

This exhibition is part of the statutory consultation on proposals for Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn Wind Farm, which is located to the west of Abertillery within an identified Pre-Assessed Area for the provision of wind farms.

The proposals are being developed by Pennant Walters, a subsidiary of Walters Group; a local company based at Hirwaun and operating nationally. Since 2003, we have developed, built and now operate six wind farms and solar developments in South Wales (on land very typical of the south Wales coalfield with both surface and underground mine features), generating a total of 127MW, making us Wales' largest home-grown renewable energy developer.

Early engagement on the proposed Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn Wind Farm took place last summer, with feedback from local stakeholders and residents helping to inform the emerging plans. A high-level response to key issues raised is provided as part of this exhibition. A draft of the full planning application, including the results of environmental surveys and assessments, is available on the project website for more information.

Feedback received during this consultation will be reviewed and used to inform the final proposals, which will be submitted to Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) in the Autumn/Winter.



The proposals are for:

- Up to eight wind turbines with a maximum blade height of up to 180m.
- A substation and transformer housing.
- A temporary construction compound and site offices.
- Crane pads, storage areas and cabling.
- Access tracks from the site entrance to the turbines and substation.

The design iteration work has been influenced by an extensive suite of assessment and survey work together with modelling of potential views from local sensitive receptors to minimise potential effects.

The project team is confident the site can accommodate eight wind turbines, which could generate up to 34MW of electricity. The non-turbine infrastructure has been arranged to avoid the identified site constraints where possible, and access track routes have been designed to minimise water crossings and avoid potentially sensitive areas.

Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn also benefits from good access to the highway network and to the electricity distribution network. An offer of a grid connection from Western Power Distribution (WPD) has been received. A 33kV line between the on-site substation and the electricity grid at Crumlin will be the subject of a separate application. A secondary consent will be required for the diversion of three public rights of way during construction and operation of the wind farm.



Proposed wind farm layout

Ground conditions and visual impact

Ground conditions

Concern was expressed during the early engagement about land stability from previous mining activity. Site visits and desk-based studies have been undertaken and identified historic mining activity beneath the site. Further work is being undertaken, including liaison with the Coal Authority and ground investigation works, to understand the stability risks and ensure appropriate design of turbine foundations and other infrastructure.

Visual impact

The layout of the eight wind turbines has been informed by a range of environmental studies as well as feedback from the early engagement.

The location of the turbines can be seen on The Proposals board and photomontages showing what the Wind Farm would look like from viewpoints around the site are available on the screen at the exhibition.

Shadow flicker

Studies have identified that up to 10 receptors have the potential to experience some level of shadow flicker due to the proposed wind farm.

This will be mitigated by using a turbine control module that will be programmed to shut down the turbine at specific times and dates when unacceptable shadow flicker is predicted.



Potential impact on the local environment and wildlife were raised during the early engagement as key issues to consider when determining the location of the wind turbines.

Birds: ornithological surveys have been carried out since early 2020 to identify the type and number of birds using the site in the winter and summer months, as well as flight paths across the site. Collision risk modelling has been undertaken and the proposed turbines have been positioned in locations with the lowest likelihood of collision.

Bats: bat surveys have identified at least seven species that use the site. Key flight lines and habitat avoidance buffer zones have been identified and the majority of the proposed wind turbines are outside these corridors.

Peat: the Unified Peat Map of Wales showed no peat deposits on the site and the absence of deep peat was confirmed by a peat survey completed in 2021.

Key habitats: areas of the site are designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and small areas of habitat would be lost due to the project infrastructure.

The Biodiversity Officer for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has advised such losses can be mitigated through the adoption of measures such as annual bracken reduction and fencing off ponds designated within the SINC to protect and enhance biodiversity.

Such measures would be implemented via a Habitat Management Plan (HMP), to be agreed with the Local Authority and NRW.

Borrow pits: plans to use borrow pits onsite have been removed to reduce potential impacts on existing habitats. Stone for turbine bases and internal roads would be sourced from two local quarries (Gryphonn Quarry in Trefil, Tredegar and Hafod Quarry in Abercarn, Newbridge). Traffic movements will increase as a result, however, not sufficiently to result in 'significant' environmental effects from traffic.

Proximity to residential areas

An acceptable distance between wind turbines and residential properties is determined through an assessment of the effects that could occur from the construction and operation of the proposed wind farm. Key considerations include the potential for significant effects from noise, shadow flicker and visual amenity.

Informed by existing baseline conditions, each of these topics has been considered and the results used to inform the siting of the wind turbines with the aim of preventing significant effects.

The site layout has been influenced by the proximity of turbines to residential properties, as well as other constraints including engineering and ecological. Potential effects on residential receptors have been considered in the Environmental Impact Assessment and are reported in full in the Draft Environmental Statement, which is available to review on the project website.

Noise

As part of this assessment, noise measuring equipment was placed at four locations around the site, which were agreed with the Council's Environmental Health Officer in advance. This helped to understand the existing base level of noise during different times of the day and night.

The topography of the site and how noise travels was raised as a potential issue during the early engagement. This has been included in the assessment and valley noise has been incorporated into the noise predictions under certain conditions where reflections are considered notable.

The noise assessment carried out will ensure that the noise generated from the proposed wind turbine layout falls within permitted parameters/allowed limits.



Construction transport: During the early engagement, questions were asked about the route the turbines would take and capacity with the local road network to accommodate the movement of Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AILs), especially on narrower, more rural roads close to the site entrance.

The issue of transport and access has been given careful consideration and an appropriate route to the site for construction vehicles identified– including AILs such as the turbine blades and nacelles – that avoids narrow roads and roads fronted by residential properties where possible.

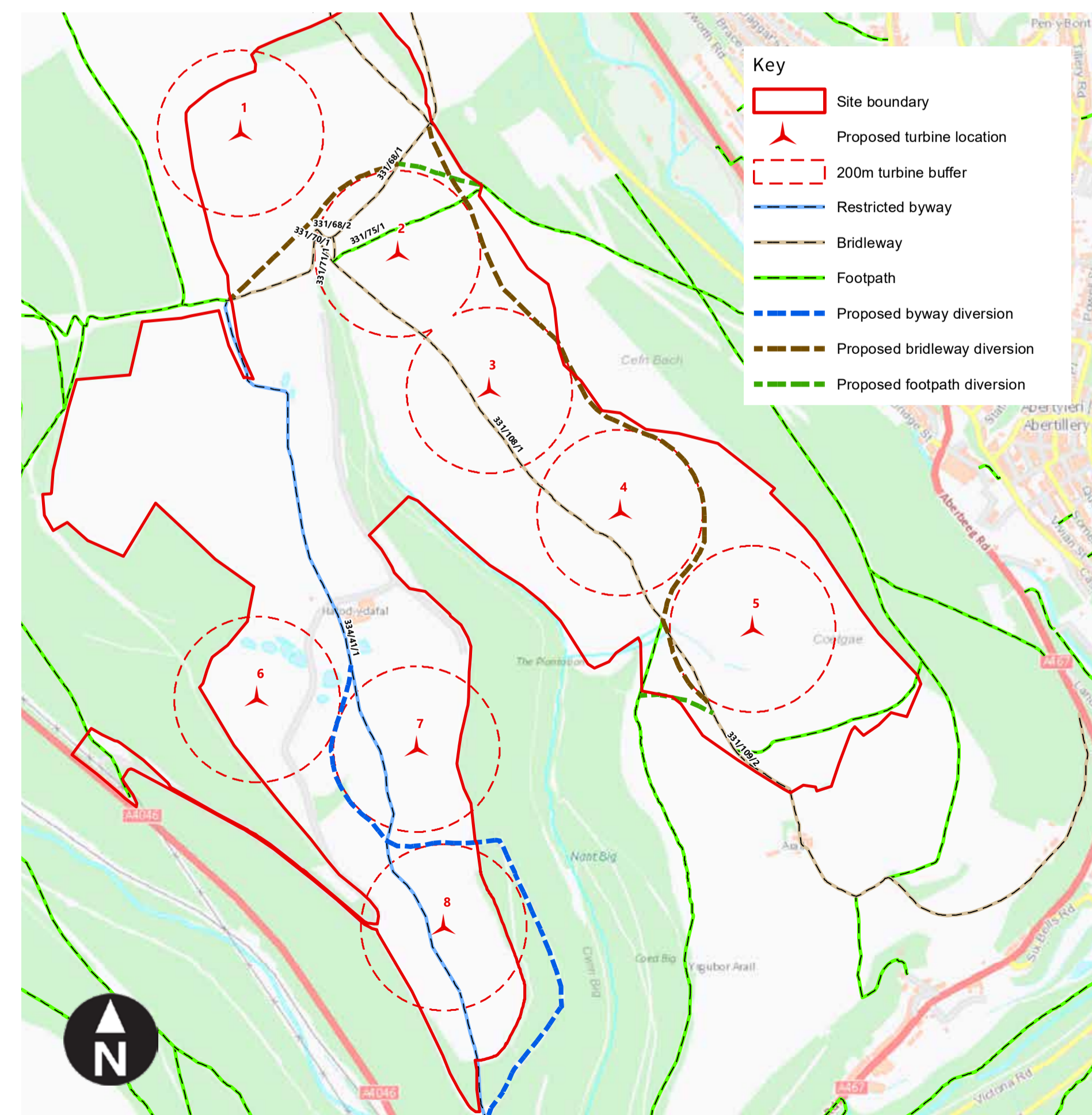
Public Rights of Way

A secondary consent will be required for the diversion of three public rights of way during construction and operation of the wind farm. (See map)

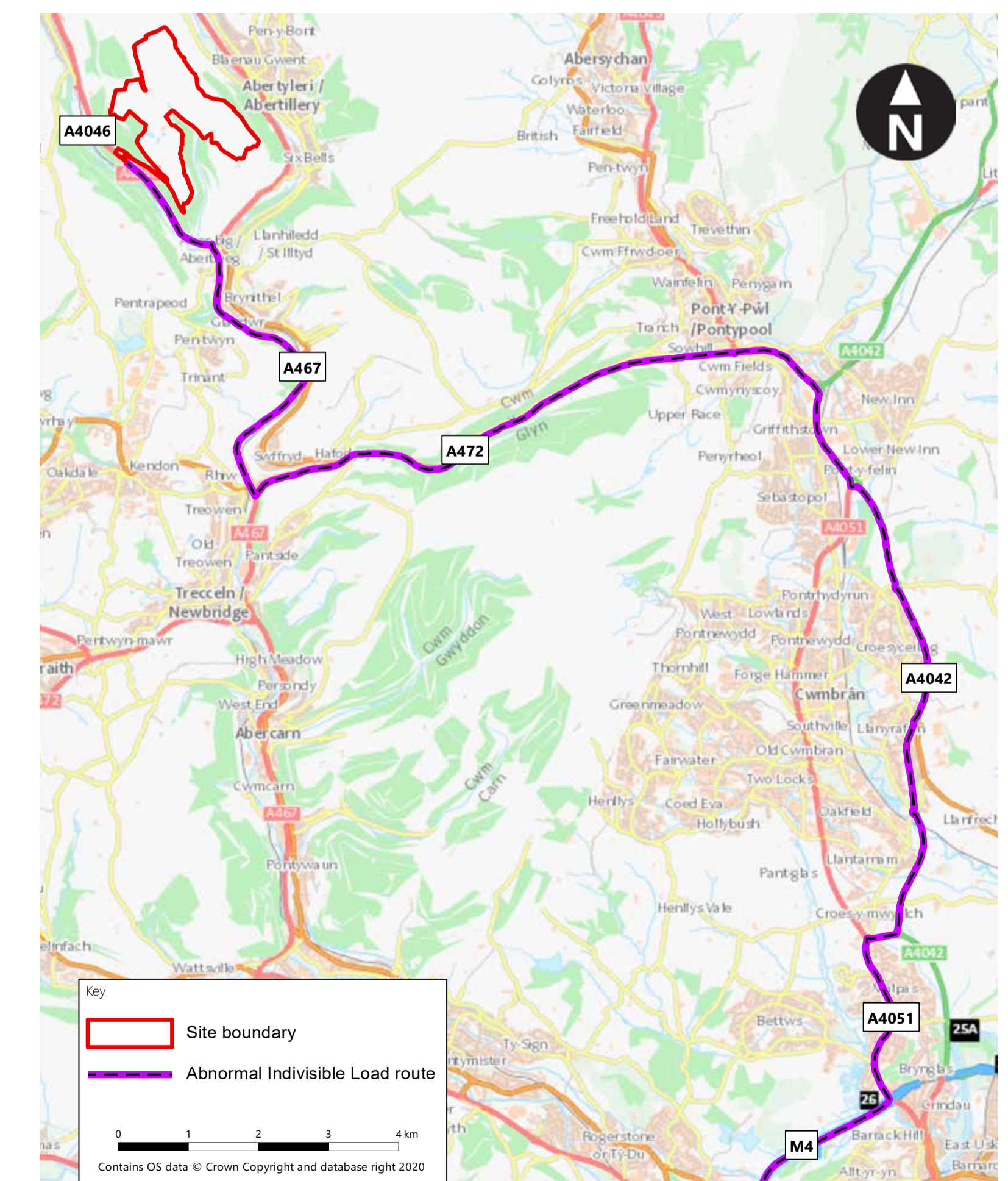
This route is:

Swansea Docks – Baldwins Crescent – A483 - A483/Ffordd Amazon/Ashleigh Terrace Roundabout - A483- A483/M4 - M4 - A4051 - A4042 - A4042 Turnpike Road – A472 - A467- A4046 - site.

It is anticipated that a separate application will be needed from the Local Authority for the temporary removal of highway furniture to allow for the transportation of turbines to site.



Public rights of way diversion map



Access route

The communities in which our wind farms operate are important to us. We operate a Community Benefits Fund for each of our wind farm projects, which invests money into the local communities. To date it has distributed around £4 million to qualifying projects.

As part of the early engagement, we invited feedback about local ownership and the Community Benefits Fund – how it could be most effectively administered, the types of projects it could support and its geographical reach. We also held a workshop with local stakeholders to gain a better understanding of how the fund could positively contribute to the local area.

Feedback so far includes:

- Potential for the Fund to support an administrator/project leader to support groups interested in securing a grant, particularly on larger projects.
- Potential to promote innovative, intergenerational and sustainable projects that will have wide-reaching benefits.
- Fund to be available to projects in the communities hosting and immediately surrounding the Wind Farm. Potential to increase the geographic area due to the linear nature of the valleys.

As Pennant Walters is a Welsh company, the Wind Farm will be locally owned, however we are also considering opportunities for an element of shared ownership with the local community.



Ogmore Vale Bowls Club targets youth membership with £8,000 from Pennant Walters



Pennant Walters donated £20,000 to Friends of Aberdare Park to make a splash!



Pennant Walters donation of £13,000 to Rhondda Football Club for new 60-seater stand

Although the planning application is a Development of National Significance (DNS) and will ultimately be determined by Welsh Ministers, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and the local communities are key consultees. You can have your say on the proposals for Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn Wind Farm by:

Calling: 01495 832476

Emailing: consultation@carn-y-cefn.co.uk

Writing to: Freepost GRASSHOPPER CONSULT
(no stamp or further address required)

Please provide your comments by
8 July 2022.

Feedback received will be analysed and responded to in the Pre-Application Consultation Report, which will be submitted as part of the DNS application.

* These contact details will put you in touch with Grasshopper Communications, who are managing the consultation.

Indicative timeline

Summer 2022 :

Statutory consultation on detailed layout of proposed wind farm

Autumn 2022:

Review feedback from the consultation and finalise the proposals/DNS application

Autumn/Winter 2022:

DNS application submitted to PEDW

Spring/Summer 2023:

Examination of application by PEDW and recommendation submitted to Welsh Government

Autumn/Winter 2023: Welsh Ministers determine application

Subject to planning consent being granted, the construction of Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn Wind Farm would take around two years, so it would be operational and generating electricity by Winter 2025.

