

1st August 2025

Geraint Roberts
Newport City Council,
Civic Centre,
Newport,
South Wales,
NP20 4UR

By email: Geraint Roberts
GeraintN.Roberts@newport.gov.uk



Nick Beddoe
Nick.Beddoe@lighthouse-dc.co.uk
M 07498 331392

Terra Nova Way,
Penarth
CF64 1SA
www.lighthouse-dc.co.uk

Dear Mr Roberts,

Response to comments received on submitted application 25/0237 - Further partial discharge of Condition 14 (ecological monitoring & contingency) of planning permission 18/1201 for erection of a renewable energy hub (49.9mw) and associated infrastructure and landscaping in relation to Year 4

The above application is informed by an Ecological Monitoring and Review Report prepared by GE Consulting and submitted on 24th February 2025. The report provides the results of Year 4 monitoring, and seeks to establish the effectiveness of the management measures against agreed objectives set out in the Ecological Monitoring and Contingency Plan (EMCP) (Green Ecology, 2019) and any subsequent agreed remedial actions.

Following the submission, a meeting was held on site in May 2025 and comments on the application have now been received by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), and Friends of the Gwent Levels (FoGL). I now write in relation to this application and to address the comments which have been made, with specific reference to the requirements of the condition and the wider objectives of the project.

The associated Planning Condition reads as follows:

Ecological Monitoring & Contingency

14) Prior to the commencement of any works of ecological mitigation/compensation the applicant shall produce an 'Ecological Monitoring & Contingency Plan'. The plan shall set out the principal aims and objectives of the ecological work to be undertaken as part of the development hereby approved and shall identify a monitoring and reporting schedule that shall have regard to the objectives of the plan. Monitoring Reports shall be submitted to the Council within 3 months of their completion. Objectives shall be short term (5 years and less), mid-term (6-10 years) and long term (11-40 years). The plan shall allow for contingency actions to be taken if monitoring shows stated objectives are not being achieved. In the event additional hedgerows are identified for removal beyond those identified in the Landscape & Ecological Monitoring Plan (December 2019) or any Lapwing mitigation in addition to that identified in the Lapwing Mitigation Plan (December 2019) is carried out in the future the Ecological Monitoring & Contingency Plan shall be revised to account for these additional works of mitigation. Any changes in the Ecological Monitoring & Contingency Plan shall be submitted to the Council for its written approval. Any change in the ecological mitigation proposed for the site due to contingency or additional works being carried out shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter any contingency shall be carried out fully as agreed.

Reason: to ensure ecological mitigation is being achieved.



Summary of Comments Made

Comments on the latest monitoring report have been submitted by FoGL, RSPB and NRW.

RSPB – Raise objections to the implementation of the Lapwing Management Area and advise amendments be made to the proposed management specification

NRW – Were satisfied with the program of Ditch Management but raised concerns regarding the management objectives of the Shrill Carder Bee (SCB) fields and advise changes to management in order to ensure compliance with the LEMP and to improve the establishment of wildflower meadow

FoGL – Raise concerns regarding the ability of the scheme to achieve its objectives of improving and supporting protected species. Concerns relate to the responsibilities for management, the effectiveness of contingency measures and academic research

Technical Response

A comprehensive and robust Technical Response to the matters raised in the above responses has been prepared by owners and managers of the site at NextEnergy Capital and WiseEnergy respectively. The response seeks to address the following points:

- To address misconceptions and inaccurate assertions relating to the site's management
- Confirm proposals for avoiding and rectifying any areas of existing non-compliance
- Confirm contingency measure and amendments to land management in order to better secure the management objectives set out in the EMCP

The Response accords with detailed discussions held with NRW at the site visit which is referenced in their response. The Response should be read in conjunction with this letter. It is important to note that NRW do not share concerns that the management objectives are unachievable in principle, but rather that adjustments and contingency measures are pursued to improve the outcomes.

The Response to the above comments explains that the LEMP was intentionally designed as a long-term, adaptive strategy that incorporates continuous monitoring, active engagement with stakeholders, and targeted intervention where necessary. This flexible, evidence-based approach allows for adaptive management in response to changing site conditions and ecological feedback, as is standard in conservation land management. As such, feedback by NRW as the independent regulator is entirely planned-for as a key factor, to inform the site's management and refine the details of the LEMP.

Satisfying the Condition and Achieving Project Objectives

The related Planning Condition to which the application reflects an implicit acknowledgement that an adaptive management approach will be required due to the dynamic nature of such an ecological intervention. For this reason the condition clearly states that:

“The plan shall allow for contingency actions to be taken if monitoring shows stated objectives are not being achieved”

And that:

“Any changes in the Ecological Monitoring & Contingency Plan shall be submitted to the Council for its written approval. Any change in the ecological mitigation proposed for the site due to contingency or additional works being carried out shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter any contingency shall be carried out fully as agreed.”



The current application (Ref: 25/0237) seeks the 'Partial Discharge' of Condition 14, through the provision of the Ecological Monitoring and Review Report which also sets out contingency proposals as would be anticipated by the condition. Such contingency measures would be agreed with NRW as the Independent Regulator and would be commenced on an appropriate timescale. These would also form part of a revised LEMP to be produced in Year 5, which take account of lessons learned and would be scrutinised by the Local Planning Authority prior to its formal adoption as the document to be complied with under Condition 17.

Noting the points made in the accompanying Technical Response and the points raised above regarding the requirements of the condition, it is considered that the applicant is in full compliance with the condition. It is questioned whether a 'Partial Discharge' is strictly required as the submission of monitoring reports and associated contingency proposals are in fact an inherent part of the ensuring compliance with the EMCP which has already been discharged prior to the commencement of development. In this regard, the submissions made to the LPA simply demonstrate compliance with the approved EMCP and should not, in and of themselves require formal 'discharge' by the LPA. Any amendments to approved documents such as the LEMP and the EMCP would of course require a re-discharge of condition in order to secure associated changes;

We would welcome the LPA's confirmation on these points so that the process of monitoring and reporting can be properly administered for the remaining operational lifetime of the development.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Beddoe BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI
Director

For and on behalf of Lighthouse Development Consulting Ltd