

P23-0117_LO03v1

26 June 2023

Planning Applications
Environment and Regeneration Reception
Flintshire County Council
Mold
CH7 6NF

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017
Request for a Screening Opinion in relation to proposed Green Hydrogen Electrolyser and associated development at Kimberly Clark Coleshill Mill, Flint.**

I write, on behalf of HYRO Energy Ltd., with regard to the site described above to request a screening opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017, to determine whether the production of an Environmental Statement is required.

Included within this request is a plan sufficient to identify the location of the site, plans illustrating the scheme proposals, a brief description of the nature and purpose of the application and of its possible effects on the environment as required under this Regulation.

Following this request, it is required that under sub-paragraph 6 of Regulation 6 that the Council adopt a screening opinion within 3 weeks beginning with the date of receipt of this request made, or a period not exceeding 90 days, as may be agreed in writing with the person making the request. Therefore, we look forward to receiving your response within this timeframe.

The Site

The site is located to the immediate southwest of the Kimberly Clark Coleshill mill in Flint.

The site currently comprises greenfield land.

The site is located entirely within the lowest-risk river flood zone according to the Welsh Government's flood risk mapping. The site has low risk of flooding from rivers or the sea, however there are pockets of land close to the site which may be susceptible to surface area flooding. According to the Welsh Government Development Advice Map, the site does not sit within any identified flood risk zones.

The site is not located within a conservation area and contains no listed buildings, nor is it within the setting of a conservation area or any listed buildings.

The Development

The proposal consists of the construction and operation of a 7.5MW Green Hydrogen Electrolyser (GHE) facility, with associated infrastructure and change to a Public Right of Way. Access is to be taken from Aber Road.

The proposed development comprises a 7.5MW electrolyser system, water treatment plant, transformers, AC/DC rectifiers and eighteen storage tanks with four compressors. The boiler house within the paper mill will be connected to the GHE by a new onsite hydrogen pipeline with gas regulators. The proposals will also include a new onsite 11kV containerised substation.

The proposals will enable Kimberly Clark to decarbonise their industrial process, which will provide long-term economic, environmental and social benefits to their business in the long-term. In order to move towards the UK Government's Net Zero commitments, businesses should be actively looking to change the energy sources used for their industrial processes. Kimberly Clark are pioneering this technology in North Wales, which may encourage other companies to follow suit. These proposals provide a significant benefit to Flintshire and Wales as a whole.

Landscaping and appropriate mitigation will be provided throughout the site in order to buffer its external appearance and to provide biodiversity net gains.

EIA Requirement

Within the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017, Schedule 1 identifies the types of development for which an Environmental Impact Assessment is mandatory. The proposed development is not described within Schedule 1, and it is therefore considered that the proposal does not comprise Schedule 1 development.

It is acknowledged that the production of Green Hydrogen (and associated works, such as the substation) falls under Schedule 2, as the proposed development will produce electricity, steam and hot water due to the nature of the electrolyser.

Schedule 2 development need not necessarily comprise EIA Development. The determining factor in any consideration of the need for EIA of Schedule 2 development is the likelihood of significant effects. To aid the decision maker in coming to a conclusion, paragraph 4 of Regulation 5 requires that, where a decision-maker has to decide whether Schedule 2 development is EIA development, they must take into account information provided by the applicant, the results of any other environmental assessment available to the decision maker and the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 3 'Selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development'.

Relevant considerations include the 'characteristics of development' (its size, cumulative effects, use of natural resources, emissions/wastes and accident risks), the 'location of development' (including the existing land use, capacity of local natural resources, and absorption capacity of the surrounding natural environment), the 'characteristics of the potential impact', having regard in particular to extent, magnitude/complexity, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility and also 'the possibility of effectively reducing the impact' (i.e. through mitigation either inherent in the design process, or provided as an additional element of the proposal).

Level of Emissions to Air

With Green Hydrogen development, there are no emissions to the air from the operation other than pure oxygen, which is a byproduct of splitting H₂O particles. The release of pure oxygen into the air will not be a permanent stream, instead it will be released periodically. No significant effects would therefore arise in relation to this matter.

Arrangements for the Transport of Fuel

With Green Hydrogen development, there are no requirements for any fuel to be delivered to the site as part of the operation of the development. No significant effects would therefore arise in relation to this matter.

Visual Impact

It is an inevitable consequence of Green Hydrogen development that there will be some visibility of the development from the surrounding local area. In this regard it is proposed that a Landscape and Visual Assessment of the development shall be submitted as part of the planning application. It is not considered however, that in the context of the site and its surroundings, that there would be any potential for 'significant' effects, such as to warrant the production of an EIA. Equally, the proposal shall incorporate significant areas of landscaping.

Characteristics of the Development

The characteristics of the development are one which is small scale, low in natural resource usage, would not produce waste products or pollution, and would have a low risk of generating accidents in terms of the technologies to be used. It is our view therefore that the characteristics of this development would not justify the submission of an EIA in terms of the generation of likely significant effects.

Location of Development

The location of the proposed development is not considered to be a sensitive area under the definition of such given in Regulation 2(1), as land lying within SSSI's, National Parks, the Broads, World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, AONBs and sites covered by international conservation designations.

Characteristics of the Impact

The nature of the proposed development is for a battery storage development, a technology which is well understood and in operation elsewhere throughout the UK, and therefore would not result in any unusual, complex or potentially hazardous environmental effects. It is our view therefore that the characteristics of any impacts from this development would not justify the submission of an EIA in terms of the generation of significant effects.

Potential Impact

It is acknowledged that there are potential environmental impacts arising from the proposed

development and these aspects will be addressed through the provision of supporting reports to the planning application. However, it is considered that with regard to the screening criteria set out in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations, that these impacts would not be 'significant' such as to warrant the submission of a formal EIA.

The forthcoming planning application will be accompanied by appropriate reports in respect of technical matters to demonstrate that the localised environmental effects of the development will be acceptable. It is proposed that the application will be accompanied by the following documents:

- Application forms and certificates duly completed and signed;
- Covering letter;
- Site Location Plan;
- General proposed drawings;
 - O5040-RES-PRO-DR-PE-002 - Utility Connects
 - O5040-RES-PRO-DR-PT-001 - Infrastructure Layout
- Proposed elevation drawings (as per attached drawing register);
- Planning, Design and Access Statement;
- EIA Screening Request letter;
- Pre-Application Consultation Report;
- Landscape and Visual Assessment;
- Landscape Masterplan;
- Transport Statement;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal with addendum;
- Air Quality and Construction Dust Risk Assessment;
- Flood Risk Screening and Drainage Management Plan;
- Proposed drainage strategy drawings;
 - O5040-RES-DRN-DR-PT-001 – Proposed Surface Water Drainage Strategy
 - O5040-RES-DRN-DR-PT-002 – Proposed Foul Water Drainage Strategy
 - O5040-RES-DRN-DR-PT-003 – Typical Drainage Details
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Survey and Tree Constraints Plan;
- Utility Survey;
- Noise Impact Assessment;
- Coal Mining Risk Assessment.

On this basis, the screening opinion of the local authority is sought as to the requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed development. Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Rebecca Little
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