impact). However, there would be beneficial effects with planting of gaps in hedgerows and there would be no significant adverse effect on landscape fabric during the construction phase. The applicant's claims of beneficial effects may be overstated but there is general agreement regarding impact on the landscape fabric.

Effects of construction (on landscape character)

89. The construction works would result in the loss of 150 m of hedgerows to accommodate entrances and on-site tracks, with compensatory gap planting of existing hedgerows to create a suggested 175 m of new hedgerows. Successful re-planting of gaps within existing hedges is difficult and does not properly compensate for the loss of linear features, and the habitat value they accrue where sections of hedge are removed.

Embedded Mitigation

90. In terms of embedded mitigation the following comments are made:

- The use of night vision goggle compatible infra-red lighting, mounted on top of each nacelle and angled above the horizontal, so not to be visible to receptors in the surrounding area is welcomed;
- At para 5.121.iii of the ES it explains that as the maximum height of the turbines is 135 metres adjacent to and well below the height of the nearby Valero Oil Refinery chimneys (up to 169m), they would appear close to and smaller than the chimneys in views from most locations. The LPA considers this an over-simplification of the situation and state that no detailed breakdown or comparison is provided in relation to the chimneys, which would be useful when making associations with possible impacts and comparisons of a general nature of appropriateness of the nearby siting, throughout the document; and,
- The earthworks where the cut and fill slopes would be seeded or topped with the site derived topsoil and allowed to re-seed from the seed bank within the soil is welcomed to hopefully encourage reinstated surfaces that would benefit local biodiversity and visually provide a best-fit with the surrounding areas.

Zones Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Analysis

91. Some of the greatest impacts will be experienced by users of the area where the landscape is more open and hedges are either absent or meagre in size, or at a distance or lower elevation and thus little screening is provided e.g. between viewpoints 5 and 16, particularly in the national park stretch of the B4320, and from longer views such as on the Coastal Path, examples being viewpoints 4, 9, 12, 14, 15, where impacts are greater and considered significant.

Viewpoint Analysis

92. The analysis and evaluation have been undertaken in a fair and balanced manner, and the conclusions reached generally proportionate and accurate except at VP's 10, 23 and 11, where the significance values as stated at Table A5.5/1 of the ES should be increased into the 'significant' category with justification being provided.

Summary of Effects on Landscape Fabric, Landscape Character, Seascape Character and Landscape Designations

93. Table 5.8: of the ES (Summary of Effects on Landscape Fabric, Landscape Character, Seascape Character and Landscape Designations) provides a summary indicating adverse significant impacts on a number of identified landscape character areas both outside and inside the PCNP. It is maintained that only T1 has any kind of meaningful relationship with the scale and mass of the refinery, and that T2 and T3 can be viewed as significantly detached from it, especially when observing from the southwest or westerly directions, where the PCNP is closest.

94. The applicant's Landscape Seascape Visual Impact Assessment over-simplifies the principles of 'impact' where it assumes that as impacts are not over the whole of the national park, so therefore they are acceptable in one portion of it. The Angle Peninsula and all its component elements are a part of the PCNP that people have to specifically seek out and travel to, owing to its remoteness and that the ZTV, shown principally at Figure 5.15a of the ES but also on numerous other versions with additional information overlain, as well as the photomontages, clearly indicate that the turbines will be visible from a wide area within the PCNP. It is likely therefore that the special qualities within the study area will be affected to a greater or lesser degree.

95. The ES acknowledges the proposal would result in significant visual and landscape effects, but these effects are also understated. The visual and landscape effects can therefore be considered to be adverse and major, and that the proposal would not be compatible with the capacity and character of the site and the area within which it is located resulting in a significant detrimental impact on visual amenities and adverse effect on the landscape including the PCNP.

The Historic Environment

96. The principal effects of the proposal on the historic environment relate to the setting of Rhoscrowther Church (Grade I), Church Hall (Grade II) and Churchyard Cross (Grade II), Eastingham Manor House (Grade I and a Scheduled Monument), Eastingham Farmhouse (Grade II), Angle Conservation Area, Wallaston Round Barrows and Corston Beacon Round Barrow. Overall, the effect on the historic environment is considered to be adverse and major for the reasons detailed below. The proposed development would therefore not protect or enhance the character, appearance or integrity of the identified listed buildings and the landscapes of architectural and/or historic merit.

Rhoscrowther Church/Church Hall and Church Cross

97. The three buildings form an intimate group both visually and functionally and despite its close proximity, only glimpses of the refinery are possible from within the churchyard due to vegetation and topography reinforcing a sense of enclosure and isolation. Despite changes to wider setting over the years, the three buildings retain their immediate setting. The cultural heritage of the listed assets is still clearly valued by visitors and locals despite the near abandonment of Rhoscrowther village as a result of an explosion at the refinery in 2004.

98. The ES states that within the churchyard the refinery is readily noticed by its persistent background noise, however this is not the case, it would be more correctly described as a background hum interspersed by intermittent disturbance during certain operations.

99. The ES argues that the church is no longer a dominant feature in the local landscape due to it generally being screened by vegetation and the fact that the nearby refinery is the dominant feature. However, the church tower when viewed form the south rises above adjacent trees and most onlookers would be capable of placing both the medieval church and the modern refinery in their historic context in terms of local landmarks.

100. The LPA do not agree that the screening effects of trees disconnects the listed buildings from the wider landscape, with longer range views out from the church making no material contribution to its significance. The church can be seen in a wide range of views locally with the church tower rising above the trees. Its four-storey tower permitted the sound of the bells to permeate the valley with the relationship of the church to its surrounding landscape being subtle and not solely based on inter-visibility as it has a wider sensory experience. The secluded setting of the buildings permit outward views and these are limited to the upper slopes of the rural valley to the east i.e. the area where the turbines are to be sited. The development would introduce new modern structures into the rural surroundings of the church. It is appreciated that from various vantage points existing trees would largely screen the development but only when in leaf.

101. It is not agreed that the impact on the setting of the three heritage assets would be of no more than slight magnitude for the following reasons:

- The analysis in the ES is heavily predicated on an assessment of aesthetic impact, however Welsh guidance on the matter as set out in 'Managing Setting of Historic Assets in Wales', is clear that there is a wider sensory context i.e., setting extends beyond a property boundary into the surrounding landscape, can include less tangible elements such as function, sensory perceptions or historical associations. It is considered there is insufficient consideration made of the church in its wider historic and communal contexts, and in aesthetic terms it is clear that the church will be seen in close proximity with turbine development especially from the south-west.

102. The ES assessment and the conclusion reached is largely reliant on the presence of the trees to the east of the heritage assets, however, the margin of error is very tight in terms of screening. The copse of trees concerned are thinly populated however even when the trees are in full leaf the blade movement would be visible especially turbines 1 and 3; it is suggested that a winter view would indicate the turbines to be clearly visible from the churchyard. There is no control over the retention/replacement of the screening trees, and it is apparent that ash die-back is evident with those trees likely to be removed. The revolving blades would be visible thus introducing an element of visual disturbance and the impact on setting would be substantial, effectively severing the last outward visual link between the setting of the church and its rural parish setting. Additionally, the inclusion of movement into the view together with the scale and visual dominance of the turbines in close proximity to the church would marginalise the church group in surrounding views.

103. Overall, given the narrow focus on setting and the weaknesses identified in terms of tree screening, which is critical to the ES assessment, the three listed buildings are considered to be of high importance and sensitivity with the magnitude of impact on their settings being high and the predicted impact as significant.

Eastingham Farmhouse and Outbuildings

104. As with the concerns related to St. Decamanus Church, much is predicated on the future management of trees that lie outside of the application site to the east of the listed

farmhouse. Without the copse of trees, the turbines would very prominent, particularly so due to blade rotation.

105. The assessment of setting within the ES does not go far enough. From various vantage points, the farmhouse still has a strongly rural setting with the Valero site and its stack/towers set away from it to the east. This setting still defines the farmhouse as a former working farm within a farmed landscape. Within this landscape the turbines would be prominently visible, effectively extending the complex of vertical features towards the farm and a contrast to the relatively low-lying refinery structures behind the farmstead which currently do not disturb the skyline. The ES focusses on the coastward setting of Eastingham being preserved and that otherwise the presence of the Valero site has a dominating presence, however this is not strictly true because despite encroachment, it still preserves a good degree of rural setting from various vantage points and the turbines would add a distinctly new note to the scene.

106. It is not agreed there is no impact on setting. It is considered the impact on setting on the listed assets would be adverse of no more than slight magnitude.

Angle Conservation Area (CA)

107. In this instance the issue is on the setting of the CA. Due to the size of the CA, much of what may be considered as setting lies within the CA itself, but elements of the wider landscape are also important. It is clear from the ES photomontages that the turbines would be prominent in the skyline and extend the industrial complex significantly southwards in a linear fashion with the rotation of the blades more insistent than the sporadic emissions of steam or flaring from the Valero site.

108. It is not agreed that the presence of the proposed turbines would add more larger modern structures to a part of the landscape already dominated by the equally tall structures of the oil refinery and thus not harm the setting of the CA. When viewed from East Angle the turbines would visually extend the industrial group and increase its overall presence. The refinery is not that dominant when viewed from East Angle where views are more distant and in the context of an expansive coastal view with far reaching vistas and a big skyline. The proposal would have a distracting impact on the sensory contrast between ancient and modern tide reliant sea-based industry as wind turbines fall outside of that context. Visually the turbines would be prominent, especially due to their motion, adding a whole new and alien ingredient to what is an attractive setting. The impact on setting of this asset of high heritage value, visually and in a wider sensory context is considered to be high in terms of magnitude.

Wallaston Round Barrows and Corston Beacon Round Barrow

109. The LPA defer to CADW in respect of effects on scheduled ancient monuments.

Other Local Effects

Archaeology

110. The LPA, in consultation with its appointed consultants Dyfed Archaeological Trust, are satisfied that the potential impacts of the proposed development on archaeology have been adequately addressed. However, an archaeological condition is recommended to mitigate potential damage/destruction of archaeological deposits associated with the possible Iron Age enclosure.

Ecology

111. It is noted that although the ES has included a section on biodiversity enhancements (para 7.176) none of the recommendations have been included in sufficient detail to be considered deliverable. It is stated there are many opportunities to enhance the land surrounding the turbine sites and a biodiversity enhancement scheme should be submitted to secure this. The lack of species present during the breeding and winter bird surveys is an indication that the site could be improved and support a greater diversity of habitats and species.

112. The ecology chapter has also not considered the potential impacts from operational lighting at the substation. If no lighting is required at the substation this should be clarified. Should external lighting be required then a suitable lighting scheme must be submitted which avoid upward light spill and the lighting of the adjacent hedgerow.

113. Overall, the impacts on biodiversity may not be significant and may be compliant with local LDP policy. However, further information is needed in terms of bat activity and the methodology employed, Dormouse activity, and lighting arrangements.

Transportation

114. Whilst the proposal would result in a minor negative impact during the construction phase, this would be satisfactorily mitigated by conditions.

Noise/Shadow Flicker/Lighting/Pollution

115. The ES appears to rely on studies and conclusions from the previous application but there are likely to be variations in noise generation particularly as individual turbine design is not confirmed and the turbines are in any case larger than those previously evaluated. Planning conditions are suggested to address the matter.

116. With regard to the potential for shadow flicker, the ES (Chapter 13) indicates that there could be adverse effects. It describes the causes and possible mitigation (by shutting-down the turbines at specific times under specific conditions) and indicates it is proposed that a planning condition will be imposed which requires a shadow flicker management plan to be submitted to, and agreed by, the Local Planning Authority.

117. With regard to lighting, if there is to be the need for aviation lighting then this should be agreed by planning condition.

118. A former landfill is likely to be encountered during the construction of the access track. Records indicate that it received commercial and household waste. There is therefore a high level of uncertainty regarding the level of contamination and potential to impact on construction and future users of the site, neither of which have been addressed within the ES. The ES recommends a preliminary risk assessment supported by a site investigation. Without such an investigation and assessment, it is not possible to ascertain whether there is any risk posed by potential contamination and whether remediation is required in the interest of protecting human health, ecology, and waters on and off site. In this respect, a planning condition is recommended.

Social and Economic Effects

119. It is noted that Pembrokeshire's economy has three main pillars: energy, agriculture and tourism. The county is surrounded on three sides by sea and a deep-water harbour that

is home to the UK's third busiest port. This has enabled the energy industry to develop around the Haven Waterway. The Haven Waterway Enterprise Zone (HWEZ) seeks to promote energy related development within spatially defined areas. Whilst the HWEZ is designed to create the best possible conditions for business to thrive, it does not represent planning policy - development still needs to comply with the policies and criteria of the LDP. In terms of local socio-economic effects, these are addressed at Chapter 6 of the ES albeit the potential benefits clearly cannot be verified. Overall effects are likely to be minor positive and, to a degree, meet some of the strategic objectives of the LDP.

120. The commitment to a community benefit scheme is noted but cannot be given any material weight.

Mineral Resource

121. A majority of the site would be situated within an area of mineral resource where the prior extraction of any economic reserves must be achieved, where appropriate, prior to commencement of development to accord with policy GN.22 of the LDP. Having regard to the nature of the proposal including its time limited nature, as well as the environmental issues that may preclude the acceptability of prior extraction in this instance, the proposal would not conflict with the objectives of the LDP.

Other Matters

122. With regard to potential effect on television reception, the planning condition recommended at the time of the previous application is recommended. The LPA do not have any comment to add to the assessments contained within the ES on other potential local effects in relation to the water environment, residential visual amenity, hydrology & hydrogeology, and geology/soils. There does not appear to be any assessment in relation to the loss of agricultural land albeit that the conclusions of the Inspector at the time of the previous application is noted.

Planning Conditions

123. PCC considers in the event that planning permission is permitted conditions would be necessary to ensure the impacts of the proposal are adequately managed and mitigated. It highlights these are consistent with those conditions recommended by the Inspector at the time of the previous application. Note, since the submission of the LIR, PCC in conjunction with the applicant have agreed a revised set of conditions as detailed later in this report.

Consultation Reponses

124. Responses were received from interested parties as part of the initial DNS public consultation exercise. However, following the submission of 'Further Information' and a 'Variation' to the scheme, interested parties were re-consulted. The main points in relation to the scheme as amended are summarised below. I have taken the interested parties' latest correspondence on the issues as their final position on matters.

Pembrokeshire County Council

125. The reduction in height of T1 makes no perceptible difference in the visual appearance of the development. In light of the amendment to the proposal, and the submission of the amended LSVIA, there is no reason for the LPA to alter its original conclusions on this issue as described within its LIR. The proposed variation would result in only a very

limited reduction in impact for the St Decumanus listed building cluster and therefore its view on the likely impact within the LIR still stands. Furthermore, the Cadw representation dated 10th January 2022 is not sound. Cadw has not considered the adequacy and status of the existing tree screening that can only ever be transient in nature. Furthermore, all three turbines are likely to be visible when the trees succumb to ash dieback as detailed in the Council's tree report. There appears to be no realistic means of mitigation for this impact within the development site boundary.

Natural Resources Wales

Protected Species

126. Whilst remaining of the view that there is uncertainty regarding the level of bat activity and therefore risk posed to bats, the suggested conditions address our concerns on ecological matters. In the circumstances, we are content to withdraw our objection.

Landscape Impacts

127. The proposed development would cause significant adverse visual effects on the character and appearance of the PCNP. The proposal would have a detrimental effect on the natural beauty of the park, in conflict with planning policy.

128. Development outside the park can adversely affect the scenic quality of views from and towards the park, detracting from the landscape character and natural beauty of the park. It is considered that the proposal has an adverse effect on views from the park and thereby a detrimental effect on the natural beauty of the park. It is contrary to the national park statutory purposes to conserve and enhance natural beauty.

Cadw

129. The assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the setting of the church carried out for the ES was reliant on the woodland being in place for the whole operational period of the wind turbines. It was on this basis that Cadw agreed that the proposed development would not have a significant impact on the settings of the church designated historic assets.

130. However, a reduction in the density of the trees in this area could increase the visual impact of the wind turbines from the church and this change could raise their impact on the setting of the church to a significant level. As such, we agree with the LPA that the applicant commission a tree survey that would provide empirical data relating to the species, size and condition of the trees.

131. It has been suggested that the church tower was used as a lookout particularly to watch for pirates entering Milford Haven. If the tower were used for this purpose the significant view from the tower would be in an arc from southwest to northwest across Angle Bay and towards the entrance to the Haven. The turbines would not be in this view or affect it and therefore would have no impact on understanding this possible additional historic use of the tower.

Welsh Government Transport Traffic Management Division

132. No objection subject to a construction traffic management condition.

Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water

133. The proposed development is crossed by a 180 mm trunk water main and an abandoned water main, the approximate position being shown on the attached plan. It may be possible for this water main to be diverted under Section 185 of the Water Industry Act 1991, the cost of which will be re-charged to the developer.

Angle Community Council

134. Whilst there is acknowledgement of world events unfolding e.g. need for energy security, this application, even if granted will not be producing energy immediately, and some of the current global issues are immediate. We continue to argue that the amount of energy production in this proposal of 3 very tall visually detrimental turbines is negligible compared to one distant offshore turbine. We have concerns that with the potential future offshore applications, the onshore underground cable routings will be compromised by any smaller onshore developments on the Angle peninsula. Given that this application is for different height turbines and significantly taller than the 100 m tip height in PCNPA planning guidance, we see no improvement in the changes made to the application. In summary, we do not feel this application is an improvement and has not changed. We continue to oppose this application.

Friends of St. Decuman (FOSD)

135. The trees to the east of the churchyard will not adequately screen the turbines from the historic, listed St Decuman's Church, the Cross Shaft and the Old School Room. The conclusions in the LPA's report add to our belief that the turbines will have a detrimental impact on all three. We are pleased to see and note that Cadw have stated that their assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the setting of the church, carried out for the ES, was reliant on this woodland being in place for the whole operational period of the wind turbines and this was the basis that they agreed that the applicant's assessment was correct in determining the scale of the impact.

136. It is noted that Cadw also state that a reduction in the density of the trees in this area could increase the visual impact of the wind turbines from the church and this change could raise their impact on the setting of the church to a significant level. As the tree report provided by the LPA states that any screening to the trees to the east provide "is likely to diminish and become fragmented within 10 years" we feel the impact the wind farm will have on the setting of the church will indeed be raised to a significant level, especially as the current trees will clearly not be, as Cadw believed in place for the whole operational period of the wind turbines.

137. In regard to the use of St Decuman's church and church tower and its presence within the wider landscape we note that in their most recent responses the LPA and Cadw have discussed the use of the tower as a lookout in an historic context. We have previously referred to the ongoing importance and use of St Decuman's and we would like to say that the use of St Decuman's Church and tower has continued and is still continuing over time. We mentioned in our previous responses that St Decuman's has a connection with Welsh poet Waldo Williams and to Waldo's landscape. St Decuman's church tower would have been easily visible in the westerly views of the sunset from Hoplass Farm that inspired Waldo in the 1930's. Waldo's landscape is still readily seen and can be appreciated in the easterly views from the top of St Decuman's tower.

Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (Brecon and Radnor Branch)

138. The survey data for bats is poorly collated and unreliable. The accuracy of the survey information for Choughs is questionable as detailed in the ES which then raises questions over the applicant's stance within the 'shadow' HRA.

Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (Pembrokeshire Branch)

139. The reduction of T1 does not change CPRW's position as set out in the original response submitted i.e., the adverse impacts of the proposal are greater than indicated by the applicant and should be judged in relation to the long catalogue of rejection of less ambitious projects on this site and are sufficient to outweigh its benefits. The application should be dismissed.

National Trust

140. Landscape harm to the national park should be the key element in the planning balance for this application. It is acknowledged that larger scale renewable projects are now required to meet the country's net zero targets, and to reduce carbon emissions to halt climate change. For Pembrokeshire, the larger scale projects can be achieved via offshore without compromising the landscape quality that many of our visitors recognise and appreciate in one of the UK's best national parks. The submitted proposal is the wrong scale of development in the wrong place.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

141. PCNPA has concerns regarding the information in the LSVIA, including the following:

- In the visual assessment in Appendix 5.5, it is recommended that the applicant identify the value of views and susceptibility of the receptor as set out in their methodology in Appendix 5.1, Table A5.1.6 (value) and Table A5.1.7 (susceptibility);
- In the landscape and seascape character assessment it is recommended that the applicant relate the geographical extent of effects to landscape features rather than viewpoint locations, as there is the potential for significant effects from locations which have not been examined in the visual assessment;
- In the visual assessment in Appendix 5.5 it is recommended that the applicant clarifies which effects are considered to be significant and provides further justification for borderline effects of moderate or moderate+. Further explanation is required in the methodology in Appendix 5.1 to understand the 'greater changes' relating to moderate or moderate+ effects; and,
- The wireframes and photomontages illustrate a 120 degree horizontal field of view (HFoV). This is not in line with current good practice wind farm visualisation guidance which recommends a 53.5 degree HFoV presented on an A1 width sheet. The applicant should provide justification for this approach.

142. While opportunities for mitigation are limited, the applicant should also consider further landscape enhancement proposals to secure long-term environmental net gain, noting

that they have committed to infilling existing "gappy" hedgerows within the site to compensate for the loss of hedgerows at the site entrance and along the access track.

143. The impact of the proposal on heritage assets in the National Park Authority are addressed in the LIR and are not repeated in this representation. PCNPA has reservations whether the landscape and visual impact of development has been adequately assessed, as referred to above. It is also our view that significant adverse landscape and visual impacts as detailed above are likely to extend into the national park during the operation of the windfarm. The proposal is therefore objected to.

Other Representations

144. In total some 48 representations were received objecting to the proposal either as originally submitted or as varied. Collectively, those objections are summarised as follows:

a The height and location of the turbines will have a substantial and harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area, especially in relation to the PCNP whose special qualities would be detrimentally affected and to the visual amenities of residential occupiers and users of recreational routes in the locality such as the Wales Coastal Path.

b Planning Policy Wales states that should any proposed development conflict with the objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area, or its setting, there will be a strong presumption against the grant of planning permission. Angle Conservation area covers the whole of Angle, including part of Angle Bay. Views across Angle Bay are intrinsic to the character of Angle. The turbines would be a major feature and distract the eye, particularly the rotation of the blades, thereby altering the character of the conservation area.

c The turbines would also be a significant and distracting feature in the view towards Wallaston Round Barrows from the vicinity of Corston Beacon Round Barrow, thereby impacting upon a heritage site. Also, the turbines are to be located in close proximity to St Decumanus Church, which is a medieval church of C13 origin, and is a Grade 1 listed building with the nearby Grade 2 listed schoolhouse and a Grade 2 listed medieval cross. The turbines because of their height would have an intrusive effect and detract from the peaceful and subdued setting of the church and intrude upon the experience of the grouping of the Church, schoolhouse and medieval cross shaft and base.

d Would result in the loss of BMV agricultural land;

e Question the proposed level and quality of biodiversity, mitigation/enhancements, and that important habitats for local wildlife such as bats, birds and mammals would be detrimentally affected by disturbance and the proposal's siting;

f Lacks any real benefits for the local community. No local ownership as stated in PPW;

g Detrimental impact on tourist activity in the area due to visual impacts;

h Potential noise detriment to nearby residential properties;

i Potential detriment due to shadow flicker effects on residential dwellings and also within St Decumanus Church;

j Questions the robustness of the findings of the ES and associated documents;

k Questions the level of local economic and other benefits the scheme would bring about;

l It is argued that offshore wind should be utilised in preference to an onshore location; and,

m Concern over safety in the event of catastrophic turbine failure and the potential detrimental impact on local television reception.

145. Some 16 representations support the proposal arguing the turbines would not be visually detrimental, their contribution to green energy, would bring community benefits long with employment and economic diversification.

Appraisal of Main Issues

146. In light of the foregoing, I consider the main issues to be the effects on:

- the landscape character and visual amenity of the area, with particular reference to the nearby PCNP;
- the setting of heritage assets;
- ecology; and,
- whether any resulting harm in terms of these matters is outweighed by the benefits of the proposal particularly its contribution to energy generation from renewable sources and combating the effects of climate change.

Landscape Character and Visual Amenity

Landscape Character

147. The site lies outside, but close to the boundary with the PCNP. PPW refers to a statutory duty to have regard to National Parks and this duty applies in relation to all activities affecting the parks, whether those activities lie within, or in the setting of, the designated area. PPW states great weight is to be given to their statutory purpose which is to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and to promote opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities. The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Management Plan (2019) defines the special qualities of the national park as including elements such as coastal splendour, diversity of landscape, remoteness, tranquillity, and wildness.

148. Chapter 5 of the ES covers landscape and visual effects of the proposal and includes a Landscape, Seascape & Visual Amenity Assessment (LSVIA). The LSVIA was subsequently amended following the reduction in height of turbine 1. The submitted LSVIA is sufficient to enable the potential landscape and visual impacts to be understood.

149. The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Guidance (NPSPG) includes Landscape Character Assessments (LCA's) with

the most relevant being i.e. LCA 6: Castlemartin/Merrion Ranges to the south of the application site, LCA 7: Angle Peninsula to the west, and LCA 8: Freshwater West/Brownslade Burrows further south. All three LCA's are regarded as having a high sensitivity to large scale turbines. The applicant concurs with this assessment for large scale turbines except for LCA 6 which they assessed as being a medium sensitivity.

150. I have no reason to believe that the broad methodology and scope of LSVIA is not soundly based. However, the PCC, NRW, PCNPA, and CPRW disagree with a number of conclusions reached concerning the extent and significance of the effects identified.

151. The site is located within a largely open and rural landscape which extends westwards from Pembroke to the Angle Peninsula within which are found individual properties, farmsteads, and small clusters of buildings. The uncluttered, open character of the landscape can be appreciated by the elevated nature of the primary roads that pass through the area, including to south of the site the B4320 between Pembroke and Angle, and the B4319 between Castlemartin and Freshwater West. To the south and southwest heading towards the coastal location of Freshwater West there is a definite sense of increasing wildness and remoteness. Freshwater West and Angle Bay along with the rest of the peninsula including the village of Angle all lie within the PCNP. At their closest the turbines would be located some 750 m from the boundary with the PCNP.

152. The substantial and highly visible presence of the Valero refinery with its tall towers, flare stacks and lower-level structures contrast sharply with the landscape in the PCNP to the south and west. Further to the north and east and lining the south and north sides of the Haven Waterway can be found port and jetty facilities, other elements of energy related infrastructure including wind turbines and Pembroke Power station with its associated pylons, and areas of urban settlement. These elements form part of the baseline against which the proposal falls to be considered.

153. In terms of LANDMAP the site lies within the north-western part of Visual and Sensory Aspect Area (VSAA) PMBRKVS061 which is described as a large area of mosaic rolling lowland landscape with a strong coastal influence in places. It extends into the PCNP and has an overall evaluation of moderate. To the north of the site is VSAA PMBRKVS090 which includes the Valero site which is characterised as urban with an overall evaluation of low. To the west and south of the application site other VSAA areas are characterised as 'Open Rolling Lowland, Intertidal, Dunes and Dune Slack, and Cliffs and Cliff Tops', with overall evaluations ranging from 'Moderate to Outstanding'. The application site therefore lies within a rolling lowland area that acts as a buffer between the PCNP and the industrialised Valero site to the north.

154. The applicant accepts that turbine development would inevitably have a significant impact on the landscape for several kilometres. Closer viewpoints (VP's) detailed within the ES are at 1, 2, 3, which are all within a kilometre or so of the turbines, with the closest being some 277 metres away at the bridleway north of Hoplass Farm. The VP's, illustrate that the turbines would appear as very large visually prominent modern engineered structures spread across a substantial part of the field of view within the local landscape. Whilst seen in the context of the Valero site with its high towers, stacks and chimneys, the bulk of those structures are confined to a relatively narrow visual space. The turbines would occupy the open countryside in between Valero and the national park. Rather than consolidate or compliment development at Valero they would result in a significant

elongation of high-rise structures that are already highly visually intrusive in the rural landscape.

155. Viewpoint VP6, is near to Wallaston Green some 1.5 km from the nearest turbine. The development would be seen more centrally sited against the high structures at Valero, with the views of the Angle Peninsula to the west. Notwithstanding their location relative to Valero or the presence of other development, they would still appear as a substantial addition to that site visually extending built development into the countryside near to Wallaston Green, with the adverse impacts amplified by the rotation of the blades.

156. Further afield, VP's 4, 7, 8 and 11 are within the PCNP and include vantage points along the B4320 and the B4319 (Castlemartin to Freshwater West) where the Pembrokeshire National Trail forms part of the Wales Coastal Path (WCP). The VP's, indicate the turbines would appear as prominent features across a significant part of the field of vision, separate and distinct from the development at Valero. These VP's correlate to LCA's 6 and 8. Notwithstanding the presence of Valero and other development such as the power station whose visual effects are much less prominent due to distance, the turbines industrial scale along with their modernity and highly engineered appearance result in a striking visual skyline feature within the rural landscape pushing towards the PCNP boundary. The turbines would significantly increase the presence of high-level vertical elements seen from multiple vantage points. In addition, unlike development at Valero, which is static, the rotation of the blades would only serve to emphasis their impact on the rural landscape.

157. Moving further out to the west VP's 9 and 12 show views from adjacent the WCP from Angle looking back over Angle Bay, all of which are within the park. These corelate to LCA 7. The turbines would result in a prominent incursion into these views, with their visual impact magnified due their rotation. Whilst the Valero site at some 4 km away already greatly influences views out from Angle those views are in the context of the extensive coastal setting which is far reaching and set against an expansive skyline, with the refinery taking its place within an environment of mudflats, shoreline, and extensive rural surroundings. The turbines would appear as a separate and distinct feature to the refinery resulting in new and prominent industrial development occupying the rural land that currently separates Valero from the PCNP.

158. To the north of the site and the Haven Waterway, from VP's such 10 and 23 (Neyland through to Milford Haven), there would be no significant effects. In landscape terms the context is significantly different to the lands on the south side of application site, with the mixture of urban areas, various wind farm developments, the power station and the Valero site playing a more visually significant role.

159. Drawing the threads of the above together, whilst the Valero site is prominent in landscape terms, nonetheless that prominence is diminished due to the taller elements occupying a relatively compact area within the overall site, with other development either on that site or in the wider area appearing much less prominent due to height or the effects of distance. The taller elements of Valero sharply contrast with its open and rural setting as seen from multiple vantage points within and outside the PCNP. From certain vantage points the turbines would be seen to be set against or closer to the development at Valero, however from many viewpoints, they would still be seen as structures that substantially increase major development away from Valero into the surrounding countryside. Rather

than consolidating development around Valero, the proposal would result in a significant increase in visual intrusion inside and outside the PCNP to the significant detriment of the character of the park's landscape.

Visual Impact

Pembrokeshire Coast National Trail and Wales Coastal Path

160. As noted in the ES users of the WCP would notice a significant change in views as a result of the proposed turbines as illustrated in VP's 4,9,12,14,15. All of which are within PCNP and include views from the B4319 (Castlemartin to Freshwater Road) and the coastal path around Angle Bay. From a number of the views the coastal splendour of the PCNP can be readily appreciated. The visual prominence and significant harm to such views has been addressed earlier. Whilst I appreciate at various points, topography and vegetation would screen all or parts of views of the turbines, however for extended sections of the WCP the turbines would be an obvious and distracting feature that would be harmful to the visual amenity of users of the coastal path. VP's 9 and 12 incorporate foreshore elements with an expansive sky, and the turbines would appear as an intrusive and prominent addition to the skyline that varies from a moderate to major visual impact on coastal views out from the PCNP.

161. Much further afield, VP24 (St Ann's Head within PCNP some 10.5 km away to the east), shows a visualisation taken from the WCP looking towards the entrance to Milford Haven including the Angle Peninsula. Despite the presence of Valero and other development, the view of the national park as shown to the right of the turbines exudes the park's qualities of coastal splendour and tranquillity. The VP demonstrates that the turbines would make a significant contribution to the elongation of high-level development away from the relatively close-knit structures of Valero into open landscape. The ES evaluates the adverse effect on the view as minor+/moderate. However, bearing in mind the above I consider it leans more towards moderate. Even with the distance involved, I consider the turbines would harm the coastal view to the detriment of the visual amenities of the PCNP and its coastal setting.

162. The proposed development would result in significant adverse visual impacts including views from the WCP, a nationally significant walking route. These significant effects are not outweighed by moderate or lesser effects elsewhere.

Bridleways/Public Other Rights of Way/Roads

163. VP1 is taken from the bridleway north of Hoplass Farm some 277 metres to the nearest turbine. From this view, turbine 1 would be seen primarily against the backdrop of the highest parts of the Valero site, whilst turbines 2 and 3 would appear as extending away from the close-knit built-up area towards the bridleway. The ES highlights receptors as horse riders, walkers, cyclists and motorists with the magnitude of change being assessed as very substantial/substantial with the effects on the view being major; I agree.

164. Whilst I appreciate that views along this route would be interrupted by hedges and topography, nonetheless when the turbines come into view, due to their proximity, they would, despite the presence of the refinery in the background, make a striking visual

impression, detracting from the open countryside view that currently acts as buffer to the development at Valero.

165. VP5 is taken from the bridleway south of Wogaston some 1.4 km from the nearest turbine. From this view outside of the PCNP the turbines would be visible beyond the next ridgeline, in front of and to the right of the Valero chimneys, with the Hoplass solar farm, the Pembroke Power Station and pylons in the view and the Castle Pill, Lower Scoveston Farm, and Scoveston Park and Wear Point wind turbines apparent on the north side of the Haven. The ES highlights receptors as horse riders, walkers, cyclists and motorists and with the magnitude of change being assessed as very substantial/moderate with the effects on the view being major/moderate +/moderate; I agree.

166. Again topography, vegetation and other features would interrupt views of the turbines, nonetheless, when they do come into view they would result in a significant change in the panorama to the detriment of the visual amenity of the identified receptors. Whilst I appreciate the refinery, Hoplass solar farm and other energy related development are within the field of view, their impact is noticeably lessened with distance or due to their low-level nature. Although not an identified VP, I experienced a likely similar effect when I viewed the proposal from a public footpath to the north of Newton Farm.

Other Road Users

167. There would be significant changes in views from some of the local roads within 3 km of the site, such as the minor road to the west of the site (VP2, 0.8 m), to the east of the site (VP3, 1 km) and also to the south from the B4320 (VP5, 1.4 km and VP7, 1.9 km) and the minor road through Wallaston Green (VP6, 1.5km). I appreciate that depending on the time of year and the height of the roadside hedgerows, views could be screened and effects more intermittent. Nevertheless, the prominence of the turbines and their elongation of high-rise development within rural views would result in significant visual detriment.

168. Whilst I appreciate that motorists may have a lower sensitivity due to their need to concentrate on the road, nonetheless, the Angle Peninsula and routes such as the B4320 will be used by those seeking to enjoy the scenic value of the PCNP. Indeed, during my site visit I noted long stretches of the road that provided relatively uninterrupted views of the application site. As I experienced along the B4320, there would be a significant effect on the visual amenity of road users up to 3 km from the proposed wind turbines. Within all these views, the development would result in significant levels of prominence as it elongates the presence of high-level development away from Valero.

Residential

169. The Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) focussed on effects on the private views of representative properties surrounding the application site. The RVAA confirms a significant change in views from the bulk of properties in some form or the other,

however any effects were not deemed to be overwhelming. I note the Council raised no concerns in this regard.

170. Whilst elements of the proposal would be visible to varying degrees from properties surrounding the site, bearing in mind factors such as the partial screening effects of topography, existing landscaping, orientation of the properties, or distance, I do not consider residential properties in the locality would be unacceptably affected in visual terms. None of the identified visual effects would be overbearing, overwhelming or oppressive to such a degree that it would unacceptably affect the visual amenities or living conditions of occupants of those properties.

171. Bringing all the above together, in terms of visual impacts, I conclude that the proposed turbines would result in significant of harm to the locality, including the PCNP.

Overall Conclusions

172. I am mindful that the proposed development is located within Haven Waterway Enterprise Zone (HWEZ), which has enabled the energy industry to develop around the Haven Waterway. The HWEZ seeks to promote energy related development within spatially defined areas. Whilst the HWEZ is designed to create the best possible conditions for business to thrive, it is not a landscape designation and any scheme within the HWEZ must satisfy planning policy.

173. The applicant draws attention to the NPSPG which indicates that there may be a limited opportunity for a single or small cluster of turbines on land within the national park close to the refinery. It is argued that PCNPA must, therefore, accept that siting wind turbines on the eastern side of LCA 7 would maintain the essential integrity, coherence and character of the landscape and the 'Special Qualities' of the park. Further, that those turbines would be bound to have a greater effect on the park than turbines proposed under this application.

174. The NPSPG is guidance to support the LDP, in this case Policy 1 (National Park Purposes and Duties) which states development must be compatible with conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the park. Whilst the applicant sought to draw comparisons between a potential scheme within the area defined by the NPSPG and the current proposal, there is insufficient evidence before me to draw any reasonable parallels. Just because the guidance opens the possibility for turbine development within the park it does not follow that other development outside the park is bound to have an acceptable impact. The acceptability or otherwise of any future scheme as referred to in the guidance would have to considered on its own merits as part of the planning process.

175. PCC highlighted that a 'Consultation Draft Cumulative Impact of Wind Turbines SPG was issued for consultation 7th January 2022 by PCC and PCNPA. In the LIR they stated whilst of limited weight at this stage, the LPA would provide an update in respect of prospective adoption in due course and how it relates to this application. At the hearing sessions the LPA confirmed that the draft SPG is intended to be presented for adoption to the relevant committees of PCC and PCNPA in late October/November 2022. Whilst the SPG may be due for considerations by both planning authorities in

the near future, nonetheless, its final adoption has not taken place. As a result, I have given the draft SPG little weight in terms of consideration of matters.

176. I conclude that the proposal would have a substantially harmful impact on the visual character and quality of the landscape, particularly in relation to the adjoining PCNP. As such the proposal conflicts with policy GN.1 of the LDP and policy 18 (1) of FW.

The effect on the setting of heritage assets

177. Section 16 (2) and 66 (1) of the Act [The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990] require the decision maker, in considering whether to grant listed building consent, for any works, or development, affecting a listed building, or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses; Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (PPW) and Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (TAN 24), reiterates this stance.

178. TAN 24 defines the setting of an historic asset as including the surroundings in which it is understood, experienced, and appreciated, embracing present and past relationships to the surrounding landscape. PPW states that it is important that the planning system looks to protect, conserve and enhance the significance of historic assets, and that this will include consideration of the setting of an historic asset which might extend beyond its curtilage.

179. In terms of the development plan, policy 18 (6) of FW refers to there being no unacceptable adverse impacts on statutorily protected built heritage assets, whilst policy GN.38 states that development affecting sites and landscapes of architectural and/or historical merit, or their setting, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it would protect or enhance their character and integrity.

180. The development would have no direct physical effect on any designated historic heritage asset. The proposal's effects therefore relate to effects on the settings of such assets, which are considered below.

St Decumanus Church with Associated Church Hall and Churchyard Cross

181. The Church of St Decumanus at Rhoscrowther [also referred to as St. Decuman's]is a medieval parish church located within a walled churchyard at the foot of the hillside immediately to the south of the Valero site and west of the proposed wind farm. The church is bounded by a minor road to its east. The churchyard has a gate at its north end to the road, and a second gate at its south corner beside which is a modest grade II listed church hall. Within the churchyard, between the church and the schoolhouse, can be found a grade II listed medieval cross shaft and base. There is a clear visual and functional relationship between these assets with the cross and church hall, listed for their group value with the church.

182. The significance of the church is derived from its evidential value i.e., surviving medieval fabric and its historical value, i.e., associations with the early Christian Church and its later development in this part of Wales. Despite the church no longer having a regular congregation with the virtual abandonment of the village in the 1990's, it remains permanently open, is cared for by local people, is still utilised for worship, funerals and

burial within the grounds, and visited by others, and also has connections with the Welsh poet Waldo Williams. It has communal value that adds to the significance of the church.

183. The immediate setting of the church is formed by its numerous historic gravestones, the trees that surround it and the other two heritage assets referred to above. Due to the local topography and the trees surrounding them the collection of heritage assets have a very definite sense of enclosure, seclusion, and isolation. Despite being close to the refinery, only glimpses of the highest part of it can be seen from very limited locations within the church grounds. The ES refers to the refinery being more readily noticed within the churchyard by the persistent background noise that it generates. Whilst there may well be times that noise from the refinery would be more discernible, during my site visit I experienced a low background hum, but even this was difficult to distinguish at times due to the rustle of trees.

184. The church hall built in 1851 as a school forms part of the eastern boundary to the churchyard and is accessed off the road. The materials and architectural detail such as rubble sandstone facings and steeply pitched roof, were designed to complement the medieval church. The historical interest is complemented by the value of the close relationship between the hall and the church. The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the church hall is primarily related to its immediate surroundings within the churchyard and its relationship to the church and cross shaft.

185. The nearest turbine, T1, would be some 700 m from the churchyard, with the furthest 1.3 km away. Visualisations indicate opportunities to see the turbines from some parts of the churchyard when looking east. In views from the north of the churchyard where all three assets are intervisible, the revolving upper half of the blades of T3 would be visible above the tree canopy. In views from the south, where the church and church hall are intervisible, most of the rotating blades of T1 would rise above the tree canopy, whilst the blades of T2 and T3 would appear through gaps in the vegetation, albeit highly restricted.

186. The secluded setting of the church and other listed structures permits outward views however due to the vegetation around the church these are restricted to the upper slopes of the valley to the east in the area where the turbines would be sited. The proposed turbines would introduce new highly engineered structures into those rural surroundings.

187. The applicant argues the turbines would be seen as more distance features, however their visibility, albeit restricted with the benefit of tree screening, would still draw the eye from within the churchyard, particularly so to the south of the church where T1 would appear as a conspicuous feature due to blade rotation. The presence of the turbines would be a distracting and intrusive feature that would detract from the tranquil setting of the church and associated listed structures with their outward rural views which complement that tranquillity.

188. The Council, along with others, highlight with supporting photographs, that the screening effects provided by the trees to the east of the church would be much reduced in winter; I share those concerns. For significant periods of the year, despite the density of any bare trees, the visual impacts of the proposed turbines would be likely to increase significantly due to lack of tree cover, with further elements of the turbines as illustrated

on the wireframes likely becoming more apparent. The harm to the setting of the church and therefore its significance would be substantial.

189. The Council raised the issue of ash dieback disease (ADD) affecting the tree screening to the east of the site. Both parties submitted arboricultural reports on the health and condition of the trees. The Council predicts the loss of all ash trees due to ADD within 10 years with no effective replacement screening, most notably the tree group denoted as G9 which forms the screening closest to the church. In addition, concerns were raised about the longevity of a number of other species. In contrast, the applicant's report predicted considerable but not total loss of ash trees but anticipates that growth of other tree species would compensate.

190. Cadw express concern that a reduction in the density of the trees to the east of the church could increase the visual impact of the wind turbines and raise the impact on the setting of the church to a significant level (as opposed to their previous comment that assessed the impact as not being significant to setting).

191. My site visit revealed that a noticeable mount of ash were subject to ADD. The applicant's tree report highlights that within tree group G9, all of the young ash were dead or dying, however, the more mature ash which it is maintained make up the majority of the group were showing little or no signs of ADD. Notwithstanding the potential for other trees to replace the trees subject to ADD, the fact of the matter is that the disease is affecting trees that currently provide screening to the proposed turbines. Whilst noting the applicant's less pessimistic outlook in terms of the influence of ADD, nevertheless, the disease is known to be prolific with an extremely high mortality rate.

192. Over time any effects of ADD may be alleviated by existing ash trees that do not succumb to ADD or by other tree species. However, the more positive assessment given by the applicant regarding the level, quality and timing of that screening is not particularly quantifiable in any meaningful way. The fact that ADD is affecting many trees on the site puts into doubt their subsequent screening effects and adds to my concerns as to the visual impacts of the proposed turbines and their impacts on the setting of the heritage assets.

193. The trees that currently provide screening from the church and other assets are outside of the control of the applicant. That lack of control is significant in terms of the potential visual impacts of the proposed development. The trees could be subject to wholesale felling at any time over the proposal's 35-year lifespan or be subject to works from statutory undertakers some of which have apparatus on the site. This casts significant doubt over the effectiveness of any current screening benefits and offers the potential for greater impacts on the setting of the heritage assets.

194. Bearing in mind above, I consider the visual change in the tranquil and peaceful setting of the church would result in a substantial level of harm and in turn to its significance. That harm extends to the other two listed structures whose are recognised for their group value with the church. Any harm identified would only be exacerbated by the likely loss of screening through ADD.

Eastington Manor Buildings

195. Eastington Manor, a Scheduled Ancient Monument and grade I listed building, which comprises a medieval tower house, is located in an open elevated position on the east side of Angle Bay, adjacent to the Valero refinery and some 500 m to the northwest of the application site. The complex of buildings adjacent to the Manor house comprises a substantial 18th century farmhouse with outbuildings (grade II listed) which are attached at their west to the tower house.

196. The buildings are experienced and understood as part of the historic complex of farm buildings on an elevated rural location overlooking the bay, albeit their setting is heavily affected by the Valero refinery in the background, which is a persistent feature in all but close views of the buildings.

197. The turbines would be located between 1-1.6 km away and as illustrated on Fig. 8.8 of the ES, would appear as a cluster with two sets of blades visible above trees and hedges. I appreciate the primary aspect of the listed buildings are seaward, looking away from the turbines, and these make a significant contribution to their setting, nonetheless in part of the wider setting there is an element of oblique views towards the turbines with gives a rural aspect.

198. An element of the setting of the heritage assets and how they are appreciated reflects the historical function of the buildings and historical relationship with the surrounding farmland. They still retain a strong rural element in regard to inward and outward views, albeit significantly compromised by the refinery. The turbines, despite the background of the refinery from many viewpoints, would add a distinctly new and obvious visual component to the appreciation of the buildings within their rural setting, especially due to their movement that would be very apparent.

199. For the reasons given above, I do not agree with the applicant's assessment that there is no impact on the heritage significance of the listed structures at Eastington. However, conscious of the much-altered nature of their setting, I consider any impact on their heritage significance would be no more than minor adverse.

Angle Conservation Area (CA)

200. The Angle Conservation Area designation covers the entire village of Angle, adjoining fields, and parts of the intertidal zone in Angle Bay and West Angle Bay. The CA comprises individual historic buildings in the village, the ways in which they are arranged creating a distinctive streetscape and the relationship between the historic settlement and the adjacent fields and coastline which collectively make a positive contribution to its character and appearance and contribute to its significance as a heritage asset. Much of what may be considered as setting lie within the CA itself, although elements of the wider landscape are also important in this context. Fundamental to the character of the CA and how its setting is experienced and appreciated is its coastal location and associated views.

201. The Act requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of CA's. PPW states there will be a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission for development that would damage the character or appearance of the CA or its setting to an unacceptable level.

PPW also refers to setting extending beyond the curtilage of an asset. The Cadw publication, "Setting of Historic Assets in Wales" states that "Setting often extends beyond the property boundary of an individual historic asset into a broader landscape context".

202. Within Angle itself views of the proposal would generally be heavily restricted due to the built-up nature of the village and surrounding vegetation. However, the same can't be said for the coastal stretch of the CA to the north and east of the village.

203. PCNPA have published a 'Proposals Document' (2012) that sets out how the character of the CA can be preserved and enhanced. The proposals document identifies a number of key views out from the CA and one of those is key view 1 to the north, from Angle point looking east across Angle Bay towards the application site. The ES explains this view illustrates the history of Angle as a sheltered landing place on Angle Bay from at least the medieval period as well as its wider setting on the south side of Milford Haven, with its important naval role. Submitted photomontages from in/around key view 1 indicate views out from the bay.

204. Contrary to the applicant's opinion, I consider the turbines would be prominent in views from Angle CA looking eastwards, with their visual impact intensified due their rotation. I appreciate that the Valero site at some 4 km away already greatly influences views out from Angle, however those views are in the context of the extensive coastal setting which is far reaching and set against an expansive skyline; the refinery takes its place amid mudflats, boats, a wide agricultural hinterland and a low skyline. The addition of the turbines into those views would result in an obvious and prominent visual expansion of industrial development to the detriment of current views and setting. In sensory terms, the turbines would appear at odds with the ancient and current sea-based industry that has formed part of the setting to Angle CA, along with its more recent role as a coastal holiday resort and all that has to offer visually.

205. For the reasons given above, I do not agree with the applicant's assessment that there is no impact on the heritage significance of the CA. The proposal would cause harm to the setting of the CA, and as a result would neither preserve nor enhance its character or appearance. As a result, I consider any impact on its heritage significance would be minor/moderately adverse.

Milford Haven Waterway (Moryd Aberdaugleddau) Landscape Of Outstanding Historic Interest (MHW)

206. The proposal would be within the MHW. The impact of the proposed development was assessed following the processes of the 'Assessment of the Significance of the Impact of Development on a Historic Landscape' (ASIDOHL) methodology. The ES assessment concludes that the development would have an impact of slight magnitude on the character of the historic landscape as a whole; Cadw concurs. Bearing in mind the range of landscape and types of development within the MHW and the proposal's relationship to them, I have no reason to disagree with the conclusions of the ES. As a result, the proposal would not have significant negative implications in terms of the MHW.

Other heritage related assets

207. Having considered all the other designated and non-designated heritage assets mentioned in the evidence, I find nothing which leads me to conclude that the proposal would cause harm to the settings of these or other assets to any significant degree.

208. In summary, the proposal would cause substantial harm to the setting and therefore significance of St Decumanus and the associated listed schoolhouse and cross shaft, and a minor adverse impact on the setting of Eastington Manor/Eastington Farmhouse, and a minor/moderate adverse impact on the setting of Angle CA. Such impacts are unacceptable and as such the proposal would conflict with the Act, policy 18 (6) of FW, policy GN.38 of the LDP, and national policy guidance which collectively seek to protect heritage assets.

Ecology

209. The application site is entirely in agricultural use and comprises a mix of arable, semi-natural and improved habitats. One main watercourse flows through the centre of the site, and the majority of semi-natural habitat is associated with this. Chapter 7 of the ES and its associated appendices details the range of flora and fauna supported by the site, the evaluation of potential effects, and avoidance and mitigation measures for significant effects, including the concept of biodiversity net gain on the site.

Designated Sites

210. The ES highlights that consideration was given to potential impacts on three internationally designated sites - Pembrokeshire Bats Sites and Bosherston Lakes Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Limestone Coast of South West Wales SAC, and Castlemartin Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) which lie within 3 km of the site.

211. The potential impact of the proposed development on the designated sites has been considered separately within this report, at Annex B. In short, I am satisfied that taking into account the identified likely significant effects together with the proposed mitigation, and the recommended planning conditions to achieve that mitigation, the scheme would cause no adverse effect on any internationally protected sites or species. This finding aligns with the advice of NRW.

Habitats

212. The ES identifies the key habitats associated with the site includes semi-natural broad-leafed woodland, wet woodland and swamp, however in each case percentages involved are very modest relative to county and national levels. The remaining habitats on the site are improved and poor semi-improved grassland and arable land. The ES identifies that physical land take and the subsequent loss of habitat from the proposed development will only take place on the improved/poor semi-improved grassland and arable land which are habitats of very low ecological value.

213. The ES indicates that material from construction works has the potential to drift onto surrounding good quality habitat e.g., the watercourse area, however, dust suppression measures adopted as part of good construction practices would assist in avoiding such effects. I am satisfied the proposed conditions relating to the submission and approval

of a Construction and Environmental Plan (CEMP) would set out appropriate measures to safeguard habitats with measures including control of dust and dirt from ground works.

Protected Species

Bats

214. The ES was accompanied by a comprehensive series of bat surveys carried out over several years which indicated generally low levels of bat activity associated with the application site. The ES identified the potential for bat strikes with the turbine blades with species such as Pipistrelles, Natterer's, Leisler's, Serotine, and Noctule being generally low, although with the Pipistrelle there is the potential for increased bat strikes due to an elevated level of activity in spring and autumn [I have separately addressed the potential impacts on the Lesser and Greater Horseshoe species later in this report].

215. Collision risk with respect to bat species would be mitigated by the micro-siting of the turbines to increase their separation distance from the nearest linear features i.e., hedge habitat which the bats would fly along. Other proposed mitigation measures include hedgerows gaps being temporarily closed on a nightly basis during the construction period, longer term reinstatement of hedgerows both at any severance point and more widely across the site through additional planting, and 'gapping up' of hedges. The ES indicates that the enhancement of the hedgerows throughout the site is likely to further encourage Pipistrelles away from turbine areas to forage along more diverse and structurally intact linear features.

216. Other mitigation measures include micro-siting of turbines to ensure adequate separation distances to the nearest bat habitats, and a lighting scheme for the construction and operational phases. The proposed conditions relating to carrying out post construction monitoring for bat activity/fatalities at the site, and if necessary, curtailing turbine use, along with feathering of the turbine blades to reduce rotation speeds while idling, would also minimise potential detrimental impacts on the protected species.

217. Whilst some question the robustness of some of the survey data, NRW are satisfied that the imposition of mitigating conditions adequately addresses bat activity on the site and confirm that the proposal is unlikely to result in a detrimental impact to the maintenance of the favourable conservation status of bat species in the area.

Birds

218. The ES details that in addition to a desk top study of bird records for the area around the application site, that an updated picture of bird activity on the site was carried out via surveys of breeding birds, wintering birds and bird vantage point surveys. The results of the survey data indicated that in general the site is very poor for birds of conservation concern, and that any breeding birds on the site are not prone to collision with turbines. Whilst some question the thoroughness of the submitted data, nonetheless I am satisfied that the information submitted and as augmented with further clarification, adequately addresses bird activity on the site; my stance reflects NRW's position on the matter.

219. The ES highlights that the key bird habitat on the site is the hedgerows which provide a good resource for breeding birds such as Whitethroat and Linnet. In addition, there is the potential for the hedges to support breeding Yellowhammer, as they have done in previous years. The ES notes that a full hedgerow assessment report has been produced, which includes detailed recommendations for hedgerow enhancement. It is suggested that, in combination with management of the arable areas of the site e.g. the creation of fallow areas and the leaving of field margins unploughed, the site could provide a good resource for seed-eating birds such as finches, buntings and sparrows.

220. I consider that the suggested condition relating to the CEMP in addition to the requirements of the Ecological Conservation & Enhancement Plan (ECEP) condition which seeks to safeguard and augment habitats within the site, would collectively provide for appropriate mitigation to safeguard and enhance ornithological interests related to the site.

Other Protected Species

221. The site has the potential for other protected species such as the dormouse, otters and badgers. I am satisfied that the measures as set out in the suggested conditions related to a CEMP, Dormouse Conservation Plan, the ECEP and a site landscaping scheme, would adequately safeguard any adverse impacts on these species e.g., short and long-term habitat management and the monitoring and maintenance of new and existing landscape and ecological features on the site.

Overall Conclusions

222. Based on the conclusions in the ES, and the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures secured by planning condition, I am satisfied that the proposal would be managed to protect and encourage biodiversity and ecological interests. It would avoid, mitigate, and compensate potential negative impacts, ensuring no significant adverse effects on areas of conservation interest such as nearby SAC's or locally protected habitats and species. In all these respects the proposed development would comply with the ecological objectives of policies GN.1 and GN.37 of the PCC LDP which seek to safeguard and protect the natural environment including protected habitats/species and the enhancement of biodiversity. It would also be consistent with the ecological objectives of FW, PPW, TAN 5.

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

223. Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended, imposes a requirement to consider the potential effects of a proposed development on a European Site, in this case the Pembrokeshire Bats Sites and Bosherston Lakes Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Limestone Coast of South West Wales SAC.

224. The Habitats Regulations requires the Competent Authority, the Welsh Ministers in this case, before deciding to give consent for a plan or project which is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of

that site, to make an "Appropriate Assessment" (AA) of the implications for that site in view of its conservation objectives.

225. To enable the Welsh Ministers to be able to carry out the AA process, evidence has been provided in the form of the applicant's Appendix 7.4 of the ES which is in effect a 'shadow' HRA. At Annex B I have set out an AA for the Welsh Ministers. It is based on the shadow HRA, the advice of NRW in its role as the statutory nature conservation body, and the comments received by other parties in response to the application. The AA concludes that the scheme, either alone or in combination with other projects, would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any SAC.

Other Considerations

Noise

226. The applicant's Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) detailed at Chapter 10 of the ES assessed the potential noise impacts arising from its operation regarding nearby noise sensitive receptors (NSI) such as dwellings. The noise limit values for the NIA were derived by applying the recommendations of ETSU-R-97 [Assessment and Rating of Noise from Windfarms] (which is endorsed by the Welsh Government), and 'The Good Practice Guide' published by the Institute of Acoustics both of which are regarded as the best available guidance on good practice on such matters. The limits were also based upon guidance from PCC. The NIA concludes that the predicted turbine noise levels would not exceed good practice criterion and I have no evidence to indicate the noise level conditions suggested within the LIR would not satisfy those guidelines and safeguard nearby residential amenities.

227. Local residents raised concerns such as the NIA's reliance on data from a previous application relating to the site, however as explained in the NIA, the results of the survey conducted in 2013 were considered to still be relevant as there have not been significant changes to roads and businesses in the area which would give reason to believe that noise levels would have materially changed; I have no evidence to indicate otherwise. In addition, others queried why they were excluded from the noise survey of relevant properties. The NIA assessed noise levels from a total of ten NSR locations representing the nearest residential/noise-sensitive properties in all directions from the proposed wind turbines. I am satisfied the NSR locations are a reasonable representation of properties likely to be sensitive to noise from the proposal; it is also worth noting that the Council did not raise any specific concerns in this respect. The proposed development would not have a significant adverse effect on local amenity in terms of noise.

Shadow Flicker

228. Concerns have also been voiced about potential shadow flicker at residential properties. This was assessed at Chapter 13 of the ES which indicated the potential for adverse effects at a number of properties. The number of properties effected is very limited and any effects would only be for brief periods and at limited times of the year. The ES stated that any shadow flicker effects can be eliminated by curtailing turbine operations at critical times; I am satisfied that this issue and any potential detriment to residential amenity could be adequately resolved by planning condition.

Television Reception

229. Concerns were raised that the proposed development would cause interference with television reception in the area. The ES at Chapter 11 concludes that the technical assessment (Television Desk Study Assessment) found that the overall impact on television services during operation is likely to be low, however in the event that such effects are reported then any additional assessment along with any necessary mitigation could be secured via a planning condition. I am satisfied the condition proposed within the LIR would adequately address such concerns.

Agricultural Land Classification

230. The land subject to the application site falls within grades 2 or 3a of the 'Agricultural Land Classification System' which is the best and most versatile (BMV). In this case the extent of land taken out of agricultural use and to be built on amounts to some 1.4 hectares. PPW states BMV land should be conserved for the future and considerable weight should be given to protecting such land from development. The proposed development would result in the temporary, albeit for 35 years, loss of a very limited amount of land, however the extent of land is not significant and crucially is entirely reversible. In addition, any limited harm of temporarily losing the BMV land is outweighed by the need to provide a more sustainable form of electricity to meet society's wider needs; to this extent and as discussed earlier, the proposed development is in line with national planning policy. Therefore, the issue of the temporary loss of existing BMV land is not decisive to the outcome of this application.

Tourism

231. A number of concerns related to the potential detrimental impact of the proposed development on the local tourist economy. The ES refers to various research findings that indicate there is no clear evidence that wind farm developments positively or negatively affect levels of tourism, and that the majority of respondents polled did not consider the presence of windfarms would affect their decision to stay in an area.

232. I visited the touring caravan and camping site at Newton Farm and observed that the field used had views both towards and away from the application site. Looking towards the site some 1.5 Km away, the proposal would be seen in the context of the Valero site, however some views in that direction would restricted by the topography of the field which falls steeply away, vegetation and the presence of buildings and other caravans/campers. Whilst the experience of those staying at the camp site would change, and it might even deter some from staying on the site or even visiting the locality, nonetheless there is no substantive evidence to reach any definitive view on the matter.

Other Matters

233. A number of locals cited their support for the proposal with particular reference to a future community benefit fund that would allow for investment in local groups and projects on an annual basis for the lifetime of the development. However, this benefit is to be given on a voluntary basis and is not necessary to make the development

acceptable in planning terms and is not therefore a material planning consideration; I have given it no weight in consideration of the application.

Benefits of the Scheme

234. The proposed development would provide a number of socio-economic benefits including:

- A valuable contribution with regards to provision of renewable energy, combatting the effects of climate change, and improve and assist in energy security, in line with planning policies of FW, the LDP and advice in PPW. In this respect the proposal is estimated to power some 9,450 homes per annum which is a considerable contribution and sustainable benefit of the scheme;

- It is estimated it would result in £650,000 for the local economy and £2,431,650 for the Welsh economy, and the creation of 22 jobs with a minimum of 2 jobs locally and 6 jobs for Wales through development, construction, operation and maintenance stages over the lifetime of the scheme.

235. I note the Council state in the LIR that the scheme will have a minor positive impact in terms of socio-economic matters. Notwithstanding the views of some interested parties, the proposed scheme has the potential bring about multiple benefits in socio-economic terms whether that be a contribution at national or local level.

Conditions

236. The Council have raised no objections to the applicant's suggested amendments to the draft conditions as referred to in the Council's LIR. My consideration of any conditions is based solely on these conditions [Appendix A]. Those draft conditions also incorporate a number of conditions suggested by NRW. The wording of the conditions was subject to more minor refinement during the hearing sessions. I made further slight refinement of some conditions to avoid repetition and in the interests of precision.

237. I have had regard to the suggested conditions as refined and whether they meet the tests outlined in WG Circular 016/2014 *'The Use of Conditions for Development Management' (the Circular).* In the event that the Welsh Ministers decide to approve the application, I consider the conditions detailed at Appendix A to be reasonable and necessary and to satisfy the tests set out in the Circular.

238. For the most part, the conditions would ensure that the development avoids or, where that is not possible, mitigates as far as is reasonable, the potentially harmful effects of the scheme. The reasons for imposing each of the recommended conditions are, in most cases, discussed in the corresponding sections of this report and summarised in the Appendix A.

Planning Balance and Overall Conclusions

239. Decisions are required to made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this regard I have taken into account the relevant policies of Future Wales and the LDP.

240. The proposed development would result in substantial harm to the landscape character and visual amenity of an area that includes the PCNP, along with significant sections of the Wales Coastal Path, a nationally recognised route for walkers being affected. The proximity of the proposed development to the Valero site does not lessen the harm. Bearing in mind the statutory duty regarding activities affecting national parks, I attach significant importance to the objective of protecting landscape character and quality.

241. LDP policy GN.1 contains criteria which development proposals should satisfy, relating to compatibility with context, avoiding significant harm to visual amenity, and protecting landscape character and quality including the special qualities of the PCNP. The proposal conflicts with policy GN.1 of the development plan and national policy guidance in this respect. It also conflicts with policy 18 (1) of FW which refers to development relating to renewable DNS schemes not having an unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding landscape (particularly on the setting of National Parks). The harm caused weighs significantly against the proposal.

242. Similarly, in discharging the duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting, I must conclude that the proposed development would cause substantial harm to the setting and therefore significance of the nearby Grade I listed church of St Decumanus and the associated listed Schoolhouse and Cross Shaft, would have a minor adverse impact on the setting of the Grade I listed Eastington Manor and Grade II listed Eastington Farmhouse, and a minor/moderate impact on the setting of Angle CA. Such impacts are unacceptable and as such the proposal would conflict with the Act, policy 18 (6) of FW, policy GN.38 of the LDP, and national planning guidance which collectively seek to protect heritage assets. The collective harm to the designated heritage assets carries significant weight.

243. Bearing in mind the above, the proposed development would also fail to comply with policy GN.4 of the LDP which seeks the delivery of renewable energy development through environmentally acceptable solutions, nor policy SP16 of the LDP which seeks to protect landscape and the natural and built environment of Pembrokeshire and adjoining areas.

244. Future Wales and PPW seek to ensure that one of their primary objectives is that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales as required by the WBFG Act. Both documents make it clear that achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience is a key national priority for Wales, and a recognition of a need for Wales to focus on generating the energy it needs to support its communities and industries over the next twenty years. More recent government guidance, and in particular the issue of energy security reinforces this stance. The proposed development would align with and support this approach.

245. The proposed development is estimated to power some 9,450 homes per annum over the next 35 years. This significant benefit of the scheme helps to meet local and national renewable energy goals, reduces reliance on energy generated from fossil fuels and actively facilitates the transition to a low carbon economy and security of energy supply. The proposal would also bring about socio-economic benefits in the local and wider economy. The collective benefits related to the proposal carries significant weight in the determination process.

246. With regard to the other issues, the scheme has been located and designed to minimise any significant detriment to ecological interests, living conditions of local residents in the area, and highway safety. Significant and persuasive mitigation measures would safeguard these acknowledged interests, which can be satisfactorily delivered via planning conditions. The reversible nature of the scheme, along with the proposed mitigation will ensure that the site will be returned to its historic use.

247. However, on balance, and having considered all other matters raised, including its time limited nature, the renewable energy benefits that would accrue from the proposed scheme would not justify or outweigh the substantial harm identified above.

248. The planning application should be refused. However, if Welsh Ministers are minded to grant planning permission, Annex A lists the conditions that I consider should be attached to any permission granted.

Recommendation

249. That planning permission be refused.

[redacted]

Inspector

ANNEX A

Recommended conditions in the event of planning permission being granted:

1. The development shall begin no later than five years from the date of this decision.

   Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans unless any variation is approved by reason of conditions 3 or 5: Drawing numbers, 1.1 Site Plan, 1.4 Sub-Station Indicative Layout and 1.5 Control Building Details.

   Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to the approved plans and to accord with Circular 016/2014 on *The Use of Planning Conditions for Development Management*.

3. No development shall commence until full details of the design (including colour), make and model of the wind turbines has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The wind turbines shall not exceed the following dimensions: as to Turbine 1 the maximum hub height shall be 69 metres; the maximum height to top of blade tip shall be 126.5 metres; as to turbines 2 and 3 the maximum hub height shall be 76.5 metres and the maximum height to top of blade tip shall be 135 metres; and in either case the maximum blade swept diameter shall be 117 metres.

   Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in compliance with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

4. All of the wind turbines shall rotate in the same direction and there shall be no display of name, sign, symbol or logo on any external surface of the wind turbines unless required by law or for health and safety reasons.

   Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in compliance with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

5. No development shall commence until full details of the external facing materials to be used for the control building, and the configuration of the sub-station have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

   Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in compliance with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

6. No development shall commence until a micro-siting protocol has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The protocol shall also accord with the joint agency guidance on ‘Bats and Onshore Wind Turbines – Survey, Assessment and Mitigation’ (Nature Scot et al, August 2021) and in particular paragraph 7.1.2 thereof. The protocol shall set out a methodology for deciding on micro-siting of

all elements of the development hereby approved to minimise the impact of the development. The protocol shall provide for the detailed layout of the turbines to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority subject to all turbines, crane pads and access tracks being located within 50m of the locations shown on the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in compliance with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

7. No development shall commence until a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The construction of the development shall accord entirely with the approved CEMP. The CEMP shall provide for:

    1. access arrangements onto the site and routing plan to the site (including times when turbine components and abnormal loads will be delivered)
    2. the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
    3. loading and unloading of plant and materials and a scheme for controlling lorry movements to and from the site;
    4. storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
    5. the erection and maintenance of security hoarding;
    6. wheel washing facilities;
    7. measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during ground works and construction;
    8. a scheme for the recycling/disposing of waste; and a scheme for the storage of excavated soil on site (to be re-used at the time of site restoration);
    9. a methodology for the investigation of any potential contamination, and mitigation where found necessary;
    10. working hours and delivery times;
    11. details of tree and hedgerow protection; invasive species management; species and habitats protection, avoidance and mitigation measures, protected species toolbox talks, copies of protected species licences required for the works;
    12. biosecurity Risk Assessment and arising precautions needing to be undertaken;
    13. details of the persons and bodies responsible for activities associated with the CEMP and emergency contact details, including Ecological Clerk of Works, Site Manager, authorities' contacts for emergency situations;
    14. Ecological Clerk of works to ensure construction compliance with approved plans and environmental regulations;
    15. details of how the construction phase will be monitored so that the above matters are complied with and a methodology for addressing any unforeseen circumstances that may occur during the construction period.

    The CEMP shall be implemented as approved during the site preparation and construction phases of the development.

    Reason: In the interests of highway safety, ecology and of pollution control and in compliance with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

8. No development shall commence until details of piling or any other foundation designs using penetrative methods sufficient to demonstrate that there is no unacceptable risk

to groundwater have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The piling shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of pollution control and in compliance with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

9. No development shall commence until details of any external illumination (during the construction and operational phases) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting details shall include:

I. Details of the siting and type of external lighting to be used, and measures to control light spill;
II. Drawings setting out light spillage in key sensitive areas (e.g., new and retained green infrastructure on site – hedgerows);
III. An Environmental Lighting Impact Assessment against conservation requirements for protected species;
IV. Measures to monitor light spillage once development is operational;
V. If any aviation warning lights are required they shall be night vision goggle (NVG) compatible infra-red lights, angled above the horizontal and not visible to the naked eye;
VI. The lighting shall be installed and retained as approved during construction and operation.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and ecology, and in compliance with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

10. No development shall commence until a scheme of landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include: a survey of all existing trees and hedgerows within the red line boundary (as shown on Drawing 1.1 Site Plan) and details of any to be retained, and proposed planting (and times of planting); together with measures for their protection during construction and their retention and maintenance thereafter during the lifetime of the development; also details of changes to existing levels; boundary treatments and areas of hard surfacing. The development shall accord with the details so approved.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in compliance with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

11. No development, including site clearance, shall commence until a site wide Dormouse Conservation Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Dormouse Conservation Plan should cover the lifetime of the development, build upon the principles outlined in section 7.152 of the Environmental Statement and include:

I. A plan showing habitat to be lost, retained and created which should identify the extent and location to an appropriate scale;
II. Details of protective measures to be taken to minimise the impacts of the works on dormice;
III. Details of timing, phasing and duration of construction activities and conservation measures;

IV. Details of proposals to enhance retained habitats for dormice including planting mixes and specifications;
V. Details of initial aftercare and long-term habitat management and maintenance;
VI. Actions to be taken in event previously unidentified species or habitat features are found;
VII. Persons responsible for implementing the works;
VIII. Details of measures to prevent or reduce incidental capture or killing;
IX. Proposals for monitoring the condition of retained and any new habitat, to inform habitat management, and dormouse population monitoring.

The Dormouse Conservation Plan shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details, with a written report of the effectiveness of the plan provided to the LPA every 5 years and any arising revisions of the plan to be agreed in writing with the LPA prior to implementation.

Reason: In the interests of ecology and in compliance with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

12. No development shall take place until a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The programme so approved shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved details and a completion report shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority prior to development commencing.

Reason: In the interests of safeguarding potential heritage on the site and in compliance with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

13. The permission hereby granted shall endure for a period of 35 years from the date when electricity is first exported to the grid. Written confirmation of the first export date shall be sent to the local planning authority within one month of the first export date.

Reason: The proposal is time limited and in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with policy 18 of Future Wales and policy GN.1 of the LDP.

14. At the expiry of the permission hereby granted or on the permanent cessation of the generation of electricity by the scheme, whichever is the earlier, the wind turbines and all associated above ground works and equipment shall be dismantled and removed from the site and the land restored to its former condition in accordance with a Decommissioning and Restoration Plan (DRP). The DRP shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the expiration of 34 years from the date when electricity is first exported to the grid and shall include a timescale of not more than 9 months for the carrying out of the decommissioning works. Decommissioning shall be implemented in its entirety in accordance with the approved DRP.

Reason: The proposal is time limited and in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with policy 18 of Future Wales and policy GN.1 of the LDP.

15. If any wind turbine fails to deliver electricity to the grid for a period of 6 months then, unless the local planning authority is provided with evidence that the turbine awaits repair and agrees a timescale for such repair, a Decommissioning and Restoration Plan (DRP) for its removal shall be submitted to the local planning authority for its written

approval within 9 months of the date the turbine first fails to deliver electricity. The DRP shall include a timescale for undertaking all works. Decommissioning shall be implemented in accordance with the approved DRP.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity, ecology, and pollution control and to comply with policy 18 of Future Wales and policy GN.1 of the LDP.

16. Within the year prior to decommissioning of the site a full ecological assessment of the site shall be undertaken in order to inform the Decommissioning and Restoration Plan. The assessment shall be submitted with the Decommissioning and Restoration Plan required by condition 14 for the written approval of the local planning authority and the Decommissioning and Restoration Plan shall be implemented as approved.

    Reason: In the interests of ecology and pollution control and to comply with policy 18 of Future Wales and policy GN.1 of the LDP.

17. No development shall commence until details of the routing of all cabling between the turbines, and between the turbines and the substation, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. All such cabling shall be laid underground. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

    Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to comply with policy 18 of Future Wales and policy GN.1of the LDP.

18. Prior to the erection of any wind turbine a scheme providing for the post-development investigation and alleviation of any interference to television reception caused by the operation of the turbines shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall provide for the investigation by a qualified independent television engineer of any complaint of interference with television reception at a lawfully occupied dwelling (defined for the purposes of this condition as a building within Use Classes C3 and C4 of the Use Classes Order) which lawfully exists or had planning permission at the date of this permission (and also any lawfully occupied visitor accommodation, including camping and caravan parks which lawfully exist or have planning permission at the date of this permission), where such complaint is notified to the developer by the local planning authority within 24 months of the first export date. The qualified television engineer shall prepare a report, with proposed recommendations, to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority within one month of the written confirmation of the complaint by the local planning authority and where impairment is determined by the qualified television engineer to be attributable to the development, recommendations in the report shall include mitigation works and a timescale for such works which shall then be carried out in accordance with the scheme which has been approved in writing by the local planning authority.

    Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and to comply with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

19. Prior to the erection of any wind turbine a report providing for the post-development investigation and alleviation of any shadow flicker effects caused by the operation of the turbines shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The scheme shall provide for the investigation by a qualified independent analyst of any complaint regarding shadow flicker within a lawfully occupied dwelling (defined for the purposes of this condition as a building within Use Classes C3 and C4 of the Use Classes Order) which lawfully exist or had planning permission at the date of this permission where such complaint is notified to the developer by the local planning authority within 24 months of the first export date. Where shadow flicker effects are determined by the analyst to be attributable to the development, alleviation works (and a timescale for such works) shall be included in the submitted report and shall be carried out in accordance with the approved report.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and to comply with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

20. If evidence of contamination is identified during construction, the development shall cease until a report on potential contamination prepared by a suitably qualified person has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The report shall include a phased investigation approach, incorporating risk assessment, to identify the extent of contamination and any measures required to remediate the site, including post development monitoring. Where remediation works are required, no further development shall proceed until a Validation Report to show that the works have been satisfactorily carried out has been submitted to and approved in writing by, the local planning authority.

    Reason: In the interests of pollution control and to comply with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

21. Following the procedures and protocols set out in the Institute of Acoustics document "A Good Practice Guide to the Application of ETSU-R-97 for the Assessment and Rating of Wind Turbine Noise", the level of noise emissions from the wind turbines hereby permitted shall not exceed:

    - at any dwelling without a financial interest in the scheme, the greater of 35dB L90,10min or 5dB above the LA90 background noise level at wind speeds not exceeding 10 metres per second at a height of 10m above ground level; or
    - at any dwelling with a financial interest in the scheme, the greater of 40dB L90,10min or 5dB above the LA90 background noise level at wind speeds not exceeding 10 metres per second at a height of 10m above ground level. For the avoidance of doubt, for the purposes of this condition “dwelling” shall refer to any residential property, including to the boundary of the curtilage, lawfully existing, or with the benefit of planning permission, at the date of this permission.

    Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and to comply with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

22. At the request of the local planning authority, following a complaint to it from an occupant of a dwelling alleging noise disturbance at that dwelling, the operator of the development shall measure and assess at its expense the level of noise emissions from each wind turbine generator following the procedures described in the Department of Trade and Industry Report 'The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms’ (ETSU-R-97). The noise emission assessment shall be submitted to the local planning authority within

8 weeks of the date of the request, or within any other timescale as agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

In the event that the results of the noise emission assessment undertaken show that the noise levels as stated in condition 21 are exceeded, the operator shall produce a written scheme of mitigation detailing measures to address the unacceptable noise levels as well as details of a timescale for their implementation, which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority concurrently with the noise emission assessment. The mitigation shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and the approved timescale.

In the event that the submitted scheme of mitigation is unacceptable, or not provided within the 8 week period (or any other timescale as agreed in writing with the local planning authority), the turbine or turbines that have been shown to exceed the noise levels as stated in condition 21 shall cease operation until such time as an acceptable scheme has been agreed in writing with the local planning authority. The scheme so agreed shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme and within such timescale as may be specified within that scheme.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and to comply with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

23. Prior to commencement of onsite works a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All construction work, including off-site mitigation (including works to facilitate all deliveries to the site) shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved CTMP.

    Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to comply with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

24. Prior to development commencing, an Ecological Conservation & Enhancement Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Plan shall include:

    - A plan showing habitats, landscape and ecological features to be lost/habitat to be created/areas to be retained which shall identify the extent and location on an appropriate scale;
    - Details of protective measures to be taken to minimise the impacts;
    - Details of timing, phasing and duration of construction activities and conservation measures;
    - Timetable for implementation demonstrating that works are aligned with the proposed phasing of the development;
    - Details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance;
    - Details of short and long-term management, monitoring and maintenance of new and existing landscape and ecological features at the site;
    - Actions to be taken in event previously unidentified species are found
    - Persons responsible for implementing the works; and,
    - Details of measures to prevent or reduce incidental capture or killing.

The Ecological Conservation & Enhancement Plan shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details for the duration of the operation of the development.

Reason: In the interests of ecology and to comply with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

25. No development shall commence until a scheme for the post-construction monitoring of bat fatalities and bat activity at the site, and in particular at the three turbines, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall accord with the joint agency guidance 'Bats and Onshore Wind Turbines – Survey, Assessment and Mitigation' (Nature Scot et al, August 2021) and shall include:

    I. Methods for data gathering and analysis.
    II. Location of monitoring.
    III. Timing and duration of monitoring.
    IV. Appropriate persons and equipment to carry out monitoring;
    V. Timing and format for presenting the monitoring results; and
    VI. Other information which the local planning authority deems necessary.

    The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details on commencement of operation of one or more of the turbines.

    Reason: In the interests of ecology and to comply with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

26. The turbine blades on all three turbines shall at all times be feathered to reduce rotation speeds to below 2 rpm while idling, in accordance with paragraph 7.1.3(a) of the joint agency guidance 'Bats and Onshore Wind Turbines – Survey, Assessment and Mitigation' (Nature Scot et al, August 2021).

    Reason: In the interests of ecology and to comply with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

27. No development shall commence until a turbine curtailment protocol has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The protocol shall be informed by the joint agency guidance 'Bats and Onshore Wind Turbines – Survey, Assessment and Mitigation' (Nature Scot et al, August 2021) and shall provide for the operation of any turbine to cease immediately in circumstances prescribed by the protocol and in any event whenever the monitoring carried out pursuant to condition 25 shows activity levels at any turbine to be moderate or above, using the Ecobat methodology, until a turbine curtailment programme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. When operation is recommenced, it shall accord with the approved turbine curtailment programme.

    The protocol shall provide for turbine curtailment programmes to include provision for on-going monitoring of the effects of the programme on bat fatalities and bat activity at the site, and shall provide for the preparation of an adjusted curtailment programme where monitoring shows that the impact on bats is unacceptable in the opinion of the local planning authority, with operation ceasing immediately until the adjusted curtailment programme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local

planning authority. When operation is recommenced, it shall accord with the adjusted turbine curtailment programme as approved.

Reason: In the interests of ecology and to comply with policy GN.1 of the LDP.

ANNEX B – APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

1. The nature of the proposal, the ecological background related to it, and significance of any effects have been previously set out within this report. In short, a total of 3 European designated sites lie within 5 km of the proposed development. In addition to the two previously identified SAC's above, there is also the Castlemartin Special Protection Area (SPA).

2. Regarding the Castlemartin SPA, the relevant qualifying species is the Chough. The applicant has screened out the SPA as the Chough has not been recorded at the development site despite many bird surveys having been undertaken; NRW have raised no concerns in this regard. In addition, the applicant submitted an additional report that clarified there is no suitable habitat for Chough on or near the site for a species that forages along coastal stretches, with short-grazed grassland and coastal heath. Given the evidence that there is no functional link between the Chough and Castlemartin SPA and the fact that there are no links in terms of habitat to the proposed development, it is reasonable that it be scoped out of this assessment.

3. Limestone Coast of South West Wales SAC is located some 610 metres from the site. Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site include the Greater Horsehoe Bat (the qualifying species). Pembrokeshire Bats Sites and Bosherston Lakes Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located some 4.5 Km from the site. Its qualifying species are the Greater and Lesser Horseshoe Bat. This SAC has been scoped in, in recognition of the fact that bat species from this SAC have the potential to interact with the development site. Limestone Coast of South West Wales SAC and Pembrokeshire Bats Sites and Bosherston Lakes Special Area of Conservation SAC are therefore the focus of this assessment.

4. The ES states in regard to the greater and lesser horseshoe bats, the potential effects are collision with turbine blades and hedgerow severance. Collision risk is not considered any further in the ES as it states horseshoe bats forage well below the height of the turbine blade sweep and therefore populations will not be at risk from the operation of a three-turbine wind farm. NRW agree that horseshoe bat species are at a low risk of collision with wind turbines due to their flight behaviour and that severance of hedgerow habitat is the main impact of the proposal.

5. Proposed mitigation measures include hedgerows gaps being temporarily closed on a nightly basis during the construction period, longer term reinstatement of hedgerows both at any severance point and more widely across the site through additional planting, and 'gapping up' of hedges. Other mitigation measures include micro-siting of turbines to ensure adequate separation distances to the nearest bat habitats and a lighting scheme for the construction and operational phases. Whilst the collision risk to horseshoe bat species is lower than other bat species due to their flight behaviour, nonetheless, the conditions suggested by NRW and accepted by the applicant to carry out post construction monitoring for bat activity/fatalities at the site, and if necessary, curtailment of turbine use, along with feathering of the turbine blades to reduce rotation speeds while idling, would minimise detrimental impacts on the protected species.

6. Taking into account the identified likely significant effects together with the proposed mitigation, and the recommended planning conditions to achieve the mitigation, I find that the scheme would cause no adverse effect on any internationally protected sites or species. The above findings align with the advice of NRW, and the wording of the suggested mitigating conditions have been agreed between the applicant and PCC.

7. In terms of other plans or projects, none have been identified which may result in cumulative effects, therefore no effects are anticipated. Bearing the above in mind, I consider there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites or features as a result of the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.

8. I have taken into account all the available evidence, including the concerns raised by those who oppose the scheme, and I have adopted the precautionary principle in carrying out my assessment. I conclude that it is beyond reasonable doubt that the scheme, either alone or in combination with other projects, would not have an adverse effect on a European site or qualifying features. Accordingly, should the Welsh Ministers be minded, planning permission may be granted subject to the necessary conditions being attached.

9. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that this report be accepted as an Appropriate Assessment which complies with the requirements of Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended.

[redacted]

INSPECTOR

ANNEX C - APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPLICANT:

[redacted] KC of Landmark Chambers

[redacted], HBA Environmental Heritage

[redacted], Headland Archaeology

[redacted], ADAS Arboricultural

[redacted], Tree Solutions:

[redacted], Framptons Town Planning

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

[redacted] Development Manager (Major Projects and Planning Obligations) PCC

[redacted] Landscape Planning Officer PCC

[redacted] Historic Building Conservation Officer PCC

[redacted] Buildings Conservation Officer PCNPA (assisting)

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

[redacted] (Senior Advisor Landscape) NRW

[redacted] (Senior Advisor Protected Species) NRW

[redacted] of Counsel (NRW legal adviser)

[redacted] Senior Historic Environment Officer (CADW)

[redacted] (Angle Community Council)

[redacted] (Angle Community Council)

[redacted] (Friends of St Decuman)

Cllr [redacted] (PCC)

[redacted] (Brecon and Radnor Branch CPRW)

APPENDIX D - DOCUMENTS

Documents submitted by applicant after application submission

1. Application form for 'Notification of Intention to Vary Development of National Significance' dated 21 Jan 2022 along with Fig. 1.1 Site Plan and associated documents as follows:
   - VARI003 - 2. LSVIA Addendum
   - VARI004 - 3. Figure 5.21
   - VARI005 - 4. Figure 5.22
   - VARI006 - 5. Figure 5.24
   - VARI007 - 6. Figure 5.26
   - VARI008 - 7. Figure 5.54 to Figure 5.56
   - VARI009 - 8. Heritage Addendum
   - VARI010 - 9. Figure 8.5
   - VARI011 - 10. Figure 8.6
   - VARI012 - 11. Revised Non-Technical Summary
   - VARI013 - 12. Revised Project Description
   - VARI014 - 13. Environmental Statement and Design & Access Statement Addendum

2. 'Further Information' received from the applicant is detailed as follows:
   - VARI020 - 19. Heritage Comments on Consultation Responses
   - VARI021 - 20. LSVIA Further Information
   - EXINFO-APP-004 - 1. Letter to PEDW (28 February 2022) - Further information as requested
   - VARI015 - 14. Rhoscrowther Ecology Chapter Addendum
   - VARI018 - 17. Wintering Birds Rhoscrowther 2021
   - VARI017 - 16. Breeding Birds Rhoscrowther 2021
   - VARI019 - 18. Rhoscrowther Vantage Point Survey 2021
   - VARI016 - 15. Ecology Appendix 2 - Bat Roost Study

3. Interested Party Representations to original and above application documents are detailed under references as follows:
   - Initial Responses - REPS001 to 043
   - Further Responses - REPS(2)001 to 034

4. Additional Information Submitted by 24 June 2022 from the main parties as follows:
   - 2022-06-22 - EXINFO-LPA-002a - LPA Photo from top of St Decumanus' Church tower
   - 2022-06-22 - EXINFO-LPA-002 - Additional Information from LPA re LSVIA
   - 2022-06-13 - EXINFO-NRW-001 - Additional information as requested
   - 2022-04-13 - EXINFO-APP-006 - Letter to PEDW
   - 2022-04-13 - EXINFO-APP-007 - Additional vantage Point summary for 2022
   - 2022-04-13 - EXINFO-APP-008 - Rhoscrowther VP1 and VP2 January - March 2022

- 2022-06-24 - EXINFO-APP-009 - Letter to PEDW - Further Information
- 2022-06-24 - EXINFO-APP-010 - ADAS Technical Response Note 1050080 Rhoscrowther 15062022
- 2022-06-24 - EXINFO-APP-011 - Rhoscrowther_Viewpoint_Coverage
- 2022-06-24 - EXINFO-APP-012 - Rhoscrowther Weather 2021 All Seasons

5. Interested Party Further Representations under references detailed as follows:
   - REPS(3)001 to 012

6. Hearing Statements were received from the following:
   - 2022-09-01 - HEARSTAT001 - Angle Community Council
   - 2022-09-05 - HEARSTAT003 – Local Resident
   - 2022-09-05 - HEARSTAT004 - CPRW (Pembrokeshire Branch)
   - 2022-09-06 - HEARSTAT008 - Cllr [redacted]
   - 2022-09-07 - HEARSTAT009 - CPRW (Brecon & Radnor Branch)
   - 2022-09-05 - HEARSTAT005 - Friends of St Decuman
   - 2022-09-02 - HEARSTAT002 and associated documents - Applicant (Session 1)
   - 2022-09-05 - HEARSTAT006 and associated documents - Applicant (Session 2)
   - 2022-09-06 - HEARSTAT007 and associated documents - Applicant (Session 3)

7. Other Information:
   - 2022-09-08 - Applicant - Policy Updated Position Statement

8. Documents submitted during course of Hearing sessions as follows:
   - 2022-09-21 - Letter from NRW
   - 2022-09-20 - From LPA to Applicant - Document referred to in Hearing Session - draft SPG on "Cumulative Impact of Wind Turbines on Landscape and Visual Amenity"
   - 2022-09-21 - From Agent - 2021 Naturescot Guidance
   - 2022-09-21 - From Agent - Amended draft conditions
   - 2022-09-22 - From LPA - Plan showing location of former landfill site
   - 2022-09-26 - From Agent - Additional link to support updated policy statement