

# Site Access Track to Llanshay Lane and Highways Improvements to the Reeves Hill Wind Farm

## Design and Access Statement

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# DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

## 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Design and Access Statement is submitted to accompany the planning application for the Reeves Hill Access Track and Highways Improvements to serve the Reeves Hill wind farm, in fulfillment of The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (paragraph 42), The Department for Communities and Local Government Guidance on changes to the development control system (2006) and advice provided in the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment's (CABE) guidance Design and Access Statements: how to write, read and use them (2006).
- 1.1.2 In addition the guidance available from Powys County Council, *Design and Access Statements: Briefing Note*, has also been reviewed.
- 1.1.3 The following statement with reference to the planning application for the access track and highways modifications is structured to contain:
- Environmental sustainability;
  - Movement to, from and within the development
  - Character; and
  - Community Safety.

## 1.2 Environmental Sustainability

- 1.2.1 The Reeves Hill wind farm, for which this access track will serve during the construction phase and requirement for any abnormal load delivery in maintenance, was the subject of a planning application to Herefordshire Council in May 2008 (application number DCNW2008/1289/F). The wind farm was approved by Herefordshire Council, following the submission of additional environmental information, in September 2011.
- 1.2.2 The access track and highways improvements will enable the construction and operation of the Reeves Hill wind farm, which itself will be a renewable energy development that is designed to contribute towards efforts to tackle climate change and security of energy supplies. The effects of climate change are well documented and are, in summary, expected to radically alter climatic conditions, including weather patterns, and thereby cause considerable changes to the natural environment through effects to habitats and species. The fundamental premise of wind energy schemes is to improve global environmental sustainability and therefore it is expected that the proposed scheme will make a small contribution to objectives to stabilise climate change.
- 1.2.3 The construction of the access track and highways improvements will, however, have localised environmental effects. Any new development has the potential to affect the environment, both positively and negatively. In this case a new access track on agricultural track will be required, along with modifications to existing highways. The environmental effects of the proposed works have been accounted for and are presented in this Environmental Statement. Overall the effects have been found to be acceptable. Some effects to potential habitats and species have been identified, and appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures are proposed in order to balance the effects of the development.

## 1.3 Movement to, from and within the development

- 1.3.1 The new access track and highways modifications will enable the delivery of wind farm components parts and construction vehicles to the site
- 1.3.2 The tower sections, blades and turbine components will be transported by articulated low loaders with steerable rear wheel trailers. The towers are typically transported in four sections and the maximum length transported will be the 35m long turbine blades. There will be 10 movements per turbine installation making a total of 40, which will be escorted with personnel who will deal with traffic control where necessary. When these vehicles leave the site they will be considerably shorter by moving the rear trailers forward to be attached to the front cab section.

- 1.3.3 During the construction period there will be two mobile cranes on site, of approximately 120 tonnes and 650 tonnes lifting capacity. These will remain on site for the duration of the contract and move between the three areas as required. The 650 tonne crane has a travelling weight of approximately 120 tonnes and a maximum axle weight of approximately 15 tonnes. This vehicle will be self-steering and able to negotiate tight radii bends.
- 1.3.4 The wind turbine foundations (4) will require 10 lorry loads of steel reinforcing, ducting and foundation bolts. There would be approximately 186 loads of ready mixed concrete from local batching plants. For technical reasons it will be necessary to pour all of the concrete for a base on a single day, i.e. there will be 4 days of intense vehicle movement.
- 1.3.5 The vast majority of crushed stone for track construction, cabling and temporary works is likely to be imported from local quarries. Dependent upon the outcomes of consultation on the preferred track specification, whether bound or unbound or a combination of both, three local quarries which would be able to provide crushed stone have been identified in the vicinity. Since access to the site from the north is desirable it is suggested that all HGV movements take place from and to that direction. This can be conditioned if deemed necessary.
- 1.3.6 In addition there will be approximately 116 deliveries of plant, machinery, electrical equipment and other building materials to site.
- 1.3.7 Apart from the delivery of concrete for the turbine foundations it is estimated that the HGV movements will be spread over a 4-6 month construction period.
- 1.3.8 There will be approximately 20-30 people working on site at any one time during the construction period and various deliveries by light goods vehicles.
- 1.3.9 Consequent to the above, the average daily HGV flow is estimated to be around 12 arrivals (loaded) and 12 departures (unloaded) with a maximum of around 60 arrivals (loaded) and 60 departures (unloaded). At a worst case the 30 employees could all travel independently, however since some of them are likely to be accommodated in local hotels and B & B's a degree of car sharing is anticipated.
- 1.3.10 **New access track**
- 1.3.11 Movement to the location of the new access track will be from the A4113 via a new site entrance arrangement onto land under the control of Llanshay Farm. Details of the site entrance arrangements are set out in the planning application (see Figure 5-14) whilst the accompanying document to the planning application, *Reeves Hill Wind Energy Scheme: Construction Traffic Management Plan* sets out the proposed measures and methods to enable the effective transportation of abnormal loads to the site and the management of construction vehicles to avoid potential delays and disruptions to local traffic.
- 1.3.12 Traffic management may also be required in respect of the protection to users of the Caleck's Lane, which, it is understood, is not a definitive right of way but is a planned cycle route. It is recommended that clear warning signs of traffic movements be installed well in advance of the crossing point on both sides of the footpath, with temporary gates to protect users at times of vehicle movements.
- 1.3.13 All construction traffic would be managed into the site and on-site throughout the construction of the access track. Following construction and once the wind farm is operational, the access track will be required for routine O&M vehicles on a monthly basis. No additional transport management plans would be required at this time as the volume of additional traffic would be so small.
- 1.3.14 **Highways modifications on Llanshay Lane and Reeves Hill road**
- 1.3.15 Due to the construction of a new site entrance north of Llanshay Lane, passing places and new site entrance arrangements to the wind turbines along a public road, the traffic management measures set out in *Hill Wind Energy Scheme: Construction Traffic Management Plan* will need to be imposed. Such measures will ensure the continuing ability of local users to use the highway without unacceptable delays or disruptions.

## 1.4 Character

### 1.4.1 Amount

- 1.4.2 The new access track from the A4113 to the Llanshay Lane will be approximately 540m in length and

4.5m in width. Consequently, a track of approximately 2,430m<sup>2</sup> will be required. Details of the number of vehicular movements are set out in section 7.3 above.

1.4.3 It is estimated that 2700m<sup>3</sup> of stone will be required for the track based on an unbound surface. The majority can be obtained from the cut material on site and thus only approximately 675m<sup>3</sup> of high quality stone would need to be imported.

1.4.4 Minor quantities of concrete and pipes would be required for the aqueduct crossing and stream crossing.

1.4.5 Minor quantities of tarmac will be required for the passing places and site entrance arrangements.

#### 1.4.6 **Layout**

1.4.7 The layout for the access track from the A4113 to the Llanshay Lane has been prepared on the basis of minimising the length of track required, avoiding where possible all sensitive features, and following the alignment of the existing topography. The purpose has been to reduce the landtake requirements and environmental effects of the scheme, whilst minimising the quantity of materials required for its construction.

1.4.8 The locations of the passing places and the site entrances to the turbines have been based on the optimal positions for such infrastructure in order to ensure public safety, avoid delays to normal traffic flows, and minimise landtake requirements.

#### 1.4.9 **Scale**

1.4.10 The scale of the development has been determined by the standard requirements for access track infrastructure, site entrances, and passing places for wind turbine abnormal loads and construction vehicles, including cranes.

#### 1.4.11 **Appearance**

1.4.12 Overall the landscape and visual assessment has confirmed that there will not be significant effects to landscape fabric or character in the local area. In addition, the appearance of the new track will partially be screened along its length through new hedgerow planting.

1.4.13 The Applicant is additionally proposing that, should a bound track surface be required by the local planning authority, such a track would be finished in a colour considered appropriate by consultees as reducing the visual effects of the track.

#### 1.4.14 **Landscaping**

1.4.15 Landscaping around the proposed new access track is not proposed. However, planting of local species along specific sections of the track is proposed, mainly to provide habitat corridors for species such as bats, but also to provide additional screening of the track. Details of the proposed planting are presented in Chapter 8 and Figure 8-1, Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement.

## 1.5 **Community Safety**

1.5.1 Community safety around the development will be engendered through the rigorous application of the measures set out in the Construction Traffic Management Plan, which accompanies the planning application.

1.5.2 Additional measures at the point that Caleck's Lane crosses the proposed access track may be provided to protect users should the Council deem it necessary.